

Coffee Cup

A Newsletter for Valley Hope Alumni and Friends



VALLEY HOPE

Fall/Winter 2010



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Association News

Journey People and Destination People

By: Ken Gregoire, Ph.D.
President/CEO



Ken Gregoire

There are two distinctly different types of people at the far ends of a continuum.

Destination people proceed through life focused on destinations...end points that are very much desired. Destination people are very much goal oriented. They consciously set goals and are totally focused on achieving them. They ruminate about goals, devise strategies to achieve goals and day dream about how good life will be when a goal is achieved. Their focus is often very narrow, as can be the scope of their interests. They map out their journey, anticipate barriers and attempt to reach their destination in the shortest possible time. All that they see, all that they do, all that they think about is getting to the destination. A delay in reaching a destination is very upsetting. Failure to reach a destination-catastrophic and devastating. The trip to a destination is a bother to destination people. They see, hear and sense very little on the journey that is not related to the destination.

Destination people, appear to be absent minded though in reality their memory is infallible when it relates to their desired destination. A journey for a destination person is a race and they become impatient with fellow travelers who can't keep pace or want to tarry to enjoy the ride. They are competitive and focus on winning. Ironically, destination people, after a brief period of exhilaration, often feel restless and even empty once the destination is achieved. They quickly find another destination and the race begins again. Destination people are cool people. They often accomplish great things. But, all too often they find themselves looking back with regret.

Journey people proceed through life focused on destinations too. It's just that the destination isn't the only thing. Sometimes it isn't even the thing, as journey people frequently change their destination somewhere during the journey. An object in the middle of a path would be an obstacle to overcome for a destination person. For a journey

person it might engender fascination and might become the best part of a journey. Time is not so important to journey people. A short trip can turn into a long trip without causing any distress. Failure to reach a destination likewise isn't always felt as a failure...sometimes it is cause for celebration. It's not that journey people don't have goals...they do, of course. And they can be remarkably adept at achieving goals. It's just that they seem to insist on enjoying, noticing and celebrating the trip. They often have an artist's eye and temperament. The artist has an eye for color, form, proportion and perspective and observes much on the journey that escapes destination people. The artist can easily lose consciousness of the destination while noticing the shades and juxtapositions of color and form in a landscape. Sometimes they reach their destination almost by accident. The journey person tends to live in the here and now. The journey person will see the eagle soaring overhead rather than obsess about the tasks and hurdles that need to be managed to reach the destination. The journey person instinctively knows the difference between a journey with an end point and one that stretches out indefinitely, a distinction that a destination person has to learn through loss and missed opportunity.

Journey people grasp the real challenge and joy of recovery, a journey that doesn't have a known destination, a journey that stretches out, that curves and twists and morphs, a journey that is to be enjoyed, that is full of mystery's to be solved, paradoxes to contemplate and simple joys and accomplishments. Journey people know that the recovery path actually has many destinations--meeting of new friends, hearing new jokes, seeing oneself from a variety of new vantage points, finding relief and freedom in an ever deepening sense of humility, filling more and more with every step of the journey with the sense of a power greater than self. So, if you are a journey person enjoy your journey in recovery, you are made for this trip. If you are a destination person look for the eagle overhead once and a while and the glory of the sunset on another sober day. I have heard many say that recovery is a journey not a destination.

Letters to the Editorial Committee

Notes, Cards and Letters from our readers:

I love the experience, strength and hope it's a powerful tool. I thank who ever put me on the list in the first place. God love you all and so do I.
~Brad T.

Keep up the great work, dedications and love! Thanks to Sid, Valley Hope in O'Neill and Narcotics Anonymous, Sept. 29, I will celebrate 20 years in Recovery!!!
~Dawn B.

A very good read! An excellent reminder that miracles happen every day!
~Mike C.

I particularly like to read the short notes written by newcomers in the program. "Out of the mouths of babes..." come the words of renewed HOPE that invigorates my own sobriety.
~Julie H.

Thank You, I Always look forward to the *Coffee Cup*.

~Gray W.

Valley Hope gave me the tools I needed to start my life again and I thank you for that.

~Linda N.

Welcome Christal Rose

"Hi! My name is Christal and my family consists of my two wonderful children - Jordan (16) and Lexi (12), my best friend, my husband Marty, and our little Jack Russell, Chase. I live in Norton, KS; however, this hasn't stopped me from being an AVID husker fan as I am a Nebraska born and bred gal! I am glad to be back at the corporate office of Valley Hope and look forward to working with you all!



Christal Rose

Holiday Traditions

A Collection from Valley Hope Association Employees

I once read a story about a woman who was trying to touch the sky. She extended her arms upward, but could never seem to get high enough off the ground to accomplish her goal. As she stretched and stretched, she realized that she was being held down, and when she looked she saw her mother below her, anchoring her feet with her two hands. She asked her mother, "Why are you holding me back?" Her mother looked upward at her daughter and said, "I'm not holding you back, dear. I'm steadying you so you can reach the stars." The young woman looked again and saw that she was standing on her mother's shoulders, and her mother was indeed providing her with support. She looked again and saw that her mother was also standing on the shoulders of her mother, and below her was a series of women steadying one another, as each reached higher and higher to the sky.

This is what it is like for me to participate in the holiday traditions of my family. At Christmas time I place my great-grandmother's nativity scene in an honored place in my living room. I make my grandmother's chicken and noodles and my mother's sugar cookies. We eat lefse and laugh about lutefisk. Our Christmas tree decorations include ornaments representing each phase of our lives. These include baseball playing reindeer, Lego sleds, Dalmatian firemen, a trombone playing elf, Michael Jordan taking a jump shot, and a bear hitting a golf ball from atop an ice cream sundae. I still throw tin foil icicles by the handful onto the tree, as my father and I would do, and let them drape themselves wherever they fall. A porcelain icicle, given to me by my mother after my father died, has a place of prominence in the middle of the tree and often catches the brunt of those made from tin foil. My grandmother used to look around the room at our circle of faces and smile and nod her head. As I look at the faces of our sons, our daughter-in-law, and our two granddaughters, I am reminded of my grandmother's look and I nod and smile my head. And I am also reminded that family traditions are a way of steadying ourselves and over time become stair steps that help us reach higher and higher, until one day we are all able to reach the stars.

~Juanita Gregoire, Clinical Director



Thanksgiving – Big Family meal with all the trimmings and then, of course, the Husker game and snacks on Friday. GO BIG RED! We also put up the Christmas décor and get our (real) Christmas tree; watch Charlie Brown's Thanksgiving cartoon

Christmas – Mom and I bake (and bake, and bake) trays of goodies for the neighbors and various parties; we all pile in the car and drive around looking at Christmas lights; spend time with family and friends and watch all the old classic Christmas cartoons and movies

Thank you for letting me participate!~Amy Elsbury

O'Neill Valley Hope



Our holiday family tradition is every Christmas Eve we go to my grandmother's in Hays. We always have meatballs, corn flake potatoes, green bean casserole and kuchen. For those of you that don't know what kuchen is it is a German dessert that is similar to a streusel. After we stuff ourselves we get to open presents.

~Melanie R, Human Resources

Growing up in a sometimes mobile Air Force family made traditional family gatherings during the holidays challenging to say the least. For as long as I can remember, one tradition we practiced during the holidays revolved around decorating the Christmas tree.

While my friends would share their excitement in decorating their Christmas trees in early December, I would remain quiet, sometimes jealous, sometimes in awe. I'd get to go to their homes, and witness the variety of ornaments and decorating techniques...from homemade and ornate ornaments to fake snow and silver stringy "icicles" thrown haphazardly over branches.

Our family would purchase a tree in mid-December - something pristine, something real. My Dad was one of those real tree "purists." None of these pretend aluminum, modern deals for us. We would sometimes even travel to Christmas tree farms and try and choose the best tree on the lot--not too tall, not too thin, not too lop-sided...it may be why the Charlie Brown Christmas Special hits home for me. So without regard for future punctured soles due to brittle drying out pine needles, we would purchase the hand chosen one and bring it home, where it would stand. Naked. Ornament-less. The house would be full of holiday decorations – but the tree remained untouched.

But then...Christmas Eve would come. Christmas Eve meant we could finally decorate the tree! It was tradition! Every Christmas Eve my Mom, Dad, sister and I would drop all activities and join together to unwrap each and every ornament, telling stories about each one that had special memories – maybe the cookie dough one we made that weighed 3 pounds, or the silk ribbon and satin one that was my grandmother's. This was time we spent together, as a family, without question. It was our time. And it was special.

When I started my own family, I asked my parents where our special, family tradition began. The answer was, not so special. Evidently, my parents schedule with the social holiday requirements involved in their military career made Christmas Eve one of the only available evening that remained open to spend together to decorate the tree. Contrary to my thinking that this was some old Welsh tradition brought over from the "old Country"...it was actually a result of a career...but nonetheless it was a tradition that was held dear to my heart.

~ Kathy Erbert

Director of Marketing/Customer Service



Combining the color red and food is a magical event. My family has a tradition in which I consider to be the greatest of them all! Husker football after turkey day! Now I know what you all are thinking...how you wish you could attend these, right? Our tradition consists of leftovers from the wonderful dinner the day before, having mom's bean dip, my brother's homemade salsa (yummy!) and everyone dressing in their best Husker attire. Even when we can't all be together to cheer on the Big Red, you can bet we are all making this at our own homes, and texting like mad throughout. This is a tradition that I hope to keep going with my kids and one day, enjoying it with my grandchildren as well....GO BIG RED!!!!

~ Christal Rose

Corporate Administrative Support Manager

Family Matters

By: Ella Kogl, BS, AAPS, Counselor
Moundridge

"I love you to death!" We say this as though it's a good thing yet that is what we're doing when we continue to enable. Learning to love in recovery is difficult after years of being in the active part of addiction. As the addict's attitudes and behaviors change in the progression of the disease, so do the attitudes and behaviors of those who love him/her: nagging, the silent treatment, hiding the keys, bailing out financially/legally, threats, etc. Based in fear and helplessness, the anger and resentments multiply as it seems there are no alternatives. I know the power of those feelings because I've been there, done that. As my husband's alcohol abuse progressed, my life reeled more and more out of control, until it seemed as though there was no way out and no tools to use to keep me from sliding further into my co-alcoholism.

I have found that learning to be supportive and caring without enabling is not an easy task. The fear and distrust don't just disappear; it takes time and work. Gaining information about the disease is a beginning, as it helps to understand that no one chooses to become addicted. Taking the time to attend Al-anon or Alateen meetings to share with others who have walked this path is a tremendous relief. Finding out that no one has to be alone in this turmoil allows the focus to become more directed toward personal recovery. Identifying a sponsor in Al-anon to help work the Twelve Steps is a way of releasing the anger that has built up over the years. And, possibly hardest of all, is the task of beginning to find balance in sharing responsibilities again. Letting go of those responsibilities that really belong to the addict, yet have been taken over by family and friends, means opening the door to trust even just a little.


Working together in recovery is a partnership that can strengthen the relationship, relieve the pressures of the past, and bring peace to the heart. Recovery doesn't mean there won't be problems and concerns; reality is that life is fraught with pitfalls. Learning tools to communicate openly and honestly with one another, identifying the problems and focusing on the solutions will ease the burdens. Choosing not to step into the chaos but rather walking through to the other side without reverting to old behaviors is what recovery is about. Families working together in recovery is one of the strongest units in our world today.

Although my husband did not maintain his sobriety and died from this disease through suicide, I have found serenity through the Twelve Step program of recovery. The help and support is there; each of us has only to reach out and say "Help me to learn to love in recovery."

Reflections

The Power of Choice

By: Tiffney Yeager, Ph.D., LP



Life is about choices. Every day we are faced with them. Some are little and may not even seem like "choices." What to have for breakfast...which shirt to wear...do I hit the snooze button one more time. Other choices are much larger, much more significant, and may affect our lives for years to come. These might include choices about career, family and of course, do I drink or use today/this hour/this minute?

My name is Tiffney Yeager and until recently, I worked for the corporate office of Valley Hope Association as a Clinical Supervisor. Although I was based out of the corporate office in Norton, KS, my position allowed me to visit treatment centers monthly and work with the local program directors and their treatment teams. I talked with patients and families, participated in treatment activities, and generally had a wonderful time at work.

I developed a number of additional skills while working for Valley Hope those six years. I learned to make coffee without flooding the break room. I learned how to hide small knick knacks in my bosses' office so that she would stumble upon them when she least expected to. I learned to read financial reports (sort of...). I learned that you can catch a bat with a cardboard box, but that it's better to have a coworker do it, when possible (and for those of you who might be interested, Curt Krebsbach, the Director of Training, is an accomplished bat "catch and release" professional). The only thing I failed miserably at was using the postage meter, but then it is about progress, right? I can tell you that my time at Valley Hope was wonderful. I worked with amazing people whose focus

was always on providing good patient care.

