LET'S TALK

Changing the Conversation. Changing Lives.

Eating Disorders Coalition of Tennessee

WINTER 2008

CHANGES BY CHANCE

by **Whitney C. Hassell**

A lot can happen when you let it. Nineteen months ago I began getting help for my eating disorder. In that time, I also started rappelling and rock climbing. I took the opportunity to travel, had a few "spontaneous food adventures," and I started making friends and confiding in people. It was hard to face my internal fears and start trusting people (and trusting myself), but it was so, incredibly, wonderfully worth it. One chance at a time, one choice at a time, my life changed for the better, right before my eyes.

As far back as I can remember, I've wanted to achieve perfection. I'm a very driven person, so in college I made up my mind to stay a size 0 and graduate early. I met those goals, but where did that get me? I didn't have a social life, I didn't go places, I didn't make friends. I took no chances, and as a result I had no memories. I learned a lot in class, but I still had so much to learn about the real "real life."

With less than two semesters to go, I realized I had disappointed myself and was in the midst of a wasted life. With less than two semesters to go, I finally broke down. Feeling like I had no one and nothing, I didn't know what to do besides see the university counselor during Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Even when I didn't want to, I made myself face... myself. I learned to cry. I learned how to use my driven nature to my advantage instead of to my detriment. I focused on the adventure that life can be and started trying new things. I discovered that I'm a people person! I love the outdoors! I learned it's worth it to take a chance now and then. If you get hurt physically, you'll heal. If you get hurt emotionally, the pain is probably worth all the good that came from it—the heart is surprisingly resilient if you allow yourself to move on. Take a chance. Get dirty. Get hurt. Make memories and allow your experiences to shape you.

One chance at a time, one choice at a time, my life changed for the better, right before my eyes.

Now, I'm far from flighty, but I know for a fact that if you're given a chance to do something, you ought to take it and go along for the ride. You never know who you'll meet or where you'll end up. I moved to the D.C. Metro area in March 2008 to look for a job (on a week's notice). There were no jobs where I was from, and I was ready to move on. After seven months of meeting people on the Metro (subway system), networking everywhere I went, and just putting myself out there, I landed an internship with the Library of Congress, then fell into my dream job. It was worth the wait for sure. And it was definitely worth every effort, every lesson learned.

Looking back, I see how far I've come, and I'm proud of myself. I'm finally becoming who I always was and didn't know it. Good changes happen when you take a chance. So take every opportunity you're given. Never miss a chance to be who you're meant to become.

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EDCT
P.O. Box 121825
Nashville, TN 37212
Ph: (615) 831-9838
Fax: (615) 831-0444
www.edct.net

Words Into Action

a note from the Executive Director

In September the EDCT unveiled its new tagline: **Changing the conversation. Changing lives.** This new tagline comes after months of community interviews and creative introspection into the many ways the Coalition carries out its mission of offering hope, help, and support to all those impacted by disordered eating. This new positioning statement is intended to provide a descriptive hint into what it is we do as well as direct us in where we want to go. Whether it is through the Speakers Bureau, Families Supporting Families, Resource Library, the Online Resource Database, Annual Forum, Community Chat, Eating Disorders Awareness Week, or the youth initiative YES!, the Coalition is striving to make a difference on a personal, social, and public policy level around the one issue that calls us to our important work together, addressing and eradicating eating disorders. Thus far in 2008 and through these EDCT programs, the Coalition has actively participated in 475 "conversations" across the state and directly served over 18,000 Tennesseans.

This new tagline also guided us in the restructuring of the newsletter. Each edition of Let's Talk will delve into a word or concept that will hopefully offer a new perspective, deeper insight, or an alternative way to approach treatment, advocacy, and perhaps even our own journeys of recovery. Whatever brought you to the EDCT or brings you for the very first time to this cause, your voice changes the collective whole. We want to hear from you! Through voluntarism, membership, coming out to events, donating, or serving on the Board, there are many ways to add your voice, be involved, and turn words into action. Your involvement with the EDCT makes a difference and advances the mission of the Coalition and as a result is changing lives.

A President's Point of View

by **Nancy Beveridge, MD**

For as long as I can recall, I have been aware of a pervasive but oft unspoken "culture of thinness" in the world in which I live. Several of the girls in my high school were super thin, and were even mysteriously absent for long periods of the academic year, though no one seemed too worried. I remember when one of my favorite celebrities died at a young age, and the paper blamed "anorexia," though no one could explain to me exactly what that was. I can even remember a friend in my college dorm disappearing after dinner....we all knew what she was up to in the bathroom, but registered no concern and perhaps even envied her small "cute figure."

