



# Pine Grove

## Alumni Program

Forrest Health®

Winter Issue  
2022

### EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

#### SHANNON RUNNELS, MS, BA, P-LPC

*Clinical Therapist, Legacy*

*Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services*



Shannon is from Magee, Mississippi and has one sibling, a younger sister who lives in Laurel. Although there were only the two of them in their immediate family, they had ten first cousins with whom they are very close. They phone each other often and get together with them frequently. Shannon's sister