

# PINE GROVE ALUMNI *Quarterly*

WINTER 2012



Dear Alumni and Friends of Pine Grove,

It was about nine months ago that Amanda Elkin, Caroline Smith and I had one of those high-energy, deeply-creative impromptu meetings where one idea spawned another and a new plan was hatched. Caroline is the Director of the Family Program and Intensives at Pine Grove, and Amanda is the Clinical Director of the same. I am crazy about them both.

The plan was to present the 12 Steps "Family Style" for all of the participants of Family Week and impress upon them just what it was going to take for all of us to find permanent, contented recovery. I would present the 12 Steps, Lauren would assist, and I was nervous.

The first Family Week came and I was a bundle of sober nerves and jitters. Perhaps Starbucks was not the best idea for a morning stop. The family members came spilling down the staircase all wide eyed with far away gazes and I remember thinking some of them looked like they had just been shot out of a cannon.

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"Our family found so much healing through family week. I can never say enough about that experience. I have shared the knowledge that I gained with many who are finding that addiction is in every walk of life. Thank you so much."

I still cannot explain what happened and continues to happen at Family Week, week after week, but we connected. We met on the plain of hopelessness and despair and looked at the plan set forth 76 years ago that guarantees relief for those of us who would "work it." We took the steps together and set forth a plan of action that would help us all. At the end, we were a team.

I love the patients and their families. It is my experience at Family Week that helps me get better one day at a time.

God Bless,  
Carver Brown, Alumni Coordinator

Read more responses from our Family Week participants on page three.

## A message from your Alumni Outreach Associate



I can't help but think of gratitude during this time of year. I remember sitting in a meeting a few years ago and the leader announced that we would have a Gratitude Meeting. I was in such a bad place, I remember wanting to run screaming!

Today I am so grateful that I actually have gratitude. Now, I just laugh to myself whenever someone announces the topic of gratitude and remember how far I have come. Today, gratitude is part of my day. I lived in such an ambiguous place during those first couple of years of sobriety, learning the hard lessons of "letting it go." This has made me eternally grateful for what I have today. Peace of mind, loving relationships, calmness and joy, just to name a few.

I have also learned that gratitude trumps just about every nasty lie I tell myself or negative emotion I am feeling. Now, after a ton of practice, I am aware of my thinking and can "turn it around" with a quick gratitude list in my mind. It works every time.

My hope and prayer is that all of our Pine Grove Alumni have the best year yet in 2012, that we will all be reminded that we have been given a second chance at life, a beautiful life. This is a recent email from one of your fellow alumni about gratitude that really touched me:

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# FAMILY

# Plan A

by Ben S.

I had been out of Pine Grove's Next Step Residential Rehabilitation program for less than 24 hours when I made it to my first AA meeting in my hometown of Meridian, Mississippi. I felt proud of myself for making it through treatment and very hopeful for my future. I was nervous as I walked into the building full of unfamiliar faces, but the familiar smell of fresh brewed coffee reminded me that I had done this before. Even if it was a different building, in a different town, with different people, I knew that I could do it. After all, they were all seeking the same thing that I was. Sobriety.

I had learned at Pine Grove that I needed to have a plan...and I did. My plan was to pour a cup of the coffee that I smelled, sit down in the back and listen. The meeting was going great and my plan was working to perfection. Then, out of nowhere, my plan was shattered. A gentleman from across the room pointed at me and asked me to speak! I couldn't believe it! What was I going to say? The possibility of speaking hadn't even crossed my mind. In my nervousness, I forgot to even say my name or that I was an alcoholic. All I said was the only thing that I could think of, "I just got out of a treatment center in

Hattiesburg, Mississippi called Pine Grove, and I am just grateful to be here." It wasn't much, but I had done it. The rest of the meeting I dissected what I had said over and over again in my head.

Should I have said more? Should I have told a room full of strangers that I just got out of rehab? My head was spinning and I was ready to get the heck out of there. The meeting finally ended, and I was about to run to the door when a funny thing happened.

People started coming up to me shaking my hand and giving me hugs. There were at least a dozen people who told me of their times at rehab. Several had been to Pine Grove just like me!

Numerous people gave me their contact information and even more, gave me words of encouragement. I felt so welcomed and so blessed. That was the last and only time that I walked into that building as a stranger.

During my stay at Next Step, I made many friends, and because of my stay at Next Step, I have made many more since coming home. It has been great to reminisce about time spent at Pine Grove with former patients just like myself. I am so very grateful to have had the opportunity to go to Pine Grove and for the opportunity to speak at that first meeting, even if I didn't want to.

## Schiller named Director of Gentle Path



Pine Grove is pleased to announce that Deborah Schiller, LPC, CSAT-S has accepted the position of Director of the Gentle Path program. Deborah has over 10 years of experience in treating

clients with addiction; the last five years working primarily with sex addiction. She previously worked as Clinical Therapist in the Professional Enhancement Program and Clinical Director of Gentle Path. During the last year, she has treated patients in private practice and continued to work in Pine Grove's Intensive Workshop program.

