

PINE GROVE ALUMNI *Quarterly*

FALL 2011



Dear Alumni and Friends of Pine Grove,

Sometimes it's great to just hang out with friends. Do you ever get that overwhelming feeling of gratitude? Do you ever get that sense of belonging? From time to time, do you get that flash of a reminder of what life used to be like and go "whew" that was then and this is now. All of that and so much more happened for me at the last Pine Grove Alumni Reunion.

It was just last June, but in some ways it feels like a long time ago when we gathered on a Friday night at the Walnut Circle Grill for dinner and sharing with the returning alumni and some of the clinical staff. Joe Pack Arnold was there as well and we shared about what brought us back to Hattiesburg and back to the place where we were trying to make heads or tails out of our lives. We laughed a bunch and there were some touching times too.



We met again on Saturday morning where the Family Program and Intensives are held and we were joined by David Sellers who is the new Spiritual Coordinator. Earlier I had asked David to consider doing a mini-workshop for us on the Spirituality of the 12 Steps. I wish I had recorded it. He has the most genuine questioning style toward Powers Greater than we and I was just captivated. Apparently I was not alone in my assessment as there were lots

of questions and "sparkey" comments that kept the program lively.

In the afternoon, we had a sharing time with the patients, and many alumni reported to me that this was their favorite part. There is magic in the sharing of stories, and I could see the questions appearing on the faces of the patients as those with sober lives gave hope to the struggling. The returning veterans of sobriety demonstrated a life that has moved from hurting to healing to helping. I was in awe.

Saturday night we had a huge banquet with the patients, staff and alumni. Joe Pack emceed the affair and allowed the alumni to speak again and the gratitude they have for what Pine Grove and the staff had done for them flowed. As I looked over the room, I saw a couple of the staff members in tears. I couldn't help but pause for the wonderful thing these group of healers have done for us all. Sometimes we don't think to say "thank you" enough, but not on this night.

Sunday we had a spiritual sendoff in the Joe Pack tradition. It was Gandhi meets the white wolf (or something like that) when Joe Pack took the circle on a journey. Perhaps it was Bill Wilson meets Geronimo. It doesn't matter, because we hugged each other goodbye with a resolve to meet again soon.

God Bless,
Carver Brown, Alumni Coordinator

A message from your Alumni Outreach Associate



... The most important thing I have learned on my journey thus far is that I have an ego and a spirit and they cannot coexist. When one is "large and in charge" the other is muted.

The 12 steps have shown me how to live in the spirit. This is the place where I can rest, I can breathe, I can be happy and comfortable and wonder at nothing done against me. When I am living in the ego, I am never satisfied. Nothing is ever good enough. I always want more.

The next most important thing I have learned in my journey is that God loves me. I realized this one day when I was praying for my little boy while he napped. I prayed that his journey to God would be short and painless. Then I paused, knowing that my pain is what brought me to God. So, I changed my prayer and said, "God, please let my little boy know he is deeply loved by his mother, and that I love him no matter what." Instantly I heard a small voice deep inside, "My child, that is all I ever wanted you to know – that I love you too no matter what." This spiritual experience has changed everything.

I now see the world in a different way. We are all on a journey to find a Power Greater than ourselves to solve our problems. Some of us are so fortunate that we get to see this Power before we leave this earth.

(continued on Page 3)

The Power



I wanted to express my thanks to Carver for the two spiritual practices that he taught us at Gentle Path. He gave a talk on the Twelve Steps, which was extremely helpful, and then he took the GP community to the Gazebo and we sat in a circle. It was a beautiful day, warm and breezy. He instructed us in the Eleventh Step Practice and the Four Channels of Divine Guidance: sight, sound, feelings and thought. It was a mindfulness practice and very spiritually peaceful. Then we were to simply write down what came to mind with the preface prayer – “God please direct my

thinking,” and “Illumine my mind, inflame my heart and strengthen my will! Thy will be done.” I am proud to say I have continued this practice since discharge from GP through today and will continue the practice. I have found that I receive “intuitions” or what I feel is God speaking to me in helpful and loving ways. It helps fulfill the Eleventh Step by improving my conscious contact with God. This begins every day during my meditation time in the morning. I am committed to this practice and highly recommend it to all of my peers. It keeps me grounded and in tune with God’s will for me.

The second practice he recommended: kneel down every day and ask God, “Please keep me sober today.” He said, “If you forget and remember while driving, pull over as soon as possible, find a restroom or private place, kneel and say that prayer. I have continued to do this since I returned home from GP as well. I have forgotten a few times and as soon as I remembered, I found the first private place, knelt and prayed “God, keep me sober today.” This simple exercise reminds me everyday and throughout the day to stay sober just for today. It has been very, very helpful. Please pass this on to my other recovering brothers and sisters. Peace, Gary W.

