

THE LA PORTE COUNTY
HERALD-ARGUS

Learning hope

Local woman tries to help others down the road to recovery

April 9, 2009

By CRAIG DAVISON

Staff writer

LA PORTE--These days, Daniela Troche is busy. There's work, board meetings, volunteering at the jail and leading a Bible study there as well.

The woman called "Sonshine" by almost everyone she knows said she was trying to slow down and even rein in her excitement a little so the words aren't racing out of her mouth.

She has a vision for a place women suffering from addiction and abuse can go upon exit from incarceration, a place called **WORTHY Women Recovery Home, Inc.** This place she's trying to make reality in La Porte is a place she once needed.

"I spent many years thinking I didn't matter. I spent many years being told I didn't matter," Troche said.

In the past 10 to 15 years, a lot has changed. She found sobriety, God and a passion for her life's work.

Troche spent most of the first eight years of her life in a German castle. It wasn't a fairy tale.

The castle was owned by the government and housed a children's home. She struggled with loneliness and isolation, not knowing her dad or where her mom was. Troche moved back in with her mother at age 8 and moved to the U.S. in 1973 after her mother



Daniela "Sonshine" Troche poses with her motorcycle Tuesday. Troche is working to make her vision for a women's recovery center in La Porte a reality. Photo by Bob Wellinski

married a Vietnam veteran named Michael Wood.

Troche started drinking before school at the age of 10. She began smoking cigarettes and, a few years later, became addicted to amphetamines. Troche said her mother didn't know how to handle her and Wood didn't know how to punish her except with violence.

Troche said she always blamed her troubles on her mother, not herself.

"It was all about poor, pitiful me," she said.

At 16, Wood told her he understood she had issues, but, "Kid, we have to go talk."

Troche said that talking to Wood was the first time she felt someone was able to listen to her. It was the first time she saw Wood

cry.

Although she later found out Wood turned to Christ a year before his death from cancer, that was not the turning point for Troche. She was angry with God.

More than a dozen years ago, Troche gave God a try. Her prayer was short -- she asked God to do His thing.

The transformation wasn't immediate. But she began to feel guilty about her drug use and wanted to drink less.

"It was a starting point," Troche said.

She's been sober for 13 years. Eleven years ago, she became a Christian.

In the past few years, Troche has been doing prison ministry with the Christian Motorcycles

Association and mentoring women who are struggling with some of the same issues she had. She earned a degree in business administration and took classes on non-profits. Last year she began teaching at the La Porte County Jail and then began teaching women's Bible study.

The class she teaches follows a program called **Moral Reconation Therapy**, a strategy to reduce re-incarceration.

Troche explained that one of the key parts is that individuals need to learn to take blame for their actions and how it affects their family, friends and health.

"They need to understand hope, they need to understand healing," she said. "People want to tell you all their hurts, but they don't want to heal. They don't know how to heal."

These are steps Troche had to learn herself; taking blame for actions and learning to heal.

She's learned to listen as well, like Wood did for her when she was a teen.

And this work has helped lead to the recovery home.

WORTHY Women became a tax-exempt non-profit organization

... one of the key parts is that individuals need to learn to take blame for their actions and how it affects their family, friends and health.

last month, but there are still steps to take. The organization's board needs to find a building to call home and raise funds to be able to create a substantial down payment on it.

Vice President Nicole Lopez of La Porte said that after seeing Troche mentor other women, she wanted to help. Lopez said that in her youth, she didn't have anyone to help her with her troubles.

"We need (a recovery home) so bad," Lopez said. "If we don't help these women, they're going to be re-incarcerated."

The **MRT program** will be the primary system used. Troche said she didn't want to push Jesus on anyone, just to love them like Jesus loves us.

The idea is to remind these women that no matter how hurt they've been, how much they feel unimportant, they still matter. They're worthy.

"Really all people want to do is feel loved," she said. "All people want to do is feel important."