This past summer, I was faced with a decision. Not one of those small decisions like whether to go golfing instead of mowing my very overgrown lawn, but one of those really big, oftentimes scary decisions. I had an opportunity to make a major change in my life and marry a wonderful man. Unfortunately, this wonderful man lives in Georgia. If I made this decision, I would give up my career with Valley Hope, move away from all of the people I know and love, and move two children and myself halfway across the country to a state where I didn't know anyone else. I believe that life is about the journey so after much soul searching, I decided to take the risk and give it a try.

Now I will be the first to admit that any change is rife with struggles, some very unexpected. Even changes that appear positive from the outside often require some discomfort as you get used to them. Situations as wonderful as getting married, having a child, or getting a promotion at work may appear perfect on paper, but the reality is often very different. I have also found that I am one of those people who can get so wrapped up in the problems that I lose sight of the good in my life (I sure hope some of you can relate to this, or you will probably find this to be a boring article!). I have lived in Georgia for about three months and this is what I have learned:

- Hiring a moving company to move your things from one state to another can be an awful experience;
- In larger cities, enrolling children in school is very complicated and requires a lot of paperwork;
- The check-out lines at Wal-Mart are much longer than they were at the Pamida in Norton, KS;
- You have to get a Georgia driver's license before you can register your vehicle. Unfortunately, getting a driver's license

requires a trip to another county while registering your vehicle has to be done in your county of residence; and last but certainly not least...

·There are SCORPIONS in Georgia!!!

Now those of you from the South, please bear with me. I grew up in Nebraska, went to graduate school in North Dakota and lived in Kansas for the past 11 years. I have never seen a scorpion that wasn't in an aquarium or some exotic pet store. I thought they only lived in zoos and Egyptian tombs. When my seven year old daughter told me there was a scorpion in the play room, I thought "surely she has no idea what a scorpion looks like and it must be a big ant or something." But I am finding out again and again that I am not as smart as a fifth grader (or even a second grader) and there it was, walking across the play room floor. Although it was probably only about an inch long, at that moment it may as well have been the size of a basketball. I stared at it for a moment, completely at a loss regarding what to do next. You would have thought I found a lion in the basement I was so shocked. Fortunately, good sense prevailed and I did what seemed like the best idea at the time, I called my husband into the house to take care of it. My husband suggested that I should be happy that it wasn't a tarantula. Sometimes he is not as funny as he thinks he is!

I really do have a reason for sharing all of my recent challenges. Time and time again, I have realized that life is about choices. Not only do we make choices about actions, but we also make choices about how to react to the difficulties in our lives. When we went through our "moving company fiasco," I was so frustrated that I almost regretted getting married and moving. By the time I finally had the children enrolled in school and had both a Georgia driver's license and Georgia license plates, I was angry at Georgia (yep, the ENTIRE state was somehow out to get me) and had also decided that my new husband was to blame for all of the inconveniences I was facing. Then came Mr. Scorpion (who, by the way, apparently has some friends in the neighborhood). At that point, I was sure I was not cut out to be a Southerner. What I was losing sight of was the blessings in my life--those things that I have gained by moving to Georgia.

·I am married to a wonderful man who gets along fabulously with my children;

·I am living in a place where snow is infrequent and winters are temperate (and I hate the cold so that is a very nice perk);

·I am within easy driving distance of a mall and almost any kind of food I desire (it's hard to find Thai food in Western Kansas - believe me, I have looked!);

·I'm able to have more time with my children because I am not working full time;

·There are a lot of wonderful people in this part of the country;

·My children love their new school and all of the opportunities that a larger grade school can offer;

·and so on...

Every day as we make decisions, we also have to decide how we are going to feel about those decisions. Even something as simple as choosing to wear a white shirt is a decision you might quickly regret if spaghetti is on the menu for lunch. At each fork in the road, we decide not only which path to take, but also whether we are going to make the best of it or be disappointed when it doesn't work out exactly as we hoped it would. I know that my tendency is to worry and obsess when things don't work out the way I wished they would. But I also know that if I make the decision to make the best of any

situation, I am much more likely to feel good about the situation and good about myself. If I get spaghetti on my white shirt and I cannot get home to change, well, I guess that is a good excuse to go shopping for a new shirt after lunch.

The spaghetti metaphor also applies to recovery. Let's face it, there will be days that really stink. There will be days when it is hard to care about recovery and the easier solution seems like it requires a drink or some pills or a needle or a pipe. However, if you force yourself to focus on the good in your life (even if only one or two things come to mind), it is easier to have a few more moments of recovery. If you find it is hard to remember the positives when you are having a bad day, write them down and keep them in your wallet or purse. Include every blessing you can think of--family, friends, health, career, everything. When you are feeling overwhelmed and hopeless and ready to use, pull out that list and look at it. REALLY look at it. Think about each item on that list and smile every time you read an item that makes you even just a little happy. Stare at that list until you can go a little longer without using or drinking and then enjoy your moment of success...perhaps the peace you feel when you make the decision not to drink or use, at least at that moment, is another positive that you can add to your list. And I hope in time that recovery gets easier and that each of your lists gets too long to fit in your wallet or purse.

Valley Hope continues to be a big part of my life. I have transitioned from being a full time employee to serving as a part time contract employee. I am still in touch with my Valley Hope family and I still have the opportunity to work with patients (albeit indirectly). It really has become a perfect opportunity for me. However, it is very easy to forget the positives and start to think about the negatives. I can get very caught up in the things that aren't quite perfect and lose sight of the things that are wonderful. On any given day, something is likely to happen that isn't the way I hoped it would be. Oftentimes things like a grouchy bank teller, being cut off in traffic, or having to work late can throw off an otherwise good day. And let's face it, some days are just awful from the get-go and by 5:00 you are just looking forward to going to bed and trying again tomorrow. It is so easy to focus on the problems, to replay them in your mind, to the point that drinking or using seems reasonable or even like a good idea. It is one of those many tricks our brains can play on us to keep us in our addiction. I have found that some days it is a lot easier to "marinate" in the crud than to make myself think about the positives, but if I choose to think about the things in my life that are good, I feel better. If I choose to treat others well even when I am not being treated that way, my day goes better. And if I choose to smile and "be happy" despite my deep desire to be a crab, my day ends on a much better note. I also hope I helped someone else's day improve, as well.

After my move to Georgia, I am even more convinced that life is about choices, both in our actions and in our emotional responses to them. I am blessed with so many wonderful things in my life. No, it's not perfect, but I have never actually met anyone whose life is (although there are plenty of people out there who are scared to death to admit that they have problems, too). I am going to love this chapter of my life. I'm going to take advantage of the many opportunities that I have. I'm going to accept that some days will stink but that there is always good to go with the bad. And I am going to trust that my Higher Power will give me the strength to deal with the challenges. I wish all the same for each of you.

Building Hope

Valley Hope Association Foundation News

By: Megan O'Connor, Director of Development

As the fundraising arm of Valley Hope Association, the Foundation secures all donations and it's my job to insure gifts are utilized as intended and where designated.

From scholarships for treatment, to dental needs, to treatment-related books, to new equipment, people donate to help us fulfill our mission.

I am committed to making certain we are good stewards of those gifts.



Megan O'Connor



Building Hope Fund Drive Begins

This is our means to *Build Hope* for the future by growing our endowment fund within the Foundation. Valley Hope's William D. Leipold Endowment Fund began many years ago as "Hug a Bear Fund." As the fund principal continues to grow each year from donations, the interest earned creates scholarship funds for the next year, and each year after.

Gift Acceptance Policy

Valley Hope Association and the Foundation will not accept gifts from a patient in excess of a cumulative \$250 amount within the first two years of discharge from any level of care. This amount was determined, to allow everyone the opportunity to participate in fund-raisers, golf tournaments, Birthday Club, etc. Our ethical policies guide us to maintain only a therapeutic and professional relationship with patients, for a minimum of two years following discharge. If we begin accepting donations within that two year period, our relationship changes from therapeutic to donor-social.

Summer Fun & Fundraising



Rob & Weave Freedom Ride

On Thursday, September 9, Little Bob and Weavin' Steven rode their bicycles more than 100 miles from Kearney, Nebraska to Norton, Kansas to celebrate their recovery anniversaries. They also raised \$500 for the Norton Patient Fund. We are so grateful for your time and energy to help our patients.

O'Neill Nebraska - Recovery Ride

Alumni and friends on motorcycles gathered on the morning of O'Neill's Anniversary event and enjoyed a beautiful ride through the valley to celebrate recovery and raise funds for the patients.



How to Give

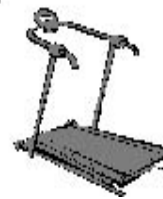
- Donate on our Website
www.valleyhope.org/donate
- Send a gift:
P.O. Box 59, Norton, KS 67654
- Contact the Foundation by phone
(785) 877-4483 (GIVE)
- E-mail: megano@valleyhope.org

In-Kind Gifts

Moundridge
- Pews from an historic church in Wichita for the new chapel from Ruth Ann Messner



Pool Table for the Recreation Area
from the Ed Ritchie family



O'Neill
Exercise equipment for the patients
from Gary Schaefer

If you have an item you'd like to donate to the treatment center, please visit with the Program Director or contact Megan O'Connor at 785-877-4483

Memorial Gift Makes a Difference

My husband, Jim, battled alcoholism as long as I knew him. In the early years he attempted and somewhat succeeded to control his drinking. After the death of his mother, all control was lost. He had brief bouts of sobriety and then would fall hard back on the bottle. "She," as we referred to his bottle, was very convincing, that Jim was nothing without her and that everyone else had abandoned him. In the end, she took all he had, including his life. Our loss is deep and we hope to help other families to avoid some of the pain that we have endured and are continuing to feel. I am enclosing an initial donation to help pay for treatment for patients who could not otherwise afford it. I will continue mailing monthly donations. Please accept our donation in his memory. Share his story with others. Alcoholism is such a terrible disease. It steals the mind and distorts reality. It makes loners of the most sociable people. Those who die of alcoholism don't die surrounded by their family as other diseases allow. Alcoholics die alone, sad and believing they have no one. Please use our donations to help people struggling against this awful disease.

God Bless Your Efforts,
The family of James C.

Enclosed is a little donation you can use as you please. This year is my 41st sobriety birthday. My wife and I are also celebrating our 61st wedding anniversary this year. Thank you for sending the *Coffee Cup*. When I get it, I read it and pass it on to others. Yours truly, Melvin H.

Birthday Club



Since the Club began, more than 71 members have contributed gifts totaling more than \$3,100 to help with dental needs, books and other immediate needs for our patients. Please consider celebrating your own birthday with a gift to help others.

Happy Birthday and Best Wishes!

Coffee Cup
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Editorial Committee: Megan O'Connor, Nate Kasper and Joni Hilburn
If your address needs to be updated or if you wish to be removed from the subscription list, please call us at 1-800-654-0486 or e-mail recovery@valleyhope.org
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New Birthday Club Members



Cara G - 1 year	Jesse O - 1 year
Lisa C - 2 years	Doug M- 8 years
Patrick O'Riley - 6 years	Melvin H - 41 years

-Cut on dotted line-

Birthday Club

Send a dollar (or more) for each year of your recovery. Your gifts provide immediate needs for patients, such as dental needs, books, etc.