Sanford recognized as Behavioral Healthcare Champion



Pine Grove is proud to announce that Debbie Sanford, Forrest General Chief Behavioral Health Services Officer, has been named a 2011 Behavioral Healthcare Champion.

This award, given annually by *Behavioral Healthcare* magazine, recognizes leadership of senior executives in community mental health and addiction treatment facilities nationwide. Sanford began her work as Pine Grove’s lead administrator in 2006, and has since helped guide Pine Grove through the addition of new services, including new outpatient workshop services and expansion of the Evaluation Center, which provides evaluations for many kinds of patients dealing with addictions or behavioral health issues. Sanford was nominated for this prestigious recognition by her peers and selected as one of five award winners by the *Behavioral Healthcare* magazine editorial team.

Tebow joins Pine Grove team



Pine Grove is excited to introduce the newest addition to our team, Tebow, named after NFL Player Tim Tebow. He is currently in training with his handler, Derrick Guinn, a full time Pine Grove

employee. Tebow is working on obedience and “search and find” skills with the same trainer that trained Samantha. He will be trained to search and find alcohol and drugs, including some prescription drugs. Once trained Tebow will conduct regular searches within our programs and will spend time with patients which is therapeutic as well. Samantha is semi-retired and will continue to spend time with patients in a different capacity.

“In your own words...”

“I’m Adam, and I’m an alcoholic. My sobriety date is December 1, 2007.

I didn’t return to Pine Grove until June of 2011. I had chances, but no desire. Somehow, after my three year chip, many parts of my life coalesced. My sponsor loves reunions, so we attended. I had no fear anymore.

What this reunion showed me above all was the soaring sense of caring at Pine Grove. In my early fog of recovery, I couldn’t grasp it. From three-plus years of sobriety, I had the sense of love from staff and patients that I am sure is always there. That was my epiphany. The staff is like a conduit of love from my Higher Power to the patients – helping them to love themselves one day at a time. Thank you, Next Step!”

“I just wanted to thank you and Lauren for a great weekend! I left Next Step in November, 2008 and had not been back since, but have thought about returning for the alumni retreat for some time now. I’m very glad I did. I had no idea what to expect of the experience, or how it was going to affect me emotionally; after attending, I can say I was truly moved. The lecture series was a great re-introduction to the Pine

Grove curriculum and the banquet on Saturday night was first-class in all aspects. But, I must say the opportunity to return to Next Step and share with the current clients affected me in a profound way. Just to be back in that setting for the first time and to truly identify with some of the disconsolate looks on the faces in the audience brought back all of those first few days and weeks to me in a powerful way. Sharing is not, and has not ever been an easy thing for me. However, I felt such a common bond with those guys, having been in their seats before, and I was eager to share. As an addict, I have always been a self-centered person. Even in recovery, it’s been a process to feel empathy as I try to grow into a better person. That Saturday afternoon, sitting in McRae Hall, I felt a part of something bigger. Not to sound dramatic, but my recovery took a visible step forward. After the meeting, one of the current clients approached me and thanked me for “making a difference” to him. For a long time I didn’t feel as if I could make a difference to anyone. That to me is the miracle of recovery, and for me it all started at Pine Grove.”

Rob F.





“That need for acceptance and love is present”

We made the decision to attend the Pine Grove Reunion to give back and show our appreciation to Pine Grove Women's Center.

Our daughter received treatment May 23-August 10, 2010. From there, she went to a sober college environment in Atlanta to begin recovery. As parents, we can only observe the transformation, but she is transforming.

We feel this transformation was affected by the Pine Grove Women's Center treatment because the “whole” family was treated. During her transformation, we found Al-Anon to help us with “our” disease. We were brokenhearted, crazy and desperate to “fix” things. We found family members that shared those same problems that listened to us and helped us find solutions to our situation and encourage us to find joy. We are more aware of the pain around us and want to help others find their way to Al-Anon. We attend every Friday night and chair a meeting once every two months. There are always other opportunities to provide access to Al-Anon in our community and this has filled our lives with hope and peace. Our daughter is learning to live “life on life's terms” without our interference but with our love.

The visit with the Women's Center patients reminded me of the many beautiful, talented women that need love, encouragement and the chance to be themselves. That need for acceptance and love is present. As family members, we have to learn to “let go and let God” and embrace what God, as we understand Him, has planned. Life is about Plan B and Pine Grove Women's Center can definitely help you with Plan B. If you let them!

The speakers and programs of the weekend reminded us to work the 12 steps every day, and apply them to any life situation that arises. We were most intrigued with the concept that one should make amends to those places that remind us of the bad times that were associated with addiction and its ability to aid in further healing.