Deborah will return to lead the daily operations of Gentle Path. Together with Dr. Jes Montgomery, Dr. Patrick Carnes and Dr. Susan Campling, the Gentle Path program will continue to advance in providing World Class Care for our patients.

## Furlong named Business Development Coordinator



Pine Grove Behavioral Health is pleased to welcome Monnie Furlong as Business Development Coordinator.

"We are excited to welcome Monnie to the Pine Grove team," said

Debbie Sanford, Forrest General's Chief Behavioral Health Services Officer. "She brings several years of experience and knowledge to her role as Business Development Coordinator. We look forward to working with Monnie as we continue to grow our programs and provide high quality treatment for our patients and families."

Furlong has worked in the treatment industry for 10 years and resides in Nashville, Tenn.

## In your own words... NEXT STEP DAY OF HOPE by Dave A.

Attending my last Combined Lecture at Next Step, Pine Grove as a ninety day quarantined inpatient, a blunt counselor, using an interesting poem about a hole in the ground, metaphorically pointed out that we were all addicts struggling with mental health issues. Basically, we were all Mental Health Patients with defective and damaged brains and neurotransmitters. Needless to say as a narcissistic, self loathing, freshly sober alcoholic, cocaine addict, sex love and relationship junkie, who has a tendency towards co-dependency, I felt "reality worksheet" angry when I heard this blatantly obvious statement which I denied up until this point. My disease told me to flee screaming, but I stayed and participated. Three months later, I voluntarily came back on a vacation for more and attended another one of these stimulating lectures.

This time, I was a free man and believed I was safe from participation. Then, Carver ambushed my friend Rick and me, by turning the lecture into an impromptu speaker meeting featuring Rick and Dave. I did not run but stayed and spoke (about what I have no idea).

Why did I do this? My sobriety depends on doing stuff like this and I did it willingly with a beaming smile on my face.

All this occurred when I returned to Pine Grove for a Day of Hope. I gratefully attended this lecture and a bunch of other programming like Back to Basics plus True Next Step Stories, and had informal chats with interesting characters like Russ, John, and the Jedi Master, Issac. Like this diverse group of individuals, my main purpose in life these days is to give back to addicts and alcoholics of all sorts, who like me struggle with this thinking problem-slash-internal spiritual malady which manifests itself in all sorts of chaotic insanity.

Hopefully I helped a few patients that day by giving them a sliver of hope. If I do not give hope away, I have none for myself. Damn A.A. paradoxes make sense now! Thank you Carver, Lauren, the staff and the patients for allowing me to participate and for keeping me sober those few days. Thank you for allowing me to be of service.



# FAMILY

Here are a few responses from our families about Carver's Family Week lecture: *week*

"Your approach to the introduction of the twelve step program was a good backdrop for the overall addictions that are treated at Pine Grove. When a patient returns to the real world, each case is a little different depending on the type of addictions that are being overcome. As a spouse with co-dependency as a problem, I am trying to do my best to overcome my addictions so that I can better assist my husband with his own recovery. We are all wounded souls of sorts with different needs and goals. My goal at the present is to become healthy, mentally and physically, so I can better handle what the future has to offer. I wish to thank you and the others who helped my husband while he was in your care at GP. He and I are both continually impressed in the quality of help that you offer to your patients. Thanks for all you have done to help bring a healthier man back into my life. We are trying to use the tools that you gave him to develop a healthy relationship to carry us into the golden years...hopefully a long time in the future."

"I definitely found the 12 Step workshop helpful. I primarily appreciated it because it gave me a better sense of Pine Grove's stance on the importance of spiritual health and involvement in the recovery process and in life moving forward. Thank you so much for following up with us. We have renewed our vows and are continuing down the hopeful but long road ahead."

"Our family found so much healing through Family Week. Carver was wonderful as was all the staff that worked through Family Week. I can never say enough about that experience. I have shared the knowledge that I gained with many who are finding that addiction is in every walk of life. Thank you so much."

"My family and I were very much helped by the engaging and profound way Carver took us through the Twelve Steps. We are so much better because of our experience at Pine Grove. We are so very grateful for Pine Grove and Family Week. You took us deep and made us work hard and look the truth in the face, face to face."

"We found the whole week very enlightening. We have implemented some of the things we have learned and hope to continue adding things as the time goes on. I attended several Al-Anon

meetings in our area prior to Family Week, but found that most of the people had qualifiers that were middle age and had been battling addiction for years. I have met a group of moms that are dealing with young adults that are addicted and that seems to bring me more peace and hope that we will get through this. I struggle with enabling. I hear Kathy saying, 'Don't do for someone what they can do for themselves.' Sometimes multiple times a day! My husband and I have united in our approach to the addiction and how we can and/or should not help our son. That has been a really positive thing for us. I spoke to Carver a few times and got so much out of our conversations. The follow up and extended resources that Pine Grove has is such a wonderful thing. We feel truly blessed that our son's journey took him there. If there are programs for the family as a follow up, I will try to schedule time to attend."