(Yes! I'd like to give a gift of hope and join the Birthday Club)

Recovery Birthday _____ Amount of Donation _____

My gift is to benefit a patient at (specify location) _____ Valley Hope

Your Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to VHA Foundation, P.O. Box 59, Norton, KS 67654

Valley Hope Association Foundation

Gifts received from August 15, 2010 - October 15, 2010. A special thanks to the following donors:

Atchison

Patient Assistance Needs

Patrick D. and Kathryn O'Riley

Unrestricted

Teresa Schmeck

WDL Endowment Fund

Linda Brown

Boonville

Patient Assistance Needs

Michael L. Haskin~

In Memory of Brandon Haskin

Melvin Haverkamp

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Building Renovation Fund

Debra Phillips

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In Memory of Eugene Utt

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Moundridge

Building Fund

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Tracy Morrison

Michael & Dorothy Stegman

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In Memory of Ardyce Uhrich

Dallas A. Uhrich

Edward C. Ritchie

Paul Westhoff

Patient Scholarships

Tammi J. Costello & Family~

In Memory of James R. Costello

Norton

Patient Assistance Needs

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Mr. Eugene G. Edwards

Hays Alumni & Friends

Donald Jackson

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Norton Alkathon Auction

North Platte Alumni & Friends

William & Julie Siefers~

In Memory of Derek Zabokrtsky

Megan O'Connor~

In Memory of Derek Zabokrtsky

Robert & Colleen Grammer~

In Memory of Derek Zabokrtsky

R.W. & G.L. Tacha

Joshua Vonlintel

Sharon Vonlintel

Doug Marsh

Patient Scholarships

Larry G. & Libby Charvat

Peter Nissen

Louis and Del Tholen

Jennifer Smith & Siemers Family~

In Memory of James Siemers

Slyvia & D.G. Steinshouer~

In Honor of Duane Steinshouer

Martin Fund (scholarships)

Ruth Martin~

In Memory of George Earl Martin

Unrestricted

Bob and Sharon Englert~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Charles H. & Barbara E. Maerz~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Ray E. Purdy~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Kenneth and Chloe Teeter~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Monty J. and Rebecca Teeter~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Fraze Abstract & Title, Inc.~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Carol S. Dailey~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Marjorie Nairn~

In Memory of Paul E. Plummer

Lucy Anne Clark

Steve Horney

WDL Endowment Fund

Bob & Rita Speer

Scott & Linda Bahe

O'Neill

Facility Improvements

Curt & Marietta Boatman

Brad Rowe

O'Neill Valley Hope Auction

Patient Assistance Needs

James D. & Lisa A. Cerveny

Patient Scholarships

O'Neill Valley Hope Golf

Tournament

Parker

Patient Assistance Needs

Mile High United Way

All Facilities

Unrestricted

Teresa Badgerow

Conner M. Lindsey~

In Memory of Roy Lee Sparks

Mary Eda Neal~

In Memory of Neal Clopman

Friends & Alumni News

By: Megan O'Connor, Director of Development

What is a Friends and Alumni Support Group?

A Friends and Alumni Support Group is not a 12-Step meeting and it's not facilitated by a counselor. Some group meetings are taking place at the treatment centers. Some take place in restaurants, church meeting rooms or other locations. The group gathers to support each other and often have a speaker or enjoy an activity. These groups are co-ordinated by a volunteer group leader. Contact leader information for each group is available on our website and in each issue of the *Coffee Cup*.



www.valleyhope.org/alumni

JOIN our website family & receive emails about:

Special Events at the Treatment Center
Alumni Group Meetings and Activities
Notice when the new *Coffee Cup* is online
And.....Help us write the *Coffee Cup*



Alumni Group Leader Retreat a Success Norton, Kansas- August 2010

We had a terrific time with our alumni group leaders visiting from as far away as Oklahoma City and St. Louis.

Thank you for making the trip for this special event August 20-21. We are grateful for your service to our patients and alumni. It was great to have many of you gathered together to meet, greet and learn what other groups are doing. The team of 15 leaders had a full schedule beginning with Valley Hope's Annual Meeting on Friday,

then an 'Extra Black Coffee Break' with Valley Hope leadership, including: President/CEO Ken Gregoire, Exec VP/COO John Leipold, Board of Directors Chairman Pat George and Board Vice President Dave Hill.

We enjoyed a great dinner together and brunch on Saturday before the big Norton Anniversary event with 300+ guests. Alumni group leaders enjoyed their time in Norton (where Valley Hope began in 1967) almost as much as we enjoyed having them here.

A special thanks to our devoted alumni group leaders across 7 states.

We'll look forward to the next retreat. Thank you for all you do to connect with our patients and help them on their road to recovery.



Ken, Tina, Chris and Gerry



Tim L. & Don H.

If you are interested in starting a Friends and Alumni Group, please call Megan at (785-877-5111 or e-mail megano@valleyhope.org

Social Networks

- Why can't my Counselor be my friend on FACEBOOK?

Counselors are prohibited from entering a personal relationship with their patients for specific time following completion and this includes being added as a "friend" on FACEBOOK. The amount of time varies with each state, but Valley Hope's policy is two years from the last treatment episode. The purpose for this ethical guideline is to protect you. It is important for a counselor to remain objective and developing a personal relationship could interfere with this. So, it is important for you to know that it was designed for your protection, not rejection.

Did you know more than 2,000 individuals are members of our website family?

Did you know more than 8,000 copies of each issue of the Coffee Cup magazine are printed and mailed?

Renewal Day Calendar

	Center	November	December	January	February	Day	Time
ARIZONA							
	Chandler	19	See Below	21	18	Friday	8am
COLORADO							
	Parker	19	17	21	18	Friday	8am
KANSAS							
	Atchison	19	17	21	18	Friday	8:50am
	Mission	26	31	28	25	Friday	6:00pm
	Norton	12	10	14	11	Friday	9:00am
	Moundridge	26	30	28	25	Friday	8:30am
MISSOURI							
	Boonville	12	10	14	11	Friday	8:30am
	St. Louis	24	22	26	23	Wednesday	5:30pm
NEBRASKA							
	O'Neill	5	3	7	4	Friday	7:00 am
	Omaha	2	7	4	1	Tuesday	6:30pm
OKLAHOMA							
	Cushing	19	17	21	18	Friday	9:30am
	Oklahoma City	5	17	28		Friday	6:00pm
TEXAS							
	Grapevine	26	31	28	25	Friday	8:00am



Special Holiday Events

Chandler December Renewal - Saturday, December 18 --5:00 p.m.

Parker Christmas Party Saturday, December 18 --1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Norton Open House Holiday & Lunch Friday, December 10th
9:00 a.m -3:00 p.m.**

**Moundridge Holiday Celebration – Sunday, December 5th
4:00-7:00p.m.**

**Boonville Holiday Dec. 10th Dinner at 5:00 p.m.
following Renewal Day events**

Cushing Holiday – Saturday, Dec. 11th--1:00 to 5:00 p.m.



Alumni & Friends Support Groups

Find a group near you and connect

- it'll help your recovery.

Atchison, KS

Alumni group meets each month at Atchison Valley Hope on Renewal Day at 9:00 a.m. for a Business meeting and 10:00 a.m. for 'Road to Recovery' when we answer questions from the patient group. Upcoming dates: Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 18 Contact: John M. - Phone: (785) 364-3801
E-mail: jmcmmanigal@embarqmail.com

Chandler, AZ

Alumni and friends meet every Tuesday evening from 7:15 until 9 p.m. in the dining hall for a speaker and group discussion. Those welcome to attend include Chandler Valley Hope patients, alumni and anyone else interested in recovery. Where: Chandler Valley Hope
Contact: Ray Pena - Phone: (480) 229-5723
E-mail: rpj164@q.com

Ford / Dodge City, KS

Alumni and friends meet every other month on the 3rd Sunday for breakfast, fellowship and speaker at 9:00 a.m. Upcoming dates: December 19, February 20. Where: Becky's Blue Herford, Ford, Kansas
Contact: Damon P. - Phone: (620) 514-0421
Email: rightygirthing@msn.com

Goodland / Colby, KS

Join us the 3rd Sunday of each month for a speaker and breakfast 9:00 a.m. Mountain Time/10:00 a.m. Central Time. Upcoming dates: No meeting in November, but join us : Dec 19, Jan 16, Feb 20. Where: 1013 Center St. in Goodland
Contact: Dave H. - Phone: (785) 728-7022

Grapevine, TX

Alumni Group meets at 2:00 p.m. every Wednesday afternoon in the lecture hall. Where: 2300 William D. Tate Ave, Grapevine TX. Contact: Bill - Phone: (972) 263-4789
E-mail: racerbill@sbcglobal.net

Hays, KS

Group meets once per month for breakfast, fellowship and speaker. Join us Sundays at 9:30 a.m. We'll order breakfast at 10 a.m. Upcoming breakfasts: Nov 21, Dec 19, Jan 23, Feb 20. December meeting will be extra special with door prizes and giveaways. (Feel free to bring a gift for the prize drawings!) Where: Professors Steak House, 825 East 8th
Contact: Ron S. - Phone: (785) 650-1064

Kearney, NE

Special speaker and potluck events scheduled. Keep close to the website for details coming soon.
Where: St. Lukes Episcopal Church - 2304 2nd Ave
Contact: Dianne & Tim F. - Phone: (308) 452-4321

Lincoln, NE

Plans are underway to determine upcoming activities, including a golf tournament. Contact: Dan S. - Phone: (402) 430-6882 E-mail: eaglewindow@nebr.com

Moundridge, KS

Alumni Group is on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Moundridge Valley Hope. We will have a meet and greet with the patients in the lecture hall. Group starts at 6:00 p.m. After the Alumni Group is finished we usually get together and go out to eat. Where: Moundridge Valley Hope, 200 S. Avenue B. Contact: Chris S. - Phone: (316) 644-6516
E-mail: chrissevert@yahoo.com

Norfolk, NE

Norfolk Friends and Alumni of Valley Hope will celebrate recovery with special events. Contact: Dawn B. - Phone: (402) 371-6791 or Contact: Dagwood C. - Phone: (402) 841-1833

North Platte, NE

Group meets the third Saturday of every month for an evening potluck fellowship and speaker. Upcoming meetings: Nov 20, Dec 19, January 15, Feb 19. Where: Bethel Church in 'the loft,' 2700 W. Philip Ave. Contact: Loran P.
Phone: (308) 534-9175

Norton, KS

Alumni group meets every Thursday evening, 6:30 pm to share experiences in recovery. Where: Norton Valley Hope Dining Hall-Contact: Duane S. - Phone: (785) 675-1966

Oklahoma City, OK

Join us every Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. at the Oklahoma City Valley Hope outpatient office, for a one hour meeting to renew recovery. Where: 6110 NW 63rd., Oklahoma City
Contact: Gerry L. - Phone: (405) 816-1936

Omaha, NE

Alumni and Friends of Valley Hope join us as we organize monthly recovery events in Eastern Nebraska. We've recently enjoyed a hayrack ride, fishing and a fireside meeting. Contact: Don H. - Phone: (402) 290-3945 Contact: Rick H. - Phone: (402) 709-3202 or Contact: Cathy W. (402) 630-4560

St. Louis, MO

Alumni group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month; from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. We'll have a speaker and refreshments will be served. Upcoming dates: Nov 24, Dec 22, January 26, Feb 23. Where: St. Louis Valley Hope, 12777 Olive Blvd. E-mail bnccleansober.SLAAG2010@gmail.com Contact: The St. Louis Office
Phone: (314) 514-9220

(Alumni and Friends Continued)

Tempe, AZ

Tempe Alumni group meets every Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. at Tempe Valley Hope. There is a speaker, questions/answers and open meeting format. It's a great place to meet a sponsor. Open to patients, alumni, family and friends. Where: 2115 E. Southern Ave. Rio Sureno Med Plaza
Contact: Rick K. - Phone: (480) 232-7587 -
E-mail: Contact: Tempe Valley Hope - Phone: (480) 831-9533

Tulsa, OK

Join us every Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. at the Fellowship Church on 29th and Harvard. Join us for a great one hour meeting. Where: 2900 S. Harvard, Tulsa, OK
Contact: Peter G - Phone: (918) 760-6011
E-mail: PeterGrant@cox.net
Contact: Lori G. Phone: (918) 510-1713
E-mail: LoriGrant@cox.net

Wichita, KS

Alumni group meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at Wichita Valley Hope (901 W. Douglas), located in the front room. Group starts at 6:p.m. After the meetings, we usually go out to eat together. Where: Wichita Valley Hope, 901 W. Douglas, Contact: Chris S. - Phone: (316) 644-651
E-mail: chrissevert@yahoo.com



Carry The Message

Treasured Moments and Personal Stories

Snowflakes is one of the most fragile creations, but look what they can do when they stick together

~Unknown

I Said A Prayer For You Today

I said a prayer for you today
And know God must have heard.
I felt the answer in my heart
Although I heard not a word.

I didn't ask for wealth of fame,
I knew you wouldn't mind.
I asked to send you treasures
Of a far more lasting kind.

I asked that God be near you
At the start of each new day,
To grant you health and blessings,
And friends to share your way.

I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small
But it was God's loving care for you
That I prayed for most of all.

~Author Unknown

Holiday Survival Tips for Recovering Alcoholics By: Dave W.

The Holiday season is upon us, that time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. This can be a dangerous time for recovering alcoholics. There are family gatherings, parties at work, and all sorts of obligations that we're expected to attend where others might be drinking. Plus, the added stress of the holiday season can be enough to overwhelm just about anyone. Here are ten tips to help you through the holiday season:

1. **Just Say No**--Get a holiday party where drinking is involved? Your sobriety is number one.
2. **Tell your sponsor where you will be**--Take your cell phone and their phone numbers with you.
3. **Use the buddy system**--Going to a holiday party where there will be drinking? Take another recovering alcoholic with you. There is strength in numbers.
4. **Drive yourself**--If an AA can't attend with you, drive yourself. This way you can leave when you are ready and are not at someone else's mercy.
5. **Show up and leave early**--Show up early, socialize, and eat. When the volume of the party gets kicked up know when this happens.
6. **Have a Plan B**--If you must attend a party or gathering where alcohol is being served, have an escape route or alternative place to go if you feel uncomfortable. Go out for coffee, out to a movie, or hit a meeting.
7. **Be Specific When Offered a Drink**--Instead of awkwardly telling the person that you're a recovering alcoholic, just say "Sure, a Coke, ice tea, water with lemon would be great."
8. **Avoid dishes that may contain alcohol**--This is especially true if it is uncooked. If you do not know--ask.
9. **Schedule other plans**--Figure out something else to do on the nights you are invited to parties where alcohol will be served. This will keep you from deciding to go at the last minute.
10. **Attend an AA party instead**--This time of year there is never a lack of recovery events. There are parties, carry-ins, dances, candlelight meetings, you name it! Check the bulletin boards or ask around.

