



News from ACORN

December 2013

ACORN Food Dependency Recovery Services, PO Box 50126, Sarasota, FL 34232
www.foodaddiction.com | info@foodaddiction.com | (phone) 941-378-2122

Post-Holiday Weekend Retreat January 10 – 12, 2014

The holidays can be a difficult time for food addicts. Whether one maintains a strong abstinence, has problems with their food or is just becoming aware of their need for more help – all of these can benefit from the inspiration, education and support available at an ACORN food addiction recovery weekend. The recovery workshop is open to all ACORN alumnae and to those who have never attended an ACORN event. Feel free to invite a friend or perhaps someone you know who may be interested – you do not need to have a current abstinence to attend.

Modeled after the old “recharge recovery” weekends, the event begins Friday night with a community circle, individual introductions and a presentation by ACORN staff. On Saturday there will be small groups led by ACORN facilitators to support participants to get clear about individual food abstinence, identify blocks to recovery and experience food addiction recovery. Saturday evening will offer an open, food-related Twelve Step meeting. Sunday morning will focus on the spiritual solution to food addiction and support for individual recovery plans.

The fee is \$200. This does not include meals or lodging although participants are encouraged to bring meal(s) with them. Assistance with where to purchase abstinent food and suggestions for overnight accommodations are available.

For information or to register, please see www.foodaddiction.com or contact Raynea McCumber at 941-378-2122.

We hope to see you January 10 – 12, 2014.

If you are not currently receiving ACORN's electronic E-News bi-weekly, send your email address to rmccumber@foodaddiction.com

ACORN Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

ACORN Food Dependency Recovery Services is beginning its 20th year of service to food addicts. Founded in the Fall of 1994, ACORN was started to fill some of the need when private health insurance companies stopped reimbursing for food addiction treatment and almost all of the residential treatment programs of the time were forced to close.

In its first year, ACORN offered 36 weekend recovery recharges in the Midwest and up and down the East Coast of the United States. The first residential Primary Intensive was held later that year in Washington, Pennsylvania.



Phil Werdell & Mary Foushi

To date, more than 2500 middle and late stage food addicts have participated in an ACORN Primary Intensive®, over 99 percent becoming rigorously abstinent and detoxified by the end of the five days. One third have remained abstinent since leaving one of these workshops. In 2005, the newly formed Food Addiction Institute asked ACORN to administer its three-year, experiential training program which offers in-depth teaching of this model to health professionals.

The ACORN model – standing for the “Addictive Concept of Overeaters Recovery Needs” – is presented as a promising practice in the new medical textbook *Food and Addiction: A Comprehensive Handbook*, Brownell and Gold (eds), Oxford University Press, 2012.

ACORN services are for people in all stages of recovery from chemical dependency on food: those just beginning, those in relapse and those in long-term recovery.

We wish to express our deep gratitude for your ongoing support of this work. We trust 2014 will be a year of peaceful abstinence, recovery and service.

Professional Training Primary Intensive© for Continuing and New Members

The next Professional Training Primary Intensive© will be January 17 – 22, 2014 in Bradenton, Florida. The Professional Training is a three-year experiential certification program of the Food Addiction Institute, administered by ACORN. It begins by learning the addictive model of treatment for food “from the inside out,” then assisting experienced professionals in an internship and, finally, creating a special contribution to food addiction healing based on your own interests, strengths and learning goals.

To date, 50 people have joined the professional training and almost half of those are now certified food addiction professionals. About 25 trainees and graduates are now working or have recently worked in the field. Here is just some of the work done by professional trainees and graduates:

- Founding Gladness House, a recovery place for food addicts in Philadelphia.
- Co-facilitating ACORN Primary Intensives© around the country and abroad.
- Working in private practice, mostly with food addicts.
- Starting an out-patient treatment center in Iceland.
- Working at a residential food addiction program in Texas.
- Coaching and facilitating workshops for people doing indepth First Step work.
- Coordinating and assisting in “3-days with Phil” workshops in D.C.
- Leading weekly workshops in Chicago focused on inventorying food slips.
- Participating in the founding group of the International Society of Food Addiction Professionals.
- Developing a food addiction course in Jordan for newcomers to recovery.
- Developing a recovery house in Asheville, North Carolina.
- Creating a new Intuitive Painting workshop for food addicts.
- Leading weekend workshops of the Food Addiction Institute on a donation basis in Richmond.
- Serving as Chair of the Food Addiction Institute’s Board of Directors.