"Family Week was a positive life-changing experience for my husband and me. My husband and I attend an Al-Anon meeting once a week; it is our date night. We are working on the first step and have sponsors. Al-Anon has been incredible therapy. It has kept us focused on 'one day at a time,' and has allowed us to place our day and our son in God's hands. We have kept our boundaries but have adjusted some that are no longer necessary. Thank you, Lauren, and thank you, Pine Grove."

"I simply cannot say enough good things about Family Week at Pine Grove! The level of professionalism and compassion was truly amazing and helpful. I learned so much about the disease of addiction and about myself as well. I enjoyed Carver's dash through the 12 Steps. The humor and self-disclosure were almost as important as the message. I have read through the book, and as part of my self-care, I have found a CoDA group and will celebrate 1 month with them this Saturday. I don't yet have a sponsor, but I find that almost anything that is giving me trouble, I can apply the 12 Steps to, so I am dealing with small issues until I find a sponsor to help me tackle the big ones. Thank you all again for the tremendous good and hope you bring to people who need help (myself included)."

*continued from Page 1*

"It is such a joy to enter this season of the year with a heart of gratitude for all that we receive from God and all He does for us without us ever asking. I ran across a writing this week I would like to share. It expresses what I am trying to accomplish in my life now and I hope it will mean something to you:

*'Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of the past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.'*  
by Melody Beattie."

Happy New Year!

Lauren White  
lwhite@forrestgeneral.com

## MILESTONES

### JANUARY

Rudy C.	1 year
Thomas P.	1 year
Derrick A.	7 years
Carrie Ann P.	1 year
Whitney S.	5 years
Matt L.	3 years
Alberto	1 year

### FEBRUARY

Dan S.	7 years
Kenn D.	2 years
Robert G.	2 years
Sunny D.	1 year

### MARCH

John H.	2 years
Chris B.	4 years
Curt B.	1 year

We would like to celebrate your sobriety date! If your sobriety date is coming up in April, May or June, please email your sobriety birthday and your name to Lauren at: lwhite@forrestgeneral.com



**Come visit Pine Grove staff at these conferences!**

**January 27-29**

CAPTASA  
Lexington, KY  
Dr. Susan Campling, speaking  
Ruth Ann Rigby, Carver Brown  
and Lauren White, attending  
[www.captasa.org](http://www.captasa.org)

**February 2-4**

MS Social Work Conference  
Biloxi, MS  
Kim Jarrell, attending

**February 9-11**

MS Addiction Conference  
Jackson, MS  
Ruth Ann Rigby, attending

**February 13-18**

IITAP Symposium  
Scottsdale, AZ  
Monnie Furlong, attending

**February 13-16**

US Journal  
Clearwater, FL  
[www.usjt.com](http://www.usjt.com)

**February 29-March 2**

SEED Conference  
Nashville, TN  
Ruth Ann Rigby, attending  
Monnie Furlong, attending

**March 12-17**

US Journal  
Las Vegas, NV  
Dr. Patrick Carnes, speaking  
Dr. Susan Campling, speaking  
Dr. Jes Montgomery, speaking

**March 22-25**

IAEDP  
Charleston, SC  
Monnie Furlong, attending  
[www.iaedp.com](http://www.iaedp.com)

**March 30**

Ole Miss Workshop  
Oxford, MS  
Cathy Reto, Ph.D., speaking

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## MEETINGS

*Back to Basics* Workshop coming to a city near you. For more information, contact Carver • 601-297-6639

**March 30-April 1**

Gentle Path Reunion  
Hattiesburg, MS

## ALUMNI LEADERS

**Boise, ID**

Robert L. • 208-286-2727

**Gulf Coast Area, MS**

Allen J. • 228-860-0909

**Hattiesburg, MS**

Wes P. • 601-916-3918

**Jackson, MS**

Anthony C. • 601-259-0092

**Lexington, KY**

Steve S. • 859-312-4854

**Norfolk, VA**

Fred R. • 757-695-6500

**Tupelo, MS**

Margaret P. • 662-377-3530 or  
662-840-7115

## RECOVERY ZONE

2012 dates to be announced

## INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit [www.pinegrovetreatment.com/intensives-workshops.html](http://www.pinegrovetreatment.com/intensives-workshops.html) for information.

**January 9-13**

**February 29-March 4**

**April 16-20**

**May 30-June 3**

Facing the Shadow for Men

**January 16-20**

**March 12-16**

**May 7-11**

Mending a Shattered Heart

**January 23-27**

**February 20-24**

**March 19-23**

**April 23-27**

**May 21-25**

**June 18-22**

Breaking Free: Help for Co-dependency

**January 30-February 3**

**April 30-May 4**

Relationship Restoration

**April 9-13**

Facing the Shadow for Women



## YOU'VE GOT MAIL!

Pine Grove Program event invitations are sent by email.

Would you like to receive invitations?



Send your email address to  
Lauren White at  
[lwhite@forrestgeneral.com](mailto:lwhite@forrestgeneral.com)



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for links