(Carry The Message)

Loss Of A Loved One

By: Cathy W.

Fortunately, I have not had to deal with the loss of a loved family member or friend. However, as an alcoholic I have to deal with the loss of my former best friend and worst enemy, alcohol. Last year I spent Thanksgiving in O'Neill and we had a blessed holiday! Guess what, we had gravy for the mashed potatoes, just kidding. The turkey was awesome, as you can imagine, thanks to Marlene and her kitchen crew.

By Christmas and New Years, I was home and active in my local AA group. We had a blizzard on Christmas so I was home alone with my Higher Power. I went to a meeting on the 26th. The weather was bad on New Years Eve but I was able to go to a meeting New Years Day. As I recall, last year I was still on the pink cloud of recent treatment experience. Life was just setting in, and I was beginning to blend my recovery program with life on life's terms. I didn't have any issues with cravings and I was highly motivated for sobriety. I attended a few family gatherings where others consumed alcohol but to a very minor extent and it wasn't really an issue.

As the 2010 holidays approach, it will have been over a year since I embraced recovery. Life has changed dramatically since I went to treatment, in a very positive way. I am not concerned about issues with drinking over the holi-

Sometimes we wonder, "What did I do to deserve this"? or "Why did God have to do this to me"? Here is a wonderful explanation!

A daughter is telling her Mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, "Absolutely Mom, I love your cake."

"Here, have some cooking oil," her Mother offers.

"Yuck" says her daughter.

"How about a couple raw eggs?" "Gross, Mom!"

"Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?"

"Mom, those are all yucky!"

To which the mother replies: "Yes,

days because I have come to rely on the Lord to help me with the difficulties in life. I still experience anxiety, disappointment, fear and the negative emotions of life but I have learned to give it to God rather than try to handle it myself. I have learned that living in recovery requires continuous work to achieve true happiness. I find myself highly motivated to stay on God's path because I know now better than ever that it's a heck of a lot better than the unmanageable life I had made for myself before embracing recovery.

Thankfully, I am blessed with many wholesome recovery friends, including my sponsor, with many years of sobriety. I read a lot of inspirational material, especially my Life Recovery Bible that I bought in O'Neill. I still attend AA meetings 3-5 times each week and I am honored to lead our Sunday

night Step Study. My online continuing care helps give me additional support and growth in recovery, and I am planning to sign up for another year because it is good for me and the others in my group. In addition, I attend Bible Study sessions and I am working with my church to start a Celebrate Recovery ministry. How does it get better than that?

In reality, I certainly don't have all the answers. What I do have are the grace of God, family, friends and the tools of recovery. That doesn't mean life is always easy but it gives me support and resources to call upon when I need them. As I continue to work the steps over and over again, I am beginning to grasp the true meaning of happiness and experiencing a more blessed life than that old friend and enemy could ever have given me.

Morning Prayer

Refreshed from the night's sleep, I am filled with gratitude as I rise this morning. I pray that I will be strengthened by your grace this day. In the quiet of this moment, I ask your blessing throughout the day. Help me to be mindful of your presence and the needs of those I encounter. Open my heart in generosity, confident that you will give me what I need from moment to moment. Good and gracious God, I know you have blessed me beyond measure throughout all my days. Give me confidence in your care as I strive to fulfill the obligations I face today. Those I can now anticipate and those that will come unexpectedly. May I recognize your presence in the people I meet and the opportunities I face. Lord, I don't feel particularly close to you right now, but I hope and pray for your help in my struggles today. Forgive me for my failings and strengthen me to discover and carry out your will. Give me courage and a lively sense of the possibilities and promises of life. May I grow in faith, hope and love today and every day.
Amen.

all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!"

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they

always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!

God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

I Hate Going To Meetings

These meetings are oh so boring
The same things over again
They sit there just like statues
And barely share a grin.

I hate going to meetings!
It makes me want to drink.
Just listening to those boring stories
Makes my thinking start to stink.

Then one day a thought was shared
That dug into my soul.

I couldn't believe the words I heard
That stirred me Head to Toe.

How could I have missed this
A story such as mine
That people survived a life like me.
Came here to spend their time.

Maybe I should listen more
And look deep down inside
Open my mind to new ideas
And let my heart decide

~Mike C.

(Carry The Message continued)

Hope all is well for everyone, not sure you even remember who I am because it's been many moons ago but come this Sunday the 10th, 25 years ago, I checked into Vally Hope and thru the grace of God I've been sober ever since. Kinda wild thinking about it all, I was 28 when I checked in, and now here we are many moons later, but yet seems like just yesterday,--and my son just turned 28, My son and I are headed down to Tan-Tar-a for the weekend and coming back here to K.C. on Monday, thought maybe I might drop by for a brief moment for old times sake on our way back here and didn't know if you were gonna be around or not. Depending on how we are doing on time, coming back will determine if I can swing by or not, but regardless, if given the chance, I just wanted to tell you all, thank you for the extremely great work that you all do. Hope all is well and keep up the great work! ~Damon

An Evening Prayer

On a day I am happy to see pass into history, Lord I ask your mercy for what I failed to do and for the mistakes I made. Thank you for remaining with me in difficulty and for showing me the truth about my life today. You said the truth will set us free, and I hope that will be true for me. In your mercy, Lord set us free. In quiet moments the day recedes like a wave withdrawing from the shore. With sunset the world lets go of the light and so I ask you now, to help me let go of the day. Help me to see that I have done the best I could and to hope in your grace to heal those places where I fell short of the goal. With the rush of activity finally over, Lord I take a minute to thank you for the blessings of the day, some of which I can see and others I believe are there even though I cannot recognize them. Thank you for being with me, especially when I was unaware of your presence and thoughtless about your will. Draw me close to you in sleep tonight so that I may rise refreshed and better able to serve You and my brothers and sisters tomorrow. Amen.

Kudos!

ATCHISON

- Our maintenance men are the BEST!! They go out of their way to help not only patients and staff....but also the little critters that hang out at our Atchison Valley Hope. Vic graciously rescues a bird that was stuck in the gutter, Thanks Vic!



Vic

Stress busters for the holidays

December can be a joyous month, but it's also a stressful time for many people caught up in the rush of holiday planning and family issues. Here are some helpful hints for reducing stress during what should be a fun and relaxing time:

- **Recognize the signs of stress, such as irritability and anxiety.** Avoid these by getting a handle on things instead of just letting them happen.
- **Allow yourself to say "NO."** Be realistic about what you can and cannot do during this busy month.
- **Watch your diet.** It's easy to overindulge in holiday treats that can affect your mood. Sugar overload will make you sluggish, for example, and the stimulating effect of caffeine may make you overanxious.
- **Exercise.** Not only will it combat those extra calories you're consuming, it will also relieve tension and provide relaxation.



David Howenstine

- A BIG Thank You to counselor Dave Howenstine! Dave has worked at many of our Valley Hope facilities and he was gracious enough to come and help us out for a few months. We appreciate it so much!

BOONVILLE

- Kudos to Monte Miller! Monte came to Boonville as a counselor trainee, and he departs to take the job of Program Director at O'Neil, Nebraska! We are very sad to see Monte go, but, oh so very proud of what he has

CUSHING

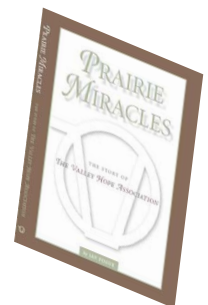
- Melissa W, Counselor at Cushing will be celebrating 12 years of sobriety on December 27th.
- Eileen W, Counselor at Oklahoma City will be celebrating 11 years on November 25th.
- Amy Morrison and Barry Hesson both completed and received their Masters Degree.

ST. LOUIS

- Janet Worthy has been named Outpatient Director

Prairie Miracles

Prairie Miracles, The History of The Valley Hope Association, is available now. You may purchase a book at Valley Hope residential centers or on our website, www.valleyhope.org Each book sale also helps patients at our treatment centers. \$14.95



For each book sold, \$5 is being donated to the Valley Hope Association Foundation to benefit patients who otherwise could not afford treatment. Valley Hope and the Foundation are not for profit organizations and your gifts help support our mission.



Spotlight on the 12 Steps



**By: Chaplain Bill Kornovich
Chandler Valley Hope**

Steps Ten and Eleven

The Twelve Steps are a journey, not necessarily a destination. We as humans enjoy having a goal, a destination, something for which to look forward. The anticipation of reward begins early in life: expectation of a journey to grandpa's farm, graduation from high school and other milestones in growing. Yet, we find the journey of life continues throughout our mortality. Such are the steps. Like a tree growing with all the steps of the branches developing simultaneously throughout the perennial plant's lifetime, so the steps of recovery are a journey of expanding horizons, knowledge and application. Each day of recovery supports the next. Tomorrow cannot come without today and yesterday. So too the steps build into a seamless structure of recovery. To paraphrase a favorite meditation: 'Each day well lived can make yesterday a dream of serenity and tomorrow a vision of hope.' For myself, while focusing upon the task at hand today, I need guard against drifting away to the resentments and guilt of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow. Do well the job of now and all will grow in mutual support of recovery.

Steps Ten and Eleven fit hand-in-glove, together in protection and support for my journey of recovery. A daily inventory not only leads to appropriate amends where needed, and good self feelings, these actions also move us daily into the light of that serenity every human craves. Take care of this day's faults and mistakes today. Admitting one's shortcomings is not pleasant. But, "...pain was the touchstone of all spiritual progress." (page 93 of *Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions*). The word "spirituality" keeps coming up in recovery. For the Twelve Steps is a spiritual program. The disease lives in our head, recovery is in our heart.

For many of us, the revelation of mistakes and shortcomings comes in that quiet time of meditation. Taking time to reflect upon the day and thank my God for another 24 hours of sobriety gives opportunity for honesty with myself. Only by candidly examining my own actions am I doing my part to keep the 'me' in harmony with others.

Over the last eight plus years at Valley Hope, I have ministered to many people of dramatically different life journeys, all with diversity of faults, failings, as well as saintly acts. Though quite diverse, these people, without exception, all have loved and needed to belong, even though some outwardly denied this human desire. Needing to belong, living in fellowship and community, these are our humanity. Making timely amends for my wrongs keeps me from becoming separated by resentment.

In my career in the United States Air Force, as a young officer I was privileged to serve under the command of and fly with a former prisoner of the North Vietnamese in the Vietnam War. On the rare occasion he would speak of his experience, he talked about extended periods of solitary confinement. This man recalled the fear of being alone, separated and forgotten. In the colonel's case, his separation was not by his choice. But when we are separated by fault of ourselves, the choice to mend the breach is ours. In separation due to resentment we are not only at odds with a core human need, our serenity is tested if not jeopardized. If the grieved party, however, does not accept our amends, we have at least done our part. We can be at peace with our effort.

Very recently, I delivered a Sunday homily around the words "action and belonging." Our step work is a labor of action both to our benefit and others. We all need to belong. When disharmony exists between myself and other humans, one of my human ties of belonging is strained; and these threads of connection are indeed fragile. In meditation I ask my God for the humility of amends and courage to take action.

Fellowship is a key part of our lives. The Twelve Steps provide support for the daily life journey in sobriety as well as the joy of fellowship in harmony. The quiet time with my God in review of the day's actions, both good and bad, honors the spirit, calms the emotions, and refreshes the body.

Letters From Home

N Home Is Where The Heart Is

By: Larry Black, BS, AAPS,
Program Director

O Home is where the heart is and Norton Valley Hope is where the heart of a lot of addicts and alcoholics resides for patients and staff. Renewal days continue to be very well attended and we so much look forward to seeing good friends each month. Members of the Valley Hope family are welcome on the 2nd Friday of each month to celebrate renewal with us. Of course I think many of them just come back for the delicious cookies, but that's just speculation.