As my pediatric practice has aged, I am now all too aware of the face of the devastating group of diseases called "eating disorders." Not only do I see more and more girls (and boys) descend down the dark path of restrictive eating, binging and purging or all of the above, these children are presenting at an increasingly younger age. Thankfully change is occurring! The models for treatment have improved, and the curtain of shame associated with eating disorders is lifting as more people seek the help they need. The EDCT is helping to bring about this change, and I am truly privileged to represent the EDCT as president of the board this year and look forward to the year ahead.

A Deeper Look at... CHANGE

Websites:

www.ted.com Ideas worth spreading

www.youtube.com search SPIN by Double Edge Films –what if you could change the way things happen?

Books:

***Stick Figure: A diary of my former self**
by Lori Gottileb

***Reinventing Your Life: How to Break Free from Negative Life Patterns and Feel Good Again**
by Jeffrey E. Young, PhD. and Janet S. Klosko, PhD.

***The Invisible Woman: Confronting Weight Prejudice in America** by W. Charisse Goodman

***Love Your Body: Change the Way You Feel About the Body You Have**
by Tami Brannon-Quan and Lisa Licavoli

Blogs:

frozenoranges.com

organizingmadeeasy.blogspot.com

the-f-word.org/blog/

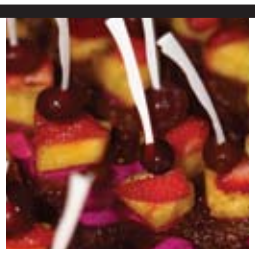
Exhibits and Events:

http://fall.tnvacation.com/fall-color/weekly-foilage-reports/ observe nature's most dazzling changes across the state

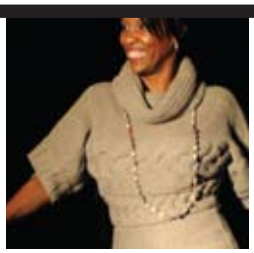
http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/exhibits/suffrage/index.htm "Remember the Ladies!": Women Struggle for an Equal Voice. Tennessee played a pivotal role in gaining women the right to vote and this exhibit will show you how we became the "Perfect 36."

**Available in the EDCT Resource Library*

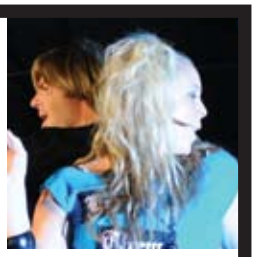
the BUZZZ



Fabulous food courtesy of Passport Global Cuisine
Tonya Glasgow Photography



Tina Tuggle, Tennessee Titan's Director of Player Development
Schenk Photography



Megan Conner (the next Gac star finalist) & **Beau Davidson** (Actor, Singer/Songwriter, Guitarist, & Keyboardist)
Schenk Photography

FASHION FOR EVERYBODY 2008

The Eating Disorders Coalition of Tennessee proudly presented their 5th annual Fashion for EveryBODY event on Saturday, September 27 at Limelight in downtown Nashville. Over 350 people attended and overall, the event raised just above $30,000 for the EDCT, making it the most prosperous event in coalition history!

Executive Director, Shelli Yoder, began the evening by explaining the mission of the EDCT and proudly unveiling the new slogan, **Changing the Conversation. Changing Lives.** The EDCT's brand new promotional video touched many in the room with its debut. You can see it for yourself on our website *www.edct.net.*

EDCT CLINICAL MEMBERSHIP PERKS: HEAL THE HEALER

Noelle McIntyre, LMT a graduate student at Middle TN State University, completing her final internship (with EDCT), led a three-workshop series for our clinical members during the latter part of July and early August.

The workshops utilized imagery, music, and other techniques to replenish the spirit.

Calendar of upcoming events

For details on all events, please see EDCT website www.edct.net

EDCT Northeast: Karen Wetherall MS, RD, LDN and Merry Miller, MD will present a half day workshop entitled, Enhancing Eating Disorder Treatment Through a Team Approach for professionals on Friday, November 14, 2008 from 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Johnson City, TN. Registration fee is $25. For more information, email Misty Bays at BaysMC@msha.com.

EDCT Knoxville: Karen Silien, PhD, and Dr. Coyle will present a full day workshop entitled Creating a Positive Impact on Body Image for professionals and students on Friday, February 20, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Welcome Center. Registration fee is $60 for professionals and $20 for students. Please mail check to EDCT by February 6, 2009.

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Professional Membership
_ Clinical Membership $75

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(check one of the following)
_ Middle & High School Free
_ College/Graduate Student & Senior *(over age 65)* $15
_ Individual Membership $35
_ Family Membership $50
_ **I want to make a donation.** $_____

Make Checks payable to: **EDCT, Inc.**
Please mail your contribution to: **EDCT P.O. Box 121825 Nashville, TN 37212-1825**

If you are seeking professional membership, you will receive an additional membership form to complete before membership is approved. The EDCT is a 501c3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible. Anonymous donations accepted.

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