The January Professional Intensive is open to continuing members of the training and to new members. There will be an optional extra day at the beginning of the Intensive where we introduce a new workshop on **Food Addiction Recovery and Intuitive Painting** (see page 8). It will focus on the expressive arts as a tool for spiritual development.

Members of the FAI/ACORN training must attend at least two primary intensives a year; one of which must be with members of the training. The fee for the program is \$1000/year plus the cost of workshops attended.

Attendees do not need to be enrolled in the training to attend this intensive. In fact, we welcome those not in the training to attend. They will have the benefit of working with the training group, and it provides an opportunity for trainees to assist in process groups and make presentations.

Additional information and registration is available at www.foodaddiction.com or by contacting Raynea McCumber at 941-378-2122.

"The Professional Training was the most powerful experience yet for me! Being with other professionals committed to helping still suffering food addicts brought me to a new level of honesty, vulnerability and abstinence. Thank you so much for that wonderful gift!" - Anne

 **The FAI/ACORN Professional Training program is open to new members, ACORN alumnae, and those seeking recovery.**

 **You do not have to enroll in the Training Program to join us for this event.**

 **Facilitated by Phil Werdell and Mary Foushi.**

 **Guest lecture by Dr. Vera Tarman.**

Program Dates:

**January 17 – 22, 2014
October 10 – 15, 2014**



Recovery and the Holidays

The winter holidays – Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Years, the Super Bowl, Valentine’s Day – each have their own special social and religious meaning. In America, commercial interests often emphasize the food. Most often, it is the very foods that are most dangerous for food addicts that are pushed through advertising and by friends and family. This is a time to redouble our recovery support and to remember that consuming our binge foods is not really the most important or meaningful aspect of any holiday.

What can we do? Here are some suggestions from ACORN alumni:

- **Commit** daily to a sponsor to put abstinence and God, *as we understand God*, first, absolutely.
- Think about and plan **abstinent** meals for holiday celebrations.
- **Call** someone before and after going to the grocery store, to family gatherings and to work-related parties – frequently referred to as “**bookending**.”
- Double up on **meetings** – go to extra meetings.
- Bring a fellow **abstinent** food addict with you to difficult social events.
- Use the **Twelve Steps** to work through difficult problems on a spiritual basis.
- **Plan** special abstinent gatherings to celebrate with other food addicts and non-food addicts (they may not want to overeat either).
- Write on the **spiritual** meaning you can bring to each holiday, for example: Which of the Twelve Steps do you relate to the day?
- **If in doubt, leave it out.** If a situation looks like it could put your abstinence in danger, just don’t do it.

Have an Abstinent and Delightful holiday season!

THE ACORN STAFF
Phil, Mary and Raynea



Phil Werdell & Sandi Kaiser



Dana Dickson



Mary Foushi



Raynea McCumber

Thank You Local Volunteers for Your Service!



Dana Dickson, a registered nurse in Sarasota County, began her journey with ACORN by attending a Primary Intensive for her own recovery. She has been abstinent since December 15, 2011 and has maintained a 60 lb weight loss. Dana has attended several programs with ACORN including beginning her FAI/ACORN Professional Training and was key in creating the local ACORN Recovery Group and the Food Addiction Coalition of Sarasota/Bradenton.

Dana often assists Mary and Phil at Primary Intensives, "3-Days with Phil" workshops, local lectures, presentations and educational opportunities. Dana contributes her time and assists with shopping, cooking and Aftercare Planning for intensive participants.

Tina Selinsky, is an abstinent food addict who has been part of the ACORN network for almost 20 years. She had the good fortune of meeting Phil Werdell when she was in treatment for food addiction at Glenbeigh Hospital of Tampa in 1991. With the help of ACORN staff, Tina has created a recovery house where people come to detoxify from their addictive foods and practice living abstintently in a supportive environment.