R In addition to patients returning, members of the staff are returning to where the heart is as well. In addition to my return as program director after starting out with Valley Hope in Norton, Maggie Ellis has returned to us after a stint in Boonville, Ray Colligan has returned after serving as AC/ESS counselor and Laurie Cliff is back as business manager. It is great to have them back in Norton. Heather Cain joins the treatment team as AC/ESS counselor. Heather has been living in Iowa but we are glad to have her on the team in Norton. Barbara Butler has also begun work as a PCA at Norton Valley Hope. She is from Colby and we are happy to have Barb on board. Our wishes and prayers go out to each of you. All the best in recovery from the Norton Valley Hope team.



L to R: Ray Colligan, Maggie Ellis and Laurie Cliff

Welcome Back

By: Laurie Cliff, BS
Business Manager

A Valley Hope employee since October 2001, I'm delighted to be back at the Norton facility as the Business Manager. While I greatly enjoyed working at our corporate offices over the last three years, I found myself missing the interaction with our patients and their families. In the time I've been away from the facility, I completed a bachelor degree, began a master's degree, watched two of our 5 children graduate from high school and start college and had one move to Norton with her husband and our 3 grandchildren. I enjoy spending time with my family, reading and doing outdoor activities.

Since returning to the Norton facility in August, I have felt very welcomed and am happy to be meeting and getting to know the staff, patients and their families.

**Christmas Open House
Renewal Day and
Holiday Lunch for those
who attend on the
second Friday of
December. It all starts at
9:00 a.m. December 10**

By: Maggie Ellis BS ADAC

Back home! Wow, it is definitely hard to believe but I'm just ecstatic that I've been given this opportunity to return to where my family (yes, this includes all of you at Norton Valley Hope!) and friends.

Valley Hope has been incredible as they have allowed me to not only come back to where my heart is but also for having allowed me to go to Boonville to spread my wings in the first place. Unfortunately in coming back home, I was forced to leave many people behind in Boonville that I will miss greatly. Not only was the staff amazing, but I met some exceptional patients along the way as well. Miss you all!

However, that being said, I am so excited to again start my journey back here at Norton Valley Hope as I am not only counseling but in graduate school as well. Thank you all, I'm so glad to be at home!

Meditation By: Ray Colligan, MS, Counselor

I read an article the other day about why AA works. The article was sharing information about the human brain and addiction and how the Twelve Steps and the fellowship of AA counteract the injury of addiction. I marveled that even prior to what we know now about the human brain the path way to a life of recovery was set before us in the Twelve Steps of AA and the fellowship.

For quite some time now my attention has been given to a word in the 11th step that is so key to many beginning a life of recovery- that word is meditation.

What experience is teaching is that mediation calms our emotion. Many who suffer from addiction believe they

got into this mess because they learned to medicate their feelings through alcohol and drugs. So many of us have had experiences of our emotion dictating behavior, only later to regret it.

What I would like to suggest to each of us in a very simple but effective way is to begin to meditate.

The exercise is to simply begin to practice the art of breathing. That is to have your brain concentrate on your nose! While you do nothing but be comfortable and breathe deep. Breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth all the while instructing your brain to focus on your breath. Doing this exercise two or three time a day for five minutes will put you on a path to have a tool to calm your

emotions when you need to calm yourself.

Those who suffer from anger or anxiety problems will find it a tool that can provide relief. Like anything worth having, this takes a commitment and discipline to this exercise and over time the quality of your life and control of your emotion will get better.

By the way, I was instructed to share something about returning to residential care at Valley Hope.

I am very grateful to be back. I hope my return to what I love so much will be of benefit to the Norton Valley Hope team and I can be of service to our patients. Thank you to all who have welcomed me back with so much encouragement!

Norton Alkathon & Renewal Days



Chaplain Bob and Louie T.



Annie helps to celebrate Cody's first year in recovery.



Mickey helps Corie R. celebrate her first year sobriety.



L to R: Vicki T., Jim S. and Rochelle M.



Steve and Larry



Ray and Vicki do the happy dance to celebrate Vicki and Charley's 15th year of recovery.



Loran P. and Louie T.



MeMe and Galen C. with Dorie and Bill D.



Dave and Sue W.

Pumpkin Pie Desert

By: Norton Dietary Department:

Serves approximately 12

3 C. sugar

2 tsp. salt

7 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

8 eggs

4 C. pumpkin (canned)

4 cans evaporated milk

1 box white cake mix

½ lb. butter, melted

1 ½ C. quick oats

Mix the first six ingredients, beating until smooth. Pour into 9 x 13 baking pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix over batter evenly. Sprinkle oats over cake mix. Drizzle melted butter over entire mix, making sure all ingredients are moistened. Bake at 440 degrees for one hour until knife inserted comes out clean. Cool. Serve with whipped topping.

Pineapple

Strawberry Punch

2 pkgs. Frozen sweetened sliced strawberries, thawed

1 can (46 oz) pineapple juice, chilled

4 cups lemon-lime soda, chilled

In a food processor, puree the strawberries. Pour into a large punch bowl. Stir in the pineapple juice and soda.

Grapevine The Changing Faces of Home

By: Harold Willis, Program Director in Training

I've had the opportunity and pleasure to be employed with Grapevine Valley Hope facility almost from our opening. We accepted our first patient in July of 2001 and I came aboard in September of 2001. As expected, I've witnessed changes in the Valley Hope systems, personnel, as well as the physical plant of our building.

As I reflect on my personal changes as a Grapevine employee over the past nine years or so, from counselor intern, to Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor, to Admissions Coordinator, and currently Program Director in Training, the title of this article becomes more appropriate. My thoughts begin to consider what a home looks/feels like etc.

For the past nine months, my main responsibilities have switched from the residential side of the Grapevine programming, to the outpatient programs.

With that said, what does home look/feel like? Let me first begin by disqualifying myself as a Marriage and Family Therapist (I don't hold any credentials in that area). However, over the past nine years here at Grapevine, I've talked with patients, listened to other staff members, attended some trainings, and have my own personal

experiences of what a home looks/feels like. In spite of all of the ongoing changes at Grapevine and within the Valley Hope Association as a whole, Grapevine and the Valley Hope Association feels and looks a lot like home for me.

Talking with current and former patients and staff, I continue to hear my heartfelt sentiments expressed. For those who are no longer participating in treatment or working for us, I hear things like, "I miss Grapevine. I learned a lot here. This facility helped put my life back on track and it's great to see that you all are still taking care of individuals." Our current patients and staff (for the most part) express sentiments like, "I'm thankful to be here. What a family oriented facility. I'm thankful to be a part of this organization, and Grapevine Valley Hope has helped me grow so much." In spite of my difficulties with addiction, life circumstances for our employees, and all the good or difficult situations that living life on life's terms throws at us, Grapevine Valley Hope is still home for us/me.

From the comments I've heard, the individuals I've interacted, I continue to get the distinct impression that Grapevine Valley Hope looks and feels like home. I take a great deal of pride in saying to anyone and everyone that the Valley Hope Association, and in particular, the Grapevine facility, is home for me.

O' Around The Coffee Table

By: Dawn Johnson, MS, CADC, PLMHP,
Program Director

N Wow, there are exciting things happening in O'Neill. First of all, we have been working on improving the grounds and the hard work has paid off--the grounds look beautiful with new roses, trees and shrubs. I hope that you will visit soon to see it. Hopefully, we will get to enjoy the landscape throughout the holidays, or at least through Thanksgiving!

E I think Fall is my favorite season--maybe because it is a sign that change is in the air and that good times are coming when friends and family get together. Change has already arrived here. I am moving on to work at the Valley Hope Association in Norton, Kansas and the new program director for O'Neill has arrived. His name is Monte Miller. Monte joins us after having worked as Program Director in Training at Boonville Valley Hope. He is enthusiastic and excited about this change and I can't wait for you to meet him in person.

I Although I will miss all of the familiar faces at O'Neill and being able to see my former patients so regularly, I am grateful for having been involved with all of you for the last eleven years. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives.

L Some of you may know by now that our Business Manager, JoAnn Quandt, has decided to retire in December. Although she will be missed, we are excited about Beth Sanders being promoted to the business manager position. We also have a new secretary in the business office, Amy Elsberry, who is excited to be here as well.

L We had a great Renewal Day in October. We congratulated the following people for their one year of sobriety: Don H., Michelle P., and Pete W. Five people received 5 year cups and they included: Tim F., Chris M., Dustin C., Seth A., John G., and Bruce H. It was great seeing everyone again and hearing how well they were doing in sobriety. Their personal stories had a great impact on the current patient group. Many of the patients who were doubtful of their ability to stay sober gained some hope that day. Thank you to everyone that was here.

Staff were not only busy working with patients, but working in the community spreading the word about addiction. Our counselor, Brad Rowe, presented information on addiction and suicide at a recent symposium sponsored by Nebraska Community Health. We hosted the nursing students from Columbus Community College for one day. They sat in on lectures and groups and found the experience to be informative and many admitted changing their beliefs about addiction as a result of the experience. Finally, to help support the local Chamber of Commerce, we are playing host to all of the children in O'Neill while their parents are out shopping for the day. We will be using our new equipment to show movies so they can have some fun that day, too!

Whew! We have been busy. Soon it will be time to slow down and enjoy the time we have with family and friends. We all have so many traditions and thinking of them brings back good memories. Here are a few of ours:

"My family spent four years in Hawaii when my father was in the military. Because he wanted us to keep some of

the traditions we learned there, we always served pu-pu's (or appetizers in Hawaii) on Christmas Eve. We turned out the lights, lit the candles and played Christmas music, including "Mele Kalikimaka by Bing Crosby and the Andrew Sisters." Out of respect for my dad, I keep this same tradition with my son, Noah."
~Dawn

"It has been a family tradition that on Christmas Eve we ALWAYS have Oyster Stew. I do not like oysters so mom, with me being the baby of the family, would take the oysters out of my soup and I would have milk and crackers! By the way, you only open presents on Christmas morning, not Christmas Eve!"
~Brad

"My favorite part of Christmas is my "Santa's Marching Band", a musical salute to Christmas, which I store in my Doc Marten shoebox until the appointed time. It has a figure of Santa and six elves, all of whom ring a bell in tune with thirty different songs. They play in perfect tune with sharps and flats. You can't have Christmas without "Santa's Marching Band."
~John

"We all go to my parent's house and pretend we are functional for one night!"
~Peggy

For Thanksgiving, we eat a large meal (Turkey, dressing, and the like) together at my mother's or sister's house and watch football and rest for the afternoon. For Christmas, Harleigh and I bake cookies and candies and distribute the trays to friends, family and neighbors. We also set up the Christmas tree the weekend after thanksgiving and play Christmas music while trimming the tree. Harleigh (and Ethan) set out cookies and milk for Santa and carrots for the reindeer on Christmas Eve. We then open presents together the next morning."
~Anne

"A new tradition I started when I became a Grandma is having my grandchildren over to decorate the Christmas tree, and then they decorate a smaller one for their toy room and then enjoy cookies. It is something that I use to do with my Grandmother, and have really good memories of going to the farm and helping her. I have also started the custom of buying them their own special Christmas ornament each year. A close family friend did that for my children and when they got their own homes, they took their special ornaments with them."
~Ann

Thanksgiving – Big Family meal with all the trimmings and then, of course, the Husker game and snacks on Friday – GO BIG RED! We also put up the Christmas décor and get our (real) Christmas tree; watch Charlie Brown's Thanksgiving cartoon

Christmas – Mom and I bake (and bake, and bake) trays of goodies for the neighbors and various parties; we all pile in the car and drive around looking at Christmas lights; spend time with family and friends and watch all the old classic Christmas cartoons and movies"
~Amy

C Greetings

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By: Tami Anderson,
Community Service Clinician

Time really does fly. Where did the last few months go? I can't say I'm sorry they are gone since the heat and humidity went with them. Cushing and Oklahoma City Valley Hope are doing well at this time. In fact, our census has stayed higher the last few months compared to last year. I find that a blessing, more addicts and alcoholics are getting the help they need. Valley Hope also rallied for recovery at the State Capitol again this year. We team up with OCARTA (Oklahoma Citizens and Advocates for Recovery and Treatment Association) and other agencies and individuals to rally and exhibit for recovery twice a year. If you are interested in advocating for recovery, check with your state for agencies Advocate For Recovery, there should be one in most states. With September being National Recovery Month, some of our staff attended the "Recovery Walk" to the State Capitol, and other's attended a great cook-out..

We are really getting excited about the new expansion of Cushing Valley Hope, which should be getting under way in November. It will be a wonderful addition. At first I was concerned that adding on to the old mansion may take away part of its character, but thanks to the architects, it will blend in and look like it was always here. This expansion is phase I of III. It will allow the recreation room to be moved up to the main level from the basement, allowing staff to monitor the patients better. There will also be an enclosure from the new building to the cafeteria, allowing all of us to enter the dining hall without going outside. This enclosed walkway will be great for the Oklahoma weather. You know when it's hot, it's really hot and when it's cold, it's very cold.

