

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a community comment.

I'm still reeling from the news that Philip Seymour Hoffman died on Sunday from an apparent drug overdose.

I worked with Mr. Hoffman when he was the Artistic Director of an off-Broadway theater company—I was their press agent. And he directed two shows that I worked on between 1999-2002 before I moved back to the west coast.

During those years, Philip Seymour Hoffman had not quite broken in to the big time but followers of indie films and the New York theater scene knew him well. He was a talented, caring, dedicated actor and director and was the consummate professional.

And, he was sober. I noticed right way that he drank only ice water at company parties and opening nights. He talked program to other actors and playwrights and while he hadn't publicly acknowledged it at that time, he worked at his sobriety.

There were so many reasons to admire him. Living sober in the theater world was one of them.

He came out to the press later as a recovering alcoholic and last year he did a brief stint in rehab after relapsing with prescription pain killers.

He had everything to live for. 3 kids, a successful career, a new series beginning production for Showtime. And he was loved and admired by anyone who knew him and by those who felt like they knew him through his incredible talent.

So why would a person in the prime of his life, in the prime of his career, overdose on heroin? That speaks to the power of addiction. Addiction doesn't care about what you have or don't have, it only cares to take you down.

The recent meeting about how to deal the growing meth addiction our County took on the subject—what do we do, what can we do, about our meth epidemic.

The death of Philip Seymour Hoffman underscores what seems like the insurmountable task of figuring out how to deal with addiction.

What will help? Is it education? Is it medical assistance? Is it stamping out poverty? Is it taking away the source of the addiction? All of those things? None of those things? It's beyond frustrating—but let's not give up.

I want to end on a positive note today. We have in Humboldt County a most remarkable person. He is humble, he is making a difference. He is commenter on this station. He was just awarded the Tom Cooke Award from the Eureka Chamber of Commerce for his work at the Humboldt Office of Education. He is Jon Sapper. Jon is a Rotarian who spearheaded an effort to build a well in Tanzania, he is an architect of the Decade of Difference, he cares a great deal about his community and serves on the McLean Foundation Board, and he is committed to the economic health of our County. Congratulations to the Eureka Chamber for recognizing his contributions to our County, and thank you Jon, for your unfaltering spirit.

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