

Jewish Organization Helps Addicts Get Freedom They Can't Find Elsewhere

Addiction in our country seems to be getting worse and worse. But thankfully, many groups are reaching out to the broken, and as a result, addicts are turning their lives around. My friend and neighbor, Michal Osteen, is aware of one such outreach group called Beit T'Shuvah. And she knows addicts who received help there that they couldn't find elsewhere.

I recently had the opportunity to interview her about Beit T'Shuvah's transformative musical, *Freedom Song*. Michal—a Jew who was born in Israel but has lived in the U.S. for almost 40 years—tells me that this musical uses the story of Passover to expose the pervasiveness of addiction and the effects it has on families across the nation.

"Freedom Song is a live show performed by actual addicts in recovery," she tells me. "About 16 of them tell their stories of recovery, their fight to live in a free society with freedom from addiction. As we know, so many people are dying from overdoses now in our country, and it has become a horrible disease."

During our interview—which you can [click here](#) or scroll down to listen to—Michal explained that Beit T'Shuvah aims for a more holistic method of recovery. The ministry combines Jewish spirituality, psychotherapy, addiction counseling, the 12 steps and creative arts to help recovering addicts engage their minds, bodies and souls for thorough healing.

Perhaps, if you're like me, you don't initially think of the Jewish community as having a problem with addiction. But addiction doesn't discriminate against religion or social class.

"This is the mess of addiction," Michal says. "And this is why so many—both in the Christian world and the Jewish world—kids are ashamed to ask for help. Because they think, *Oh, we have to be perfect families. We have to go to college. We're doctors and physicians and educated people.* And yet, in this program, I have met young people who just graduated from medical school, who are extremely bright and from great families and who haven't necessarily had trauma in their lives. So it's a disease that hits everybody."

Beit T'Shuvah is located in Los Angeles, but the *Freedom Song* musical tours around the country. In fact, this month it will be performing in various cities in Florida, including West Palm Beach, Miami, Boca Raton, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando and Sarasota.

"They have a *Shabbat* dinner on Friday night that is open to the whole community," Michal says. "And the kids serve you dinner, including people who are homeless and come off the street, but also amazing families."

The admission price is \$5 for students and \$8 for adults, but Michal says they won't turn anyone away for lack of funds. The group just wants as many people as possible to hear its message of freedom from addiction.

"It's a show about getting free from addiction," Michal says. "And at the same time, it's a family celebrating Passover, freedom of humanity, coming out of Egypt and finding freedom. So it kind of relates it back to maybe religion and maybe something that speaks to everybody from any religion."

I know there are many Christians in Central Florida and, really, all over the country who have a heart for Israel and the Jewish people. If you share that heart, I encourage you to support this program and attend this event if you are able. If you live too far away, contact Jessica Fishel about getting *Freedom Song* performed in your community. Just call

310-204-5200 or email her at jfishel@.

You can learn more about *Freedom Song* and Beit T'Shuvah at . Be sure to watch the trailer for the musical by clicking here. Michal says the program empowers people to break off the shame that keeps them from truly finding freedom.

"There's no shame of being addicted there," she says. "It is actually pride of becoming free of addiction, and community kind of hugs you and helps you get back on your feet and get jobs."

Click the podcast below to hear my interview with Michal, and let's pray that the freedom from addiction God alone provides sweeps America!