

My name is Denise Krochta. I moved to Surry County a little over 2 years ago from California. My intention was to quietly retire in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and write and enjoy nature.

Before I left California I dissolved my corporation (Addicts Family Lifeline, Inc) and discontinued my 6 year weekly podcast on Webtalk Radio (" Addicted to Addicts: Survival 101") with the intention of changing my focus from helping families and loved ones of addicts to doing something more uplifting in my new community.

After being here I have realized that this community too needs education, resources, and support related to what I know a lot about, addiction and the opioid epidemic. Wherever I live I believe it is important to be a part of the community and to do whatever small part I can to help improve the health and wellbeing of the community. This has made me rethink my goals here.

My husband and I raised our boys in Florida and had what we considered a very normal life. Both boys excelled in school and ended up graduating at the top of their class, applying to the Universities of their choice, each being accepted early decision (not having to apply anywhere else) and happily going off to college one right after the other. Empty nest time, we thought.

Not long after this time, addiction gripped our family and we learned how devastating both emotionally and financially it is. As a researcher I realized there was not much information for families for help and also how big the stigma was around alcoholism and addiction. Through my experience over the next few years I wrote a book to help families navigate through this grueling process and produced the aforementioned radio show hoping to help others in the same unsettled world as mine. Addiction wreaked havoc on our family and almost all lives around us. That's what it does.

From knowing very little about the topic of addiction and prescription drug misuse and abuse I have, because of my personal experience, spent over 10 years researching about it and interviewing experts all over the country on every topic related to this health crisis.

So, I have joined the office of Opioid Response of Surry County to try to help to improve the health of our county by educating, making those who need them aware of resources, and offering support. I will be soon starting a podcast specific to Surry County which will be posted on the website, I will be taking questions from the community and answering them in a weekly column in the Tribune, and will be out in the community whenever and wherever necessary to help make this something easier to talk about and to work together to help Surry County to be an even better place to thrive than it is already.

Surry County Cares. Please check out our website surrycountycares.com for resources and support. Feel free to send questions and thoughts to me at krochtad@co.surry.nc.us

Feel free to email me anonymously if necessary if you would like to pose a question for the weekly column or get more information about what Surry County has to offer that you might not find on the website.

Together we can make a big difference!

Denise Krochta is the author of the book "Sweat: A Practical Plan for Keeping Your Heart Intact While Loving an Addict".