

## Flash File Submission

### Contestant: A11

To the outside world, Lerena Greig was the epitome of a successful middle-age woman. She owned a house and a car—paid for with her six figure salary—and had developed a prominent career in high-end print sales.

She was, in her own words, living “the good life.”

But by the third time she tried crack cocaine, a new addition to a regular habit of hard partying on weekends, Greig’s downward spiral was well underway.

Over time, she lost her home and began living in a crack house. Her face took on a harrowed look, her sunken cheeks and jaw the physical manifestation of a brutal internal struggle.

She sought help off and on in public programs, always returning to her dealer within several days of completion.

“I would have hit the streets. That would have been the next phase,” Greig recalled.

But then she made a decision that would entirely alter the course of her life. On the advice of a pastor, on March 9, 2006, Greig entered into a long-term addiction program at the Edmonton Dream Centre.

She committed to a minimum of six months in the facility, as per the Dream’s Centre regulations, and committed to a series of restrictions over the first 60 days, included limitations on phone calls and external appointments.

It is, Greig describes, an additional form of detox. And it’s not easy.

“It’s hard work,” she said.

One of many women that compose the Dream Centre’s 88 per cent success rate, Greig completed the program. And she is now able to use her success as a way to help others, working as the public relations and resource director for the very organization that brought her out of a long-term addiction.

Her story, one of addition, isolation and loss, is a familiar one to the Edmonton Dream Centre, which has been used by over 400 families since its inception in 1998.

Over the course of the program, women take courses to help in a process of holistic healing, addressing physical, spiritual and mental concerns. Uniquely, they are able to bring their children with them.

Addiction problems are mistreated and mismanaged by public programs, Greig believes. Many government-funded programs are based on “quick fix” solutions and focus on accommodating as many participants as possible.

“I think a lot of times our decisions are based on dollars,” she expressed.

Such decision-making processes, according to Greig, don’t take into account the long-term effects of addiction treatment programs.

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“There’s no quick fix,” she continued. “We’ve become such a Bandaid society.”

As a non-profit organization, the Dream Centre acquires most of its funding currently from corporations, local businesses and grants. The next step is to expand, with the intention serving more women and providing greater resources to participants.

“We turn away... an average of 30-to-40 women a month,” said Greig.

But for Greig, and for the Edmonton Dream Centre, it’s not about the quantity of people accommodated by the program.

The focus is and will continue to be about providing unique solutions to individuals.

Through the Dream Centre, Greig found her personal truth and identity that helped her overcome years of addiction. She will continue to perpetrate that philosophy with others, with the understanding that “one person’s life can have a ripple effect on many people.”