Chili Cook-off

By: Drea Walker-Skye, Chaplain

Cushing Valley Hope participated in the city-wide 20th. Festival in the Park Chili Cook Off competition. We continued our winning streak, taking second place in the judges competition for the chili and second in booth decorating. This year's winning chili recipe was composed by our head cook, Jeannie Sugar and the booth decorations by PCA Dana Fisher, a star of our local community theater. "Manning" the booth with Jeannie were assistant cook Kotie Anderson, PCA Bill Skye and Chaplain Drea Walker-Skye, with equipment transportation provided by our head of maintenance Randall Lea. We've lost count of how many years we've entered the chili cook off, with several wins to our credit, and local residents look forward to the Valley Hope chili as one of the best. We took first place last year in the People's Choice awards, so second place wins this year are only fair. We don't want to be greedy! (Well, maybe we do--here's to next year's win!) And yes, patients --and staff- get to regularly enjoy the same chili on frosty days and on Jeanie's Indian Tacos.



Jeannie Sugar and
Dana Fisher

Come Home for the Holidays!
December 11th, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Come out and join us for an afternoon
of fun, friends and good food. We will
also be having live entertainment for
your pleasure, along with two
dynamic speakers.
So, "Come Home for the Holidays
we would love to see you!

ALSO REMEMBER

Cushing Renewal Days
December 17 and January 21
Beginning at 9:30 a.m.
(3rd Friday each month)

Oklahoma City Renewal
December 17 and January 28
Every 6 weeks on a Friday
starting at 6:00 p.m.

We would like to ask that anyone celebrating a sobriety birthday in the month of December, if you could, please come to the Cushing Valley Hope Alumni Christmas party on December 11th. at 1p.m., to receive your medallions/coffee cup. Please remember to give us a call and let us know you are coming @ 918-225-1736, or 1-800-722-5940. The more the merrier, so hope to see ya there!!

Seasons Change

By: Steve Nash, BSW, CADC Counselor

Here we are in October, the leaves are turning, which reminds us of good days and some days gone by. Fall always reminds me of running and taking part in 5K races. God has a way of placing things in its true perspective. We are powerless over things beyond our control that prevents us from a passion. God has a window open to help ease our pain. On a day which one would find me at a race in our town, I was in a golf tournament with good friends and fellowship. On a day which brings a spirit of winning can change to a day of being glad to have true friends and teammates.

Our counselors are a team, and I am filled with pride when I look at the size of the hearts around me. I used to measure life in performance and wins. Today I get to measure it with colleagues that are noteworthy of the finest individuals I have had the honor to serve with. The season is now and what a harvest of hearts.

GLAD TO BE PART OF THIS TEAM!!

Changes Are Hard

By: Scott Ehrlich, Chaplain

Changes, even positive ones, are hard for me: I suppose I am the king of the mythical land of, "But we've always done it this way!" Still, life being what it is, changes are inevitable; and I want to share two of the more monumental changes we're going through here at Boonville with you:

Our Business Manager, Leanne Groom, who has been with us for the past couple of years and who has done a masterful job of guiding our financial ship, is leaving to take a position in Columbia. We wish Leanne well and thank her for the time she's spent with us, but its hard to watch her go. While Leanne served as our business manager, she oversaw some major improvements to our grounds, and these will stand as part of her legacy for as long as Valley Hope has a presence here in mid-Missouri.

Monte Miller is leaving Boonville to start work as the Program Director at O'Neill, Nebraska. I like to joke with Monte that he came here as a trainee about 7 years ago and he's leaving us as a trainee now; but the fact of the matter is that Monte came to Boonville as a counselor trainee and he has spent the past couple of years as a program director trainee preparing to take this next step in his life and career. Personally and professionally, Monte will be a wonderful asset to the folks at O'Neill, but his departure leaves a huge hole here.

We are all looking forward to the upcoming holiday season, and we're going to celebrate in style here in Boonville! Our annual Christmas celebration will be held during December Renewal Days. We're going to have a wonderful time of sharing, maybe even some singing, and simply enjoying one another's company; and the highlight will be a holiday feast our kitchen staff will be putting

together. Please mark December 10th on your calendars so you can come to Boonville and share in the festivities. Registration begins about 8:30 a.m. We'll be having renewal/holiday programming all day, and the dinner will be at 5 p.m. For those of you who are planning on attending this celebration, would you please bring some of your favorite recipes with you? We're putting a cook-book together, and we're looking for recipes to share and try. If you have a special dish that makes you happy and hungry just thinking about it, how about sharing it with us so we can include it in the cookbook?

Allow me to get personal for just a moment. On October 29th of this year, I got to celebrate 20 years of sobriety. Don't applaud, it's not my fault. God has blessed me with incredible sponsors, healthy 12-Step groups, amazing colleagues at work and a family that is beyond my wildest dreams. Sometimes when patients are leaving Valley Hope they will say, "I don't know how to thank you." My response is always, "Live sober. That's thanks enough." I think I'll take my own advice and thank all of you -- patients, family, peers and colleagues and fellow travelers on this "road of happy destiny" by enjoying this gift of sobriety today, and one day at a time, for the days God gives me.

I wish you peace.

We had quite a celebration of sobriety at our most recent Renewal Day event! Celebrating 1 year were Kristen M; Herb B; Sylvia D; and Judy A. Celebrating 4 years were Allen H and Mark K. Celebrating 5 years were Mitchell G. and Brad L. Celebrating 10 years was Raymond W. and celebrating 17 years was John S. What a joy it was, and always is, to see "living proof" of the fact that this program really does work!

News From St. Louis

By: Tina Sanders,

Administrative Assistant

St. Louis Valley Hope hosted an Open House on September 17, 2010, to introduce the new Intensive Outpatient Plus Program to substance abuse professionals and alumni from Missouri and Illinois. The expanded office space, including the warm and inviting Coffee Shop, provided a wonderful setting for our co-hosts from Valley Hope Corporate in Norton, Kansas, as well as our co-hosts from Boonville Valley Hope, as together we welcomed community leaders, friends, and alumni to our facility. The St. Louis Valley Hope expansion could not have happened without the vision of our partners from Norton and Boonville and the hard work of so many team members over the past year. Everyone in St. Louis is excited about the services we are now able to provide to the area.

The staff of St. Louis Valley Hope was honored to have so many people take time out of their busy day to attend the

open house and learn about our new program. Visitors enjoyed tours of the new facility, hands-on demonstrations of the Intensive Outpatient Plus Program, and networking, food, and fellowship.

The staff of St. Louis Valley Hope wants everyone to know that the Coffee Shop is open Monday through Friday from 1:00 to 10:00 p.m. and all patients, alumni and friends of Valley

Hope are welcome to meet one another here to enjoy a good cup of coffee together, hang out and watch the game on the new plasma television, utilize the sober environment and wireless internet availability to do homework or treatment assignments, or simply enjoy some quiet time in a safe and comfortable place.



L. to R.: Kerri Ray, Jolene Nichols, Elizabeth Burns, Leanne Groom, Doreen Goldsmith and Janet Worthy



L. to R. Cassandra Sissom, Counselor; Nan Boone, Administrative Secretary; Tina Sanders, Administrative Assistant; Front: Janet Worthy, Outpatient Director

AC/ESS

**By: Kathy Grant, LPC, AC/ESS Counselor
Mission Valley Hope**

AC/ESS, for those of you who don't know, is our online program through Valley Hope and we offer Intensive Outpatient, Continuing Care, Family Intensive Outpatient, and Family treatment in our online format. I've been with Valley Hope almost two years now and have really enjoyed working in this position. My office is in Mission, but I've had the opportunity to work with people from all over the country through the AC/ESS program.

AC/ESS has been growing and expanding over the past two years as this program continues to offer services to those who may not be able to get treatment otherwise. AC/ESS serves many who do not have driver's licenses or transportation to treatment, those who work odd hours, or do not have access due to distance to another Valley Hope or alternate treatment center. It's been a great way for Valley Hope to help those that may not otherwise have been able to get treatment.

At Mission Valley Hope, we have had some re-decorating renovations in the past several months. We had our entire facility painted and re-carpeted and it looks really nice. We all got to choose our own carpet and paint colors, so I had paint chips on my walls for weeks trying to make up my mind! It's been finished for a few months now and looks great. Renewal dates here in Mission are the last Friday of every month and all alumni are encouraged to come and participate in those celebrations at 6 p.m.

As the holidays are coming up soon, I thought I would share some of the traditions we have here in Mission regarding the holidays. We have a tree we set up and decorate every year in the lobby of the office and also put a wreath on our front door. We have numerous potlucks for patients and staff

over the holidays and there are always lots of baked goodies and treats around as well. As far as personal family traditions with my family, we go to church Christmas Eve together. It's a beautiful service and of nice holiday music. My brother comes in from California and after we get home we make Rotel cheese dip and eat that until we feel sick! We then watch movies late into the night and usually fall asleep by the fireplace. The next morning we all have breakfast and open gifts together. We make a big holiday dinner and the rest of the family comes over in the afternoon to eat and celebrate together. I hope all of your holidays are happy,

Party Girl

By: Kristin M.

I would be the ""Party Girl Princess"" in my fairytale. Always wanting to be the center of attention. Showing up to the ball, I see the 3-tier fountain of punch, and my does it look enticing. It lures me in as it glistens from the club lights. A handsome man pours me a cup-I cant seem to stop with just one. I dance. I mingle. I always seem to go back to the fountain of punch. It has its hold on me. I see the most beautiful woman in the world dressed all in white, looking like a angel sent from above, coming down from the stage. She seems to know everyone and they love her. She comes to me and I now am under her spell. We have fun and for a brief moment I feel loved and popular. The clock rings midnight and everything around me turns black. The beautiful woman in white unveils her true idenity. She is still mesmerizing. A stunning, but evil woman all in black. Her ways make her ugly, but I can't get away. We go to a world that is dark. I hardly remember the night. Good? Bad? I can't recall. I wake up the next day still in my beautiful gown. Make-up smeared and hair a mess. How did I get home? How did the night play out? "The "Fairytale" ends...but I have a feeling it won't be the end of my "Once upon a times."

THANK YOU FOR REFERRING PEOPLE TO VALLEY HOPE

Data collected from Admission Reports indicate a high percentage of our patients are referred by former patients. Below is an unscientific report for the time period July 1-October 20, 2010. We know the percentage is higher than indicated below and for various reasons this data is not 100% accurate. (For example, if someone is referred by their employer and a former patient, they indicate only one referral source.) The point is, our alumni make a huge difference in spreading the word about Valley Hope treatment and sending folks to us.

Thanks to you from all of us!

Facility	Referred by Alumni	Patients Admitted	% Referred by Alumni
Norton, Kansas	21	156	13.4%
Atchison, Kansas	126	402	31.3%
Cushing, Oklahoma	3	244	1.2%
Boonville, Missouri	23	256	9.0%
O'Neill, Nebraska	3	182	1.6%
Chandler, Arizona	Not Available	267	NA
Grapevine, Texas	8	353	2.2%
Moundridge, Kansas	2	154	1.3%
Parker, Colorado	21	214	9.8%
Grand Total	207	2,228	9.3%

A This and That

By: Pam Larkin,
Dietary Department

Upon being asked to write a little something for the *Coffee Cup*, a million ideas began running through my mind. Should I write about the overwhelming friendliness of the patients at Valley Hope? Or, should I mention the excellent care and understanding the remarkable staff provides? Or, would I touch on any number of things including activities and social events that take place? There are just so many great aspects of Valley Hope to take into consideration; choosing just one topic became quite overwhelming.

For those of you who I have not had the pleasure to meet, my name is Pam Larkin and I am the cook at Valley Hope, a job I find both fun and exciting! Through my occupation I'm able to interact with numerous, fascinating and wonderful individuals, who have all in their own way touched my heart. From admittance to discharge, my wonderful staff and I see such hope and determination in these patients. We feel so blessed to know we play a part in their recovery process by ensuring that everyone's individual needs are met and they don't have to deal with the extra stress that comes with out-of-the-ordinary dietary needs.

Renewals are really such a special time for all of us; it's like Christmas every month! The return of the Alumni always sets us up for a big surprise. With each passing month the attendance of Renewal Day becomes bigger and bigger, but what do you expect? This is, after all Kansas, and there is no place like home!

We're now in the process of planning our anniversary party at Valley Hope which will be held on November 13th at 2:30 p.m. at our facility. Feel free to join us for some freshly baked cookies, refreshing punch and the hospitality of the staff. A transfer to the Atchison Conference Center will be made at 5:00 p.m. where dinner will begin in the Ball Room around 6:00 p.m.

Another event to keep in mind is our Renewal Day on November 19th. Please come join us for a Thanksgiving Dinner that will leave you full of both good food and great fellowship. Turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, sweet

potatoes, homemade pies, - you name it! This is our way of showing our gratitude to you.

