



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## Burn Model System Newsletter

Spring 2007



### Support for Recovery

Recovering from a burn injury, no matter the size or extent, can be challenging and frustrating. One of the frustrations is that both physical and emotional recovery can take longer than a person anticipates and continues well past

hospital discharge. Once a person leaves the hospital, survivors and family members often feel alone. It can be helpful to speak with someone who has suffered a similar injury and has successfully conquered the many challenges.

The HMC Burn Center offers several resources - the Burn Injury Information Group, peer support with trained volunteers (see Survivor Profile below), and the outpatient Burn and Plastic Surgery Center Clinic. The Clinic can be reached at 206 - 731-5735.

### Burn Injury Information Group

Our support group for those injured and recovering from a burn injury continues to meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 7-8:30pm in the 8th floor conference

room, East Hospital at Harborview Medical Center. This group is open to all burn survivors and their families. Upcoming meeting dates include June 21, July 19, and

August 16, 2007. This group is sponsored by the Northwest Burn Foundation and it is available free of charge. Directions may be found on our website.

### Survivor Profile: Kimberly Holt

At 17 years old, I was burned over 65% of my body as a result of gasoline being poured on an open fire. I spent the next 95 days recovering at the Burn Center. Upon returning home, I imagined returning to my pre-injury routine in a short while. That was not the case.

The healing process takes time and varies for each person. Talking with people who have "been there" really made the difference for me - especially in my attitude. These talks helped me to move from feeling like a victim to that of survivor.

The beauty of peer support is

that we all have much in common, despite our differences. Some of us were burned as children, others as teenagers or adults and by different causes. However, by working together - through the peer support program, we can support one another and provide needed guidance.

The best medicine will always be prevention. However, if one is injured, the peer support volunteers are available for emotional support. It is not always an easy road, but we are here to assist on that road to complete healing and recovery.

Kim Holt is one of several peer support volunteers at Harborview.

### Research Update

In the May/June 2007 issue of the Journal of Burn Care & Research, we reported on the time to school re-entry for children treated at the Harborview Burn Center. Prior to this report, only two other studies had been published concerning this issue.

What we found:

- time to return to school was quite short - on average - 10 days after hospital discharge
- factors associated with a longer return to school time included longer hospital stays, age of the child, and gender (male or female)

Future research efforts will focus on the child's experience once they return to school and may include academic performance, anxiety, distress, time spent in the nurses' office, and school attendance.

Dr. Klein, Associate Director of the Burn Center, was the senior author.

### Did You Know?

Every year in the U.S., 40,000 people are hospitalized for treatment of their burn injuries; typically 70% are males. (American Burn Association, 2007).

### Visit our website at

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwnidrr/> for more information.

To reach the UW/HMC Burn Center Clinic, call 206-731-5735.