

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



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Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation was presented to us last week by its Outreach Manager, Carrie Bates.

Carrie's life is a story of triumph, tragedy, and triumph.

Carolyn Lynne Steinseifer, known to us as Carrie Bates, is a three-time Olympic gold medalist in women's 100-meter freestyle, 4 x 100 - meter freestyle relay and 4x100-meter medley relay in Venezuela, Tokyo and Los Angeles.

She is also a recovering alcoholic and, as you can surmise from the

first paragraph, holds the keys to the kingdom at Hazelden's Inpatient Rehab facility here in Newberg.

At age 16, July 29, 1984, Carrie woke early to get to the Los Angeles Olympic Village's pool to practice. At the finals she found herself at the third block in front of ten thousand people. Yet she could still hear her family over the din.

At the first she had fallen to fifth place by the time she reached the end of her first of two laps. She pulled out of it and poured herself into the second lap. She didn't know she had won until the announcement.

Well, she AND Nancy Hogshead hit the pads at 55.92 seconds. The first recorded tie in Olympic history.

Carrie would go on to grab two more golds.

All she felt she needed to focus on was not forgetting the national anthem when standing for her medal. Yet she still wasn't comfortable in her own skin. And as supportive as her parents were, they were alcoholics and no manner of Olympic level success was "enough to keep my parents from drinking."

"No one can see my cry under water."



Now at UT Austin in 1988 she is still the world's best swimmer and in the best physical shape of her life. There was no question she would make the team.

But her head got in the way and she lost her edge. She didn't make the finals and it was the first time in her life she had had no Plan B. Her mind took hold of that emotionally devastating failure and overwrote her success of '84.

This would be the beginning of drinking to stop feeling.

Life would eventually take her to Nike where she would spend most of her career in sales and marketing.

She would marry and have two daughters. She would drink with friends and family until drinking didn't need friends or family and it slowly became a problem.

2010 would find her broken and afraid and her husband moved out.

Hazelden Betty Ford would become her first of four residential treatment stays over the next two years.

Thing is, so many keys to successful recovery go against the very core of the elite athlete's mind. "You can be the best. You can win this race. On your own."

She began journaling, [forgive the frenetic notes] speaking to her alcoholism, "I continue to fight with you every day. I dream about you. You have brought the

worst in me. I lie. I self-loathe. There are times I think I have you where I want you. Then you reach out and pull me further down."

January, 2012. Drinking not-coffee from a coffee cup and hearing her very aware friends, "what do we do with her now?"

Fun fact, severe alcohol withdrawal can be fatal, often 2 - 3 days after the last drink.

Carrie was laid off when returning from her ninety days in rehab. On her 96th day of sobriety she was facing a judge who was telling her that all she needed to do to have all her parental rights back was stay sober for two years.

Fast forward through three more treatments to 2012 when everything finally clicked after everything was finally broken.

She found her sobriety and her voice for treatment advocacy.

In 2013 she was contacted by [Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation](#) to interview for a position.

She got the job. With it, she got a set of keys to her first rehabilitation facility and she got a first paycheck from the treatment culture she had been paying for the last few years.

Carrie wrapped up with a call to action. To remove barriers to treatment. To normalize recovery.

Most people that avoid treatment do so not for expense but out of shame or embarrassment stigma.

Q: How often to people relapse?

A: "It's hard to offer concrete numbers," says Carrie. She then offered a personal example she had gotten from someone like Lori Anderson checking in to see how Carrie was doing. "I'm doing great," she speaks back into the phone with a drink in her hand.

Lori, by the way, is a Peer Recovery Support Specialist at Hazelden Betty Ford here in Newberg.



"Intelligence, will power, affluence ... none of those make recovery successful until you find yourself ready to put as much into being sober as you did finding the next drink.