



## Support group offers help to parents of addicts



By [Nina Criscuolo](#) Published: November 17, 2016, 7:19 am



AVON, Ind. (WISH) — The heroin epidemic in central Indiana continues to plague families, especially parents of people addicted to that drug and others. Now, there’s an expanding support group offering parents specific education and encouragement in the fight against drugs.

PAL stands for Parents of Addicted Loved Ones. It’s a program that started in Phoenix about ten years ago, but just recently started expanding across the United States and here in Indiana

“This is risky business and it’s tough, but when the parents get educated and they start treating their sons and daughters differently and they start responding differently... Then we started to see the results,” Kim Humphrey said.

“Things start clicking. You hear things through the educational part and ‘Oh, that’s why. That’s what happening.’ Then you start hearing other people share and that’s where you don’t feel so alone,” Robin Pickett said.

Pickett and Humphrey live hundreds of miles apart, but at one time each was forced to deal with the same tragedy when they learned their children had become addicted.

Humphrey was an experienced police officer in Arizona and happily married when he discovered his teenage son and adult son were both addicted.

“And here we are dealing with heroin in our family,” Humphrey said.

Soon he and his wife realized the toll the situation was taking on them.

“For several years, we struggled. We did not know what to do. We tried everything,” Humphrey said.

That’s when the Humphreys found a meeting for Parents of Addicted Loved Ones.

“This problem is affecting so many people that people are literally going online and they’re just searching. What do I do? What do I do? My son, my daughter is involved in drugs,” Humphrey said.

At the meeting, Humphrey found support and also advice, not on how to change his child, but how to work on himself with the help of PAL’s founder Mike Speakman, a licensed substance abuse counselor. Speakman said after decades of working in the addiction field, he felt a special need to help parents.

“Over the years, I started to notice there’s something different here with the parents... We need the help of other people that can see things in us that we can’t see in ourselves,” Speakman said.

Humphrey has now taken over the program, formed a non-profit organization for Parents of Addicted Loved Ones and is chairman of the board. Those at an Avon meeting asked for privacy and did not want to be shown on camera, but Pickett, an Avon resident, said she wants to send a message to all parents.

“Before I started attending these meetings, I was a mess. I would say I was in crisis,” Pickett said.

Now, dozens of parents gather in this church each Thursday night. Other groups gather at four additional locations across Indiana.

“I want them to know that they’re not alone, that we understand, that all have similar experiences. It’s not our fault and we really don’t have the power to change other people,” Pickett said.

Still many of these parents, Pickett included, said when they made changes to themselves, that’s when something changed with their child. And now as some celebrate sobriety, PAL has become a permanent part of their lives.

“What I’ve learned in PAL is for me and it helps me in all of my relationships,” Pickett said.

“What I found there was hope and there are people out there that can help me,” Humphrey said.

The PAL meeting in Avon is held on Thursday evenings from 6:30 until 8 at White Lick Presbyterian Church. The address is 2300 N, 600 E, Avon.

PAL meetings are also available in Frankfort, Jamestown, Lebanon, and Crawfordsville. Any sober family member is welcome to attend, you don’t have to be a mother or father of a drug addict.

- **Parents of Addicted Loves Ones meeting locations and times**

St. Vincent Frankfort Hospital: 1300 S. Jackson St. , Frankfort IN, 46041

Wednesday Evenings

7:00-8:30pm

Old Union Church: 5681 S 500 W, Jamestown IN, 46147

Monday Evenings

6:30-8:00pm

Bible Baptist Church: 1530 Riley Road, Lebanon, IN. 46052

Tuesday Evenings

7:00-8:30pm

Trinity United Methodist Church: 110 S. Blair Street, Crawfordsville, IN. 47933

Thursday Evenings

6:30-8:00pm

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