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## Support group coming for families of addicts



BY LEEANN DOERFLEIN - ldoerflein@ftimes.com | Posted 5 hours ago

After leaving town weekly to attend a support group for families of addicts, Kim and Ken Newhart decided to start a group in Frankfort.

“There’s no help here for families,” Ken said. “You have to go out of town to search out groups.”

The couple, like many in Clinton County, have been affected by a loved one’s addiction. Their son overdosed on drugs in February so they decided to seek help from other families who are struggling with the same problems.



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“You wonder over and over what you did wrong – that’s why are starting this group,” Kim said. “It helps to talk to other people.”

The group, Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL), is for parents and grandparents with children who suffer from an addiction. The group offers solace and advice on how to deal with all of the problems that stem from addiction. The Newharts’ PAL offshoot, will be the fourth group in Indiana; there are currently PAL groups in Lebanon, Avon and Jamestown.

PAL was started in Arizona and has made its way across the country via the internet, which is how Kim found out about it. She now is working to establish a group in Frankfort that will meet at St. Vincent Frankfort Hospital weekly.

Kim still needs to get another volunteer to help conducting the group sessions.

The facilitator will help run the meeting and lead the discussion on one of the nine topics that PAL rotates around. Materials for the program are available online, so no expertise in counseling or drug addiction is necessary. The ease of starting a local program from PAL’s established education materials is one of the reasons why more groups are springing up.

All one needs to be a co-facilitator is availability and a passion to help families heal.

Anyone available to help the Newharts lead the Frankfort PA should call Kim at 656-9086. For more information on the group visit [palgroup.org](http://palgroup.org).

The Newharts are also organizing a drug forum to be held at Wesley Manor on June 11 at 2 p.m. Kim said she expects to see several speakers, but the list is not finalized yet. There will be information and stories about the extent of drug abuse in the county. There will also be a discussion about the things that the community can be doing to fight the drug problem.

"I want them to know that we all stand together in this epidemic," Kim said.

Kim wants their forum to be a more public version of the forum offered earlier this year at the Frankfort Police Department. She is reaching out to local stakeholders from the legal system, law enforcement and elected officials to give their input on the topic. She hopes to raise awareness that the community has to come together to solve the drug problem.

Uniquely, the forum will also offer Nalaxone training. The treatment is easy to administer to people who are in drug overdose, and it can be purchased over the counter for use by the public. Kim said she carries Nalaxone at all times and would encourage others to do so as well. That is why the forum will feature training and a few free kits so attendees can do the same.

"People are overdosing in bathrooms," Kim said. "If I couldn't save my son maybe I can save someone else's."