



Pine Grove Alumni Program

Forrest Health®

Holiday Issue
2019

NOT GOLD, NOT FRANKINCENSE, AND NOT MYRRH—SOMETHING MORE



Eileene McRae,
Pine Grove Alumni Coordinator



December is always the most exciting time of the year. The holiday spirit just seems to reach out and grab me. A number of years ago, however, a new dimension of spirit was added to my holiday excitement! When asked to write an article for this publication, I welcomed the opportunity to share my early recovery experience because I strongly believe that the most important work one can do in the field of addiction recovery is to “carry the message.” For me and my family, the Christmas gift of recovery went like this:

December 25th was quickly approaching—I had no reason to be excited about a happy yuletide. There was not enough money in my budget for Santa to bring my beautiful children their wish list. In fact, I was lonely, depressed, sad, hurt, and confused. Not only was I over whelmed by those negative feelings, our Santa Claus didn’t even live with us anymore. My husband and I had been separated for several months. There seemed to be no answer to my dilemma—I exercised what had become a way of dealing with life, I HAD ANOTHER DRINK!!

Fortunately, within the next week or so, I believe God worked a miracle for me and my family. Through the love and compassion of some people who came into my life at that time, I came to realize that I had a substance use disorder, and later learned that I had, in fact, been dealing with it for years.

My first day on a drug and alcohol unit in Boulder, Colorado, a lady looked at me and said, “We want to help you here; you can recover from this hopeless-helpless turmoil if you have the desire to do so.” She went on to say that she knew I could recover because she had.

(Continued on Page 2)



Mark Your Calendars

Days of Hope
February 13-14

Gratitude Reunion
March 13 - 15

**Pine Grove Alumni
Weekend Retreat**
June 12 - 14

12 Ideas

of Healthy Recovery for the Holiday Season



Eileene McRae & Erin Konves,
Alumni Coordinators

In America, as in most other countries, we celebrate almost EVERYTHING with “alcohol” and food. For some of us, that’s a tricky/dangerous combination. We are not at all suggesting that you stop celebrating during the holidays, in fact, as we are told in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, “...we insist on enjoying life...”

We know that those first few holidays after treatment are a little worrisome. The following 12 tips may be helpful.

1. If going to a festive gathering where you know alcohol will be served, be sure you go with, or meet someone else in recovery. Have a plan of action.
2. If you get uncomfortable at a party, you can always excuse yourself and leave. Make sure to have an exit plan: it is wise to drive in your own vehicle.
3. Attend an extra meeting or two during the holidays to remind yourself of who you are.
4. Ask God for an abstinent day early in the morning and then thank him/her for your abstinence before you retire.
5. Check in with your sponsor a bit more than usual – be honest about your feelings and thoughts.
6. Offer to do more service work at your home group.
7. H.A.L.T. – DO NOT get too HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY, TIRED.
8. Hang with your friends in the fellowship.
9. Check your gratitude list daily.
10. Set aside additional time in your day for prayer, meditation, and reading your literature.
11. Plan to do one activity daily just for fun.
12. Always remember FIRST THINGS FIRST. Your recovery should be your top priority.

(... Continued from page 1)

Those words sparked a hope within me that I had not had in years. I took my first step down the road to recovery that day, and I know I could never have done it alone.

During the next month, that treatment center and the personal interactions with other people there, gave me a rebirth to life and an awareness of myself I had never thought possible. I realized, with the help of the other people around me, that I had an essential goodness about me and that I deserved sobriety and all of the joy it would bring.

At that time, I had lived in Colorado for 12 years and I actually, really saw the snow fall that December for the first time. I had never known what it was like to play in the snow—I LOVED IT! Christmas tree lights were brighter that year, carols were sung louder, packages under the tree were more colorful, smiles and greetings were more cheerful, and the aroma of pumpkin pie, gingerbread men, turkey and dressing cooking were all consuming. The love from my children was almost palpable that year. I FELT ALIVE WITH MY NEWFOUND GIFT OF SOBRIETY! What a treasure to be given at Christmas, a gift I could nurture and develop for the rest of my life!!!

It is my prayer that those of you who are enjoying sobriety, will go to whatever length necessary to reach out to someone who is still suffering. I further hope that you will contact, out of gratitude, someone who was instrumental in initially offering you the gift of recovery and tell them how much you appreciate their concern for you and your life.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Intensive Workshops

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit www.pinegrovetreatment.com/intensivesworkshops for information. Please note schedule is subject to change based on registration.



Pine Grove Intensive Workshops

Forrest Health®

We want to hear from you!

Please let us know what plans you have made to enhance your sobriety/recovery in 2020. We would like to publish your ideas in the winter alumni newsletter so others might find encouragement and support for their programs as well. You may email us at alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Gratitude – COSA / SAA

(All Gratitude/GP Spouses Welcome)

Family COSA Meeting

Wednesday – 8:00 p.m. CST
Conference Call-In #: 319-527-3510
Access Code: 715268

Questions? Please contact Beth A. at 256-566-8554.

This meeting is chaired by family alumni and is not associated with Pine Grove.

Write on Our Wall

Join us on Facebook and post your message of hope, get some encouragement and get connected!

Email alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com for access to our private group.

1-888-574-HOPE
www.pinegrovetreatment.com

FOLLOW US



MILESTONES

November 2019

Charles T. 4 months
Rob B. 6 years
Dee W. 7 months
John A. 17 years
Brain F. 14 years
Susan S. 6 months
Eddie R. 9 years
Luke K. 90 days
Tommy H. 2 years
Alex W. 9 months
John S. 9 Years
Ricky G. 90 days
Susan S. 6 months
Matt K. 6 months

December 2019

Scott O. 1 year
Cole F. 3 years
Ed M. 9 months
Jessica S. 1 year
Eileen M. 42 years



If your sobriety/abstinence date is in January, February, or March, please email it to alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com

I hope everyone is preparing for the holidays and the upcoming New Year! We are looking forward to some amazing changes at Pine Grove and cannot wait to see everyone's smiling face during the Days of Hope in 2020. Eileene and I have a wonderful year planned! Please make sure to check us out on both Facebook and the new app if you have not done so already. If you have any questions with regards to either one, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. My hope is everyone has a blessed and joyful holiday and a happy New Year. See you soon!

– *Erin Konves*
Pine Grove, Alumni Coordinator