Tina hosts ACORN Primary Intensives© and "3 Days with Phil" workshops in her home. She states enthusiastically, "I have the privilege of experiencing firsthand the life-changing effects that ACORN has on people's lives." By participating in the ACORN Professional Training Program and serving on the Board of Directors of the Food Addiction Institute, she hopes to help spread the message of recovery from food addiction to society at large. She states, "I work in a clinical capacity at a drug and alcohol treatment center. There are many services available to our clients to help them recover from drug addiction and alcoholism. I believe we can make similar strides in the area of food addiction so more food addicts can get the help they so desperately need... ACORN and the Food Addiction Institute are key players in making this happen."

Tina graduated from Harvard University in 1991 with a Master's in Education. Her undergraduate work was completed in 1988 at Smith College where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in mathematics and French.

Create a Local "3-Days with Phil"

"3-Days with Phil"

If you or someone you know would like a "3 Days with Phil" in your area and/or are interested in coordinating it, here are the particulars.

2013
Dec 20 – 22
Jan 24 – 26

1. Find a place where ACORN-style work can be done (e.g. a large room in someone's home or a space that can tolerate loud noise).
2. Recruit three to five participants (or three couples) for the workshop.
3. Collect \$1,500 workshop fee in advance from each participant.
4. Provide directions to meeting space and options for lodging. Group members are responsible for their own food.

2014
Feb 7 – 9
Feb 15 – 17
Mar 21 – 23 (Couples)
April 10 – 12
April 25 – 27
May 2 – 4
June 27 – 29
July 18 – 20
Aug 8 – 10
Sept 26 – 28



Coordinators receive \$200 per participant to coordinate this event. It works best to identify a minimum of three people who would like to attend before scheduling a date with Phil. **To request a date, please contact the ACORN office at 941-378-2122 or email rmccumber@foodaddiction.com.**

2013 Highlights and Advancements

- 🌿 **Phil Werdell** taught the first undergraduate course on food addiction, “Food Addiction: Nature, Assessment and Treatment,” (3 credits) in the **Addiction Studies** program of Springfield College’s School of Human Services in Tampa. The faculty went on to approve a second course, “Public Health Strategies for Obesity and Food Addiction,” which will be added to the curriculum next year.
- 🌿 At his 50th college reunion, **Phil Werdell** and **Mary Foushi** were invited to offer a lecture on food addiction for the **class of ’63 at Yale University**. The subject of the lecture was “Why Food Addiction Is a Domestic Priority in the United States.” They are working to make this available in written form.
- 🌿 **Esther Helga Gudmundsdottir**, founding Director of the innovative MFM outpatient food addiction program in **Iceland**, organized Matarheill, a group of professionals committed to advocate for food addicts nationally. A primary issue on the agenda is for government health services to recognize food addiction and to fund professional treatment for food addicts.
- 🌿 In **Amman, Jordan**, **Raja Batarseh**, graduate of the FAI/ACORN Professional Training, developed a seminar model to introduce new people to the differences between obesity, eating disorders and food addiction. Raja created an informative and inspirational PowerPoint presentation for those new to food addiction in Arab countries.
- 🌿 **Michael Prager**, author of *Fat Boy, Thin Man* and FAI newsletter editor, has been writing a blog on food addiction and sustainability for several years. This year, Michael added “**10 Words or Less**,” personal interviews with leading researchers and clinicians in the food addiction movement. See his interview with Mary Foushi at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fk9jZRkbMPc>.
- 🌿 **Bitten Jonsson of Sweden**, developed a method of diagnosing food addiction as a chemical dependency, and is training professionals to use this diagnostic tool.
- 🌿 A new FAI project in **Sarasota/Bradenton** is to identify the best practices that support food addiction prevention and treatment and to systematically bring them to one city. Participants from the Sarasota monthly Recovery Meals formed a local **Food Addiction Coalition**. Ideas for the coalition include: to develop a media campaign; continue to educate health professionals; explore options for a food addiction track in local drug and alcohol treatment programs; encourage sugar-free zones in schools; educate weight loss and bariatric surgery programs about food addiction; and, work with grocery stores and restaurants to make it easier for consumers to find foods that are free of addictive substances.
- 🌿 In July, the **FAI/ACORN Professional Training** program combined with the **Florida School of Addiction Studies** to offer a two-day (10 CEU) didactic class on food addiction treatment. Both members of the training and the drug and alcohol counselors in attendance gave high evaluations of the program. Due to this positive response, the 2014 schedule offers a four-day (20 CEU) workshop that includes more time to focus on specific clinical and public education issues.
- 🌿 Many participants in **ACORN’s Primary Intensive®** remain in Sarasota from one week to several months following the intensive. By doing this, participants can continue to work individually with Phil – particularly on challenging food addiction denial – and can attend local Twelve Step meetings and recovery events with Mary and Phil.