On a more serious note, I would like to ask you to keep Janet Wisdom, one of our beloved counselors, in your prayers. Her son, Zach, was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident. God's blessings to her and her family!

I never knew a job could change my life in such a positive way. The experiences and the people that I have come to know through my services here at Valley Hope have affected me so greatly and I am very thankful for that. So, as I close, I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Advisory board dinner
Dec.15 for all staff and
patients and Christmas
renewal with a special
meal, Christmas caroling
and lots fun! Thanks Pam**



Pam Larkin



Amy Walker



Lacey Smethers



Nancy Lewis

C Greetings From the Valley of the Sun! By: Pam White, BA, Counselor Trainee

I would first like to say thank you to our new Program Director in Training, Briana, at Chandler Valley Hope, who has given me the opportunity, as a Counselor Trainee, to report to you on all of the exciting things going on at our facility. I would also be remiss in not mentioning that despite this time of year being often cold and icy in some parts of the country well...okay we are outdoors playing volleyball, wearing short sleeve shirts and generally bragging that this is our BEST WEATHER all year long!! Did I say that the closest we come to SNOW or ICE is if we take the patients to the indoor ice rink or to see an indoor hockey game?

The past few months have been busy at Chandler Valley Hope and we want to take this opportunity to introduce you to a few new and wonderful members of our family. Counselors Brad Wagner and Carol Pruitt come to us with many years of individual and group counseling in alcohol and chemical dependency treatment. Chris Wright comes to us from Northern Arizona, the Flag-

staff area and he is a great addition to our staff. Kandi Morris, a former Valley Hope Trainee transferred here from Atchison and we are thrilled to have her Valley Hope experience. Roger Nelson is our Community Service Clinician who is providing needed sober living information which is critical to our patients continuing their recovery once they hang their cups. Our admissions staff has been blessed with our newest coordinator, Peggy O'Sullivan, who is a wonderfully experienced counselor in her own right. Our front desk has found in Travis Bending, an eager and supportive ear to our patients and staff alike. Our business office is now headed by Jeff Freeman, as our new Business Manager, who brings fresh donuts and his sense of humor to staffing each morning. Jackie Egan joins our administrative staff and as a Valley Hope alumni served as the chairperson for our Tuesday night alumni meeting. Briana Sefcik has joined us as our new Program Director in Training. She hails from Grapevine Valley Hope in Texas. We are excited that she is here and that she is supportive of staff and provides guidance and direction to new counselor's,

(Continued)

(Chandler continued)

such as myself, and brings a fresh perspective to even the more experienced staff members.

Welcome to the campus our AC/ESS team who have recently all moved into offices, providing a wonderful opportunity to meet with our patients and establish their continuing care upon discharge from treatment.

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to two of our gifted staff members. Michelle Carnell, our Director of Nursing is headed to Montana to be with her children and grandchildren. Marta Grassi, our Assistant Director of Nursing is returning to her former small town where she is excited to renew friendships. Both of these ladies will be missed for their professionalism, their compassion for their patients and their wonderful friendship. Good luck to you both!

Congratulations to Susan Warren who completed her masters degree program and Brad Wagner and his family for the purchase of their new home in Phoenix.

I want to leave you with a wonderful poem written by one of our alumni on her cup hanging day. It truly expresses the hope, the gratitude and the healing that as a member

of this amazing team of treatment professionals I am blessed to be a part of...

This cup I hold is a Chandler Valley Hope tradition....but for me it marks the beginning of a new expedition.

A journey back to a woman I once knew before the drugs and the booze.

Waits for me with an eager embrace. I notice the sparkle in her eyes and the light

That falls upon her face. She speaks of hope and of a loving community and whispers in my ear, "this is the road to recovery." So, take this book and hold these hands and God will reveal a glorious plan!!!

~Kellie S.



M Letter From Moundridge

By: Ryan Culver, Admissions Counselor. BS, AAPS

Our newly planted trees are quickly changing and it is looking like fall here in Moundridge. The staff at Moundridge Valley Hope is still in disbelief that we get to work in such a wonderful building and do what we love helping people. The landscaping was just finished up with the grass seeds planted in early October and our flowers and shrubs were planted in early September. The staff is still busy giving tours and sharing the facility with those who are interested. We have felt so welcomed by the community and encourage anyone who is interested to come on by, we would love to show you around.

In September a youth group from the local United Methodist church visited and appeared to gain a lot of insight on addiction and what Valley Hope is all about. We also had a generous donation from the Eden Mennonite church. The members donated athletic equipment for outside and board games to the facility.

As you can imagine we have all settled in nicely and are anxiously awaiting the holiday season. In Halstead we had several traditions that we enjoyed during the holidays. Our nursing staff and business office staff have always been so creative and helpful with decorations and helping getting the

entire patient group and staff in the holiday spirit. Decorating the facility will be very exciting and we hope to have many visitors this season that can help us celebrate our first holiday season in a new building. As a staff, we'll enjoy some kind of celebration that involves food and good company. We really enjoy pot-luck lunches and try and have them throughout the year but especially during the Thanksgiving and Christmas times. Usually around Christmas time we try and organize a charitable gift for a family in need and for the last few years we have participated in the angel tree program.

Our Alumni group is slowly growing larger and with more involved, more activities are being planned. We encourage anyone who is an alumnus of

Halstead or Moundridge that is interested in the group to contact the Moundridge facility or the Wichita office. The group has a Christmas party planned for Sunday, December 5th. Starting at 4 p.m. Join us.

In closing I want to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. I also want to send a very special thank you to all of the members of the Hope Builders Board. We all appreciate your hard work and all you have done for us at Moundridge.

Birthdays

July: Mindy G, Mary C, Dallas L, Alicia B., 1 year; Michael R, Paige W., 2 years; Sandy J-3 years; Carly H., 4 years; Joe S., 6 years; David H., 7 years.

August: Kenny H., Joseph S., 2 years; Jill H., 3 years; Roger Y., 5 years; Tracy M., 6 years

September: Carissa D., Josh A., Jacky R., Clifford B., Shane L., 1 year; Mike W., 5 years; Dave T., 3 years

Moundridge Renewal Days

Join us beginning at 8:30 a.m on the last Friday of each month.

10:00 a.m. we'll meet and greet with the patients

11:00 a.m. we'll celebrate recovery with a medallion ceremony

Valley Hope Anniversaries

Dallas Ulrich	February 1988
Ella Kog 1	January 1, 1991
Carla Moore	December 7, 2001
Karen Baxter	March 3, 2003
Polly Douglas	March 24, 2003
Kevin Seuser	February 15, 2008
Jenna Maley	March 31, 2008
Rhonda Christy	January 14, 2009
Deanna Magruder	February 13, 2010

P Seasons Changes By: Alison Dean, LPC, CACIII

A Greetings from the Rocky Mountains! The temperature is cooling off here as we go into the fall season. This is a time of reflection for many of us at Parker Valley Hope as we approach the end of the year. Seasons tend to have that effect on people. Sometimes we measure our life, by “where we were last year at this time.” I have to say, that for myself I never would have guessed that I would be a part of something so great. The team of people we have at Parker Valley Hope are so special and I get a sense that everyone has a willingness to be a part of a greater good. I want to thank you all for doing what you do, having a special heart for those we serve, and doing this day after day one day at a time.

Change is inevitable, and we have had many changes. First we would like to welcome back Tino Romero and tell Melvin Young that we will miss him while he is spending his evenings in our Outpatient office. Tino was a huge asset to our team and we are all glad he is back on staff. We have two new AC/ESS counselors: Kaci Madison and John Shotts. In the nursing department, change has been challenging; however I can feel the dust settling and would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication. You are amazing. Welcome aboard to our new nursing staff: Trixie Ashley, Dee Beaudet, Jennie Birkbeck, Brian Brodrick, John Fenton, Joye Ellis, Brianna Garzelloni, Caroline Metcalf, Tony Rodenbaugh, and Diane Tapp. We are glad you are all here. Patty McCartee came to us through the dietary department, and is now a PCA. She is handling the change marvelous and her excitement and desire to learn is outstanding. In our business office we have Denice Fratantuono Picone, and Colleen Lewis, Outpatient Secretary. Welcome to all! The front office is such a crucial part of what we do, I would also like to thank Missy G., Tammy S., and Bonnie C. for your continued support. We couldn't do it without you. In the kitchen we have two new staff members Alex and Brian. In Housekeeping we have Tracy Schlender. In our Outpatient office we added Valarie Colgate, Outpatient Secretary and Ann Washburn as a Counselor. Thank you all so much and for choosing Valley Hope Association.

For the holidays we are planning two parties. The facility party for the patients will be held on December 18th. We will

Denver By: Donna Schwartz, MA, MFT, CAC III, Community Service Clinician

It is another ‘beautiful’ Colorado fall this year; the Aspens and maples are so gold, red and orange against the green pine trees and blue skies; the days are in the 70s and the nights in the 40's! Sandi Prasch, our center festivity coordinator, is busy putting stuffed spiders on our shrubs for Halloween. Before we know it, decorations will be on our doors and in our waiting room for an atmosphere of fun for the patients and staff. We love calling Colorado ‘home’.

Lets look at all the new changes that have been going on at the Denver Valley Hope Outpatient Office! In the past month we have added four new people to our facility team. Ann Washburn comes to us from a treatment center in the Denver Metro area where she did work with high risk teens in the school systems. She has been a therapist in the Denver area for over 30 years. She is finding her time here quite refreshing, working with adults now and people who have motivation to seek recovery. She is facilitating the night time Intensive Outpatient Office groups. Welcome Ann!

We also have a ‘new timer’ to our Denver Valley Hope

be having great speakers, food and fellowship to celebrate. As a staff we have also decided to celebrate. We will be hosting a staff holiday party on December 11th. Karaoke, secret Santa, roasting, and ugly sweater contest will be a blast. We are decorating and getting dressed up! Pictures to follow!

I would like to put out a special thanks to our Alumni that continue to come back, month after month, and support the patients.

Until next time, please have a safe and wonderful holiday. Remember what is important, embrace others, listen more than you speak and always remember you are never alone.

Addiction

Many years behind me; all the wrinkles on my face, reflections of anger in my eyes, as I sat in the corner with no sunshine. No sounds in my world, oh how my soul ached, for my soul was deeply disturbed, so much anger, grief, sadness, confusion, hatred, I've had plenty of taste. Taste of hell, down my throat it goes, hell has become a part of me. Numbing all the pains, my soul endured for so long. A child of hell I've become. Slowly creeping down, only guide I knew to get through life. Goodness didn't exist in my world. Down my throat it goes, constantly-- and constantly filling my soul with hell. It was the only way I knew how to live my life.

Recovery

Slowly as I go, I see the light in my eyes when the sun's shining high above. Then comes the moon, gracefully rising one by one. The stars dance into my eyes. God Almighty I'm at peace, my soul's weightless, I've been lifted, touched by God's finger. Never been so happy, never been so loved, never been so grateful, never been so shocked. There is a life I'm destined to live. Without the help of my old demons, forgiven them I will. As it gives character and made me strong, truly I will hold that while I step into my new world, the recovery world.

~Todd G., Denver Valley Hope

office who has been a team member from Parker Valley Hope the past two years, Mel Young. Mel moved to Colorado from the Midwest. He also is facilitating the evening Intensive Outpatient groups, taking the place of Kaci Madison, who is now doing AC/ESS Intensive Outpatient for the Colorado Continuum. Kaci relocated from the east coast this past year, moving to Denver to work for Denver Valley Hope; she loves Colorado and the new challenges that AC/ESS brings to her life with Valley Hope. Her office is now located at Parker Valley Hope.

Our team has also welcomed two new front office people in the past two months; Valarie Colgate and Caroline Metcalf, who are working through the learning curve that comes with all new jobs. They are willing students of all that comes with learning to work a front office of a busy facility. Our morning and evening Intensive Outpatient groups are staying close to full most months.

We really have five new people, but we can't count John Shotts as 'new', as he has been with Valley Hope in Colorado

(Denver continued)

for a long time, taking a short stint up in Atchison for two years and is now back with the Colorado team. John has worked in residential and outpatient roles over the years; he is now working with AC/ESS Continuing Care groups and our upcoming, newly added DUI program that is in the works to start in the next couple of months.

If you are looking for Jen Horning or Brooke Tangen Huus, they have switched roles for two months. Brooke is experiencing Parker Valley Hope culture while Jen is overseeing the Denver Valley Hope Office; her old stomping ground for six years prior to her position as Director in Training at Parker Valley Hope the past three years.

We have had various professionals visit our Denver outpatient location, introducing themselves to our staff and learning about who we are and what we do in the substance abuse field. Valley Hope's reputation continues to be solid in Colorado; the patient care our staff brings includes contacting and inviting referring professionals in the patient's treatment process, where they contribute to the patient's success in treatment and learn more about our philosophy--which includes believing it takes a village to help an addicted

person find their way to recovery.

A big celebration is upon us soon; in November (19th), Sandi P. will have 31 years of sobriety! Also in November, Jen Horning will have graduated with her masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Congratulations to both of you!

This is what it is ALL about, looking at the rewards of the work we do with "courageous" people who have committed their lives to change and recovery:

August One Year Medallions: Patricia A., April D., Catherine G., Michael H. and David H.

September One Year Medallions: Sandi G., Melissa G. and Jonah S.

October One Year Medallions. Darrin T. and Susan W., Jhona J., Justin W., JP M., Jennifer H., Nora M., Rhea B., Bobby J., Justin B., Nicole E, Jodi G., Hollie P., James C. and Don G. are **one year!** Greg D., Vern K., Mia P., and John T. are **two years or more.**

If you haven't been to Colorado to visit our beautiful state, we invite you to. Best wishes for your holiday seasons...

You Asked...

Friends In Recovery Answered

Question 1. How do I get through a long, cold winter ahead and do you have any tips so that I don't become a couch potato or isolate too much?

Visit elderly or shut in friends. Do volunteer work.

~Paulette B.

I am in Wisconsin, so we don't turn into couch potatoes, only potato salad. Meetings help, but children and breathing the cool air to remind me that I am alive to keep me hope-filled and happy.

~ Scott S.

Find a hobby (i.e. sewing, reading and crafts). I bought a Simple Science Projects book to work through with my kids. We also like to bake and have "Football Sundays" with snack foods and rooting for opposing teams just for fun.

~ Lisa D.

A group of my friends in recovery put together a running club last year. After sitting on the bench and watching my wife get involved, I decided I would quit smoking and join the group. We ran a few races in the spring and have spent the summer, and now fall, training for a big event in January. I am in the best shape of my sobriety and have made a few new recovery pals as well. To say the least, running has gotten me off the couch this summer and looks to keep me active all winter long... thanks.

~Anonymous

Get out of bed, take a shower and "suit up and show up" for life.

~Jim P.

The most important thing for me to remember somewhere about now...every year, is that the sun is going to shine again and the temperature will still get up into the 70s and 80s: I can still wear short sleeves and even

shorts, and unless I go to a certain section of Wal-Mart, there is not any major outward trappings of the coming holidays...When I was very young in recovery my sponsor gave me some suggestions that he had and circumstances that could only be His handy-work. My sponsor said that by practicing this day by day, I would be truly amazed at all the evidence. I would start to physically see God working in just everything I could see. As time progressed, I realized God was becoming larger in my life, and when I was in that "zone" of seeking Him in my entire day, then all future things-feelings, fears, insecurities, did not seem to be able to capture as much space in my thinking. Also, even when life's daily realities seemed large enough to overwhelm me, He was always there too, constantly appealing to my Spirit to keep a focus on His wonders. With time, I began to look back and see my anxiety levels were more in balance, and contentment was a really good condition to experience...Over and Over again!

~Charles D.

Do your meditations every day. Keep a conscious contact with God. Get physical exercise by getting into a routine.

~Roger P.

The very first thing to do is to stay in today. Do not sit and worry about how bad the weather is going to get or what you are not going to be able to do. Find a new game or hobby. Try something that you have not done before. Hang in there and get to meetings no matter what. We used the alcohol, no matter what. So let's just change that. It has worked for me and next April I will have 30 years.

~Marolyn

Well, for me, winter is the hardest season to get through. I get depressed some days just because of lack of sunlight. And then there are all those holidays! I have to stay focused on my number one goal...staying sober for this day. I go to more meetings. I make friends with other women after I hear them talking in meetings and go out for coffee after the meetings. Before I got sober, I only wanted to hang out with guys. I made a list when I was in treatment in Valley Hope in Atchison, Kansas of 20 things I could do instead of drinking. I call my sponsor every day, if only for a 5 minute conversation. I don't have to be alone, unless I choose to be. Isolation is the number one killer for me, because if I'm alone and I don't share what I'm feeling, I will go to a bar to supposedly make myself feel better, and it doesn't work. Read a lot of AA literature. Do some arts and crafts stuff. Whatever turns you on. Good luck, and remember, winter isn't forever, but getting drunk could be!

~A friend from Topeka, Linda W.

First, don't think about the long winter ahead. We only have today. Then make sure your doing something for your recovery every day. Increase your meetings. Get there early and leave late. Help clean up and reach out to newcomers. It doesn't matter how much time you have,

Question 2. I'm new in recovery...what triggers should I be especially aware of as holidays approach?

The holidays themselves can be a trigger. For me it is family and all the chaos/pain that associates them with the holidays. All my family drank, so being around intoxicated people can be a major trigger. Feeling lonely, isolated, feeling sorry for yourself? Stay close to recovery people. Go to as many meetings as you can and if something is making you uncomfortable-just leave.

~Tricia T.

I avoided most holiday parties my first year. As for family gatherings (I have family members still using and drinking) I would get there right on time (not early) and leave early. I did not stay in one place for very long. As soon as I felt uncomfortable, I left. They may or may not understand but you are the one in charge of your own happiness and recovery.

~Good luck! Lisa D.

Always give yourself an out. If you're going somewhere and you suspect there will be drinking, take your own car and leave if you get uncomfortable, or take someone in the program.

~Kristen G.

Family and friends...my first year sober I had to make some new traditions. In the past ALL holidays were ANOTHER reason to drink and party. If you find yourself around those CELEBRATING the holidays try sticking with the kids. They are sooo wonderful and a lot of fun. Stay close with those in the program. You will find strength in others and NEVER be far from your phone. Today, I appreciate the holidays so much more than I ever did and I never have a hangover or am sorry for my behavior. Live in the moment and enjoy!

~Libby H.

I ask lots of questions to find out what the holiday plan is. Where? Who? How long? I also find out if alcohol or other drugs are going to be present. It has also helped to

you can always welcome new people and help set up/clean up a meeting.

~Kristen G.

Get out and go to meetings, and do something for someone else. Spend time with your kids. Take them to lunch or to see something. Maybe go to a movie. There is lots to do.

~Terry F.

Join a club, book club, motorcycle group, quilting group and go to meetings for fun and sharing experiences. Find volunteering opportunities in your community: Read more. Take dance lessons. You don't have to have a partner. Take up photography with a digital camera. It's fun, inexpensive and you'll surprise yourself. Have a date once a week with friends. Have pot-luck dinners with card games and snacks. Learn a new skill: a new language, woodworking or car maintenance. Need more ideas? (even though they may not be too exciting...I have a million of them)

~Sharon F.

Join a gym. Working out on a regular basis is a great stress reliever. My husband and I, both in recovery, go 3-4 times a week. Meet great people! Get up and move!! Recovery is work-and some is great fun!

~ Tricia T

find out how I can participate in things that will be fun and ask if there is anything I can do to help. Most importantly, I give myself permission to not go or go and leave early if it is clear that it is not a good situation. I also usually follow up my family holiday by going to an NA meeting. It's a way to talk about the good time I had with my family or ask for support if things didn't go well.

~Mindy A.

Holiday shopping was a trigger for me. Going out to lunch during a day of shopping was a good excuse to start drinking. Also, the commercials on TV remind me of the good times. Remember to play the tape all the way through. What will happen (it will happen) if I take that first drink. You are not alone. Go to a meeting and share how you are feeling. Take someone shopping with you or do it online. Have phone numbers and stay connected.

~Judy E

Be especially aware of HALT.:Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired. Any of those feelings singularly, or in conjunction with one or all, should be carefully considered.

~Billy R.

Naturally, being around alcohol in any way is a temptation especially if you are in early sobriety. Another thing that I have had to watch no matter how long you have been sober is the fact that you may want to leave the gathering, no matter where you are. I have always made sure that I took my car or that there was someone that would take me home whenever I felt the need to leave or felt that I was in a corner.

~Marolyn G.

Family. You cannot avoid them this time of year, nor should you. You embrace being okay and they will just have to deal. Do NOT give up that holiday dinner and the family. We only get uglier in their eyes when we do not go. ~Scott S.

Stay close to as many meetings as you can get to. I did 90 meetings in 90 days when I first came to the program. Winter and all the holidays can get to you, if you let it. Call your sponsor every day, if you have one and if you don't get one. This is not a DO IT ALONE PROGRAM. If you have problems with family, find some family at meetings (just imagine they are family). It will get better with time. Make a list of 20 things you can do instead of drink. Every time you look at the list, try to do just one item. Then cross that off and go to another thing. It doesn't have to be big stuff. Clean out a drawer. Nothing is too small or big to get done. Good Luck and God Bless,
~Linda W.

I think we have different triggers. Take a good 10th Step with your sponsor to help you be aware of what yours are. I try and make sure I'm around people in recovery or at least people that don't use; holidays can be hard with family around that don't have addiction issues, and choose to celebrate the holidays with a few spirits. Hit a meeting that day. If you have an opportunity to invite someone in recovery over, do so. Your sobriety is the most important thing for you, so don't feel obligated to stick

Question 3. How do you deal with grief and loss issues as the holidays approach?

If anyone hasn't read *Opening Our Hearts Transforming Our Lives* by Al-Anon, you need to. In Kearney, on Tuesday nights, the meeting is that book and a lot of healing has taken place in that meeting. It puts a name on what you're feeling. Grief is a huge issue not only for AA's but co-dependent's as well.
~Kent M.

Unfortunately, many of us have to deal with grief/loss around the holidays early in recovery. What worked for me, was first, I immersed myself in the recovery community. Service work ended up being the best medicine. It's hard not to find gratitude when dealing with those worse off than yourself. Secondly, I forced myself to start new traditions, kind of that whole "fake it till you can make it" type of thing. Believe it or not, a middle-aged man can decorate a Christmas tree all by himself. And lastly, spend extra time with the God of your understanding.
~Bill B.

Luckily I don't have grief issues. Loss of income creates guilt and stress about gift giving vs. receiving.
~Kerry B.

I get into service, go to more meetings, visit Valley Hope and talk to new folks. Most important for me, is to share my feelings with my home group – getting it out of my head allows me to be willing to listen to others and accept help!
~Derek O.

I ask for support from my family and friends. They are always there when I need them. If things should get really rough, I know my counselor will be there to get me through it.
~Julie D.

I cherish the good memories and pray for guidance if needed. I have my wife to share my feelings with but you can always talk to your sponsor or even talk about it in a meeting. The old saying "time heals all wounds" is

around if it gets to uncomfortable, your loved ones will understand. Remember it's YOUR recovery. Great time for prayer and to be spiritually fit. God Bless this fellowship.
~Lloyd W.

There are no such things as "triggers." The *Big Book* uses the words "trivial excuse." You are out of therapy and into AA, so let's start using *Big Book* terms. The problem is, we have an alcoholic mind and along with our sound reasoning, we can find that excuse and we pick up that first drink. The Solution--keep our conscious contact with our Higher Power and surrender to Him. You can only do this by working the 12 Steps and practicing the Fifth Tradition by carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
~Roger P.

I think if family has started drinking, you need to have a way out, bring a friend in recovery. Remember this is a life and death matter for some of us. When someone comments on why you may not be drinking after years. of joining in, just say "today I just don't feel like drinking. No lies and short to the point. No need to explain.
~Dwight S.

important to remember. The pain doesn't go away completely but you learn acceptance and you can learn to deal with it better over time. My advice to the people just starting with their recovery is don't try to deal with it alone. Talk to someone. Take care everyone.
~Glen V.

Same way I deal with every other day and time and season...stay spiritually fit, go to lots of meetings, work with another alcoholic, and get out of my own way. Uhm, there's a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground. Love y'all,
~Joani P.

The first thing that I have had to do is accept the fact that my wife is gone...the next thing for me is to remember the serenity prayer. I cannot change the facts...the third thing is I have to live life on life's terms and sometimes that sucks...at least she got to be with me sober for 15 yrs.
~Thomas G.

I've got one year and one month. I am good today. I didn't put alcohol in my body today. Probably won't tomorrow. Things are looking great. I just do what it says to do in the *Big Book*. Simple. When feeling uncomfortable, I go to a meeting. I help someone if I can. Get out of self. Call someone. Pray. Candy. Read. 5 alive. It works, it really does.
~Don B.

I've learned a lot and there is only one person that is in control and that one is God. So if I'm having trouble, I go to God and I talk about it and most definitely get out to "AA families" for we help one another. Everything happens in His time and not mine so I LET GO, LET GOD and at the end pray of the day I thank God for good in my life and I pray for the one who still suffers. Knowing that I had given it all to him, I lay my head down on my pillow and go to sleep.
~Ira N.



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