The group session with the Pine Grove Women's Center patients was especially healing for us and we enjoyed sharing our experiences over the past year. We are very appreciative of the staff, speakers and attendees that made this event another step in the healing/recovery process for us.”



I have been reborn. And for that I am grateful. This is a prayer an alumnus read at a recent Alumni Q&A at the Women's Center:

I asked God to take away my pain.
God said, No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.
God said, No. Her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.
God said, No. Patience is a byproduct of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness.
God said, No. I give you blessings.

Happiness is up to you.
I asked God to spare my pain.
God said, No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.
God said, No. You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life!
God said, No. I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me LOVE others, as much as He loves me.
God said...Ahhh, finally you have the idea.

Lauren White
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M I L E S T O N E S

OCTOBER

Judi S. 1 year
Judy S. 1 year
Michael D. 1 year
Oz G. 1 year
Phil A. 1 year
Phil A. 6 months
Ricky G. 1 year

NOVEMBER

Allan R. 2 years
Brian F. 6 years
David C. 3 years
David N. 3 years
Eddie R. 1 year
John S. 1 year
Kathy R. 5 years
Wendell S. 1 year

DECEMBER

Amy F. 3 years
Curtis T. 1 year
Jessica D. 1 year
Joseph E. 1 year
Paul L. 3 years
Ron F. 1 year

We would like to celebrate your sobriety date! Please email your sobriety birthday and your name to Lauren at: lwhite@forrestgeneral.com





Come visit Pine Grove staff at these conferences!

October 13-15

National Eating Disorder Association
Los Angeles, CA
Cathy Reto, Ph.D., attending
www.edap.org

October 26-29

EAPA
Denver, CO
Allison Sutton, attending
www.eapassn.org

November 1

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug
Dependency of Central Mississippi (NCADD)
Jackson, MS
Ken Seely, Board Registered, Level II
Interventionist, special guest
Ruth Ann Rigby, attending
www.ncaddcenms.org/www.intervention911.com
www.pinegrovetreatment.com/events.asp

November 2

NCADD's 1st Annual Addiction, Intervention
& Recovery Workshop
Jackson, MS
Cost \$25
Ken Seely, Board Registered, Level II
Interventionist, speaking
Caroline Smith, MA, LPC, LISAC, CSAT, CMAT,
speaking
www.ncaddcenms.org/www.intervention911.com
www.pinegrovetreatment.com/events.asp

November 6-10

ACPE
Scottsdale, AZ
Allison Sutton, attending
www.acpe.org

November 10-12

1st International Near Conference
Ireland
Susan Campling, RN, Psy.D., speaking
Caroline Smith, MA, LPC, LISAC, CSAT, CMAT,
speaking
www.nearconference.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETINGS

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

October 14

Back to the Basics
The Morton Center, Louisville, KY
Carver Brown, presenting
www.themortoncenter.org

November 4

A Day of Hope at Gentle Path
Contact Lauren at
lwhite@forrestgeneral.com to reserve your spot

ALUMNI LEADERS

Hattiesburg, MS

Wes P. • 601-916-3918

Boise, ID

Robert L. • 208-286-2727

Jackson, MS

Anthony C. • 601-259-0092

Tupelo, MS

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

Gulf Coast Area, MS

Allen J. • 228-860-0909

RECOVERY ZONE

2012 dates to be announced

INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit
www.pinegrovetreatment.com/intensives-workshops.html for information.

October 3-7

Relationship Restoration

October 13-15

Physician Professional Boundaries

October 12-16 / December 7-11

Facing the Shadow for Men

October 24-28 / November 14-18 /

December 12-16

Breaking Free: Help for Co-dependency

October 31-November 4

Facing the Shadow for Women

Recovery Zone Testimonial

"...the Recovery Zone workshop has exceeded my expectations. I feel gratitude that I invested my money and time to take a 'time out' from my work schedule to do some deeper recovery work. I can relate this workshop to my incredible GP experience. My hope is you attend the next one." – JP R., Toronto, Canada, Alumni of Summer 2009

November 11-13

Renfrew
Philadelphia, PA
Cathy Reto, Ph.D., attending
www.renfrewconference2011.org

November 12-13

Florida PRN
Phillip Hemphill, Ph.D., LCSW, speaking
Leah Claire Bennett, Ph.D., speaking
Susan Campling, RN, Psy.D., speaking
www.flprn.org

November 16-18

Alabama Counseling Association
Birmingham, AL
Susan Campling, RN, Psy.D., speaking
Ruth Ann Rigby, attending
www.alabamacounseling.org



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www.pinegrovetreatment.com
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