“Thank you, Phil, for all your research. I knew I was addicted but could be in denial without the scientific proof.”

2013 Highlights and Advancements *continued...*

- ✿ The **American Psychiatric Association** (APA) issued the fifth edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5), used by doctors and health insurance providers as an authority on treatment and reimbursement. For the first time, Binge Eating Disorder is listed as a formal diagnosis, and the introduction to the Eating Disorder section explicitly points out that some eating disorders present as substance use disorders. This is essentially a formal recognition of food addiction.
- ✿ In addition to actively working for Binge Eating Disorder and food addiction as a Substance Use Disorder in the **DSM-5**, the Food Addiction Institute (FAI) initiated work with three universities who are leaders in the area of food addiction:
 - At the invitation of **Dr. Mark Gold** at **University of Florida**, Phil Werdell and FAI board members Mary Foushi and Dana Dickson gave a Grand Rounds lecture proposing a food addiction track in their five-year impaired physician's treatment program.
 - Esther Helga Gudmundsdottir, Nicole Sleeman, M.D., and Phil Werdell consulted on food addiction with the **University of Florida** outpatient eating disorder program.
 - At the invitation of Dr. Douglas Ziedonis, Phil Werdell and Dr. Mark Cheren, FAI Board member, are participating as part of the School of Medicine's Food Addiction Research Group at the **University of Massachusetts**. One project is to develop pamphlets that physicians and other health professionals can give to food addicted clients. Another project is to assess bariatric surgery candidates for food addiction and to consider a special food addiction track for those who qualify.
 - **Dr. Nicole Avena**, leading food addiction researcher at Columbia University, and FAI are developing a research fundraising project. One goal is to fund Dr. Avena's animal research on practical issues of concern to food addicts, such as, potentially addictive qualities of artificial sweeteners and stevia. Another goal is to support Phil Werdell's qualitative research work on food addiction denial, based on ACORN participants' written incidents of powerlessness.
- ✿ Initial research by **Ashley Gerhardt** of the University of Michigan has found that about half of several test groups of those with Binge Eating Disorder score at the top of the **Yale Food Addiction Scale**, thus, probably having a Substance Use Disorder to food. No evidence to the contrary has been reported to date.
- ✿ Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, **Michael Moss**, published ***Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us***. The book hit the New York Times bestseller list with its explosive revelation that the seven largest food companies in the U.S. met behind closed doors in 1999 to hear a case from one company executive that the industry is partially responsible for the obesity crisis and that these corporations should publicly accept this responsibility and take constructive action, as an industry, to change the situation. They decided not to do this. Rather, they continued – and still continue – to find ways to make processed foods most “blissful.”
- ✿ Drs. **Kelly Brownell**, Duke University, and **Robert Lustig**, University of California, spoke at the 2013 annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Brownell's classic book, ***Food Fight***, first introduced the idea of a sugar tax. Dr. Lustig's new book, ***Fat Chance***, based on his YouTube lecture “Sugar, The Bitter Truth,” argues that sugar and refined fats should be treated as toxic drugs, i.e. as a controlled substance. The doctors argue that there are grounds for lawsuits against the food industry for contaminating the nation's food supply – 80 percent of processed food contains added sugar, fat or salt.
- ✿ Paul van der Velpen, the head of **Amsterdam's health service**, says sugar is an addictive drug that should be “tightly regulated.” “Just like alcohol and tobacco, **sugar is actually a drug**,” he wrote in a column on the agency's website. “The use of sugar should be discouraged. And users should be made aware of the dangers.”

2014 Schedule of Events

To register online go to www.foodaddiction.com

DATE	EVENT	COST	LOCATION	CONTACT INFO
2013				
Dec 14 – 19	Primary Intensive© Includes meals.	\$1,950 or \$1,700	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Dec 20 – 22	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
2014				
Jan 10 – 12	Post-Holiday Weekend Retreat Fri: 7:00 – 9:00 pm Sat: 9:00 am – noon and 1:30 – 4:30 pm Sun: 9:00 am – noon (Optional Saturday Evening Open Twelve Step Meeting 7:00 – 9:00 pm) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$200	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Jan 17	Food Addiction & Intuitive Painting Workshop led by Kaylina Michaela 9:30 am – 4:30 pm (Open to anyone)	\$60	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Jan 17 – 22	Professional Training/Primary Intensive© <i>Open to new members and non-trainees</i> Includes meals.	\$1,950 or \$1,700	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Jan 24 – 26	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Homewood, IL (Chicago Area)	Amie Fritz AmieFritz@comcast.net 312-371-1074
Feb 7 – 9	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Feb 15 – 17	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Reston, VA (DC Area)	Colleen Small Colleen_Small@verizon.net 703-309-7766 Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Mar 11 – 16	Primary Intensive© Includes meals.	\$1,950 or \$1,700	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Mar 18	“Addiction is Addiction” - Lecture at Hazelden Foundation <i>Open to public – no registration necessary One Free CE</i>	\$0	Naples, FL	Hazelden www.hazelden.org 800-257-8710
Mar 21 – 23	Couples “3-Days with Phil and Mary” (group limited to 3 couples) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$2,000 per couple	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
April 10 – 12	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Amman, Jordan	Raja Batarseh rajabg@yahoo.com 00-96265922871 Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122

“Over the six years of struggle with my food, by the grace of God and the efforts of the ACORN staff, I am abstinent today and I have another chance for sanity. I’ve spent an enormous amount of time working on my spirituality, but it wasn’t useful in dealing with my addiction – that had to come first.”

DATE	EVENT	COST	LOCATION	CONTACT INFO
April 25 - 27	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
May 2 – 4 (Tentative)	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Homewood, IL (Chicago Area)	Amie Fritz AmieFritz@comcast.net 312-371-1074
June 27 - 29	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
July 1 – 6	Primary Intensive© Includes meals.	\$1,950 or \$1,700	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
July 18 – 20	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Aug 8 – 10 (Tentative)	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Reston, VA (DC Area)	Colleen Small Colleen_Small@verizon.net 703-309-7766 Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Sept 26 – 28	3-Days with Phil (group limited to 5 participants) Does not include meals & lodging.	\$1,500	Homewood, IL (Chicago Area)	Amie Fritz AmieFritz@comcast.net 312-371-1074
Oct 6 – 9	Introduction to Food Addiction Course Florida School of Addiction Studies Facilitated by Phil Werdell & Mary Foushi	TBA	Tampa, FL	FSAS.org (813) 626-3831
Oct 10	Food Addiction & Intuitive Painting Workshop led by Kaylina Michaela 9:30 am – 4:30 pm (Open to anyone)	\$60	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122
Oct 10 – 15	Professional Training Primary Intensive© <i>Open to new members and non-trainees</i> Includes meals.	\$1,950 or \$1,700	Bradenton, FL	Raynea McCumber rmccumber@foodaddiction.com 941-378-2122

Lodging is available at Bradenton, Florida Events for \$45 per night (private home)

Note: New Events will be added to the Schedule of Events. Please visit www.foodaddiction.com for updates.

Introducing New ACORN Workshops

Couples “3-Days with Phil & Mary” – Up to three couples work with Phil Werdell and Mary Foushi for three days (9:00 am to 4:30 pm daily). The focus is on abstinence, codependency and relationship issues. Open to food addicted and non-food addicted couples. The cost is \$2,000 per couple; does not include meals and lodging. Join us **March 21, 22 and 23** in Bradenton, Florida.

Food Addiction & Intuitive Painting – Kaylina Michaela is an Intuitive Process Painting facilitator and founder of Sacred Space Painting, Asheville's Intuitive Painting Studio. She has trained extensively with Michele Cassou. It is her great pleasure to share the joy of creative exploration with fellow food addicts in recovery. **The workshop is open to food addicts and all health professionals.** The fee is \$60; does not include meals and lodging. Join Kaylina on **January 17** for the first of these new workshops.

"In this work, we surrender our will to the creative process similarly to how we have to surrender our will as addicts in life. The goal in a process painting is not the finished product but the rich inner journey of self discovery that ensues. We learn to go beneath the mind's judgments and to trust our intuitive connection with ourselves and the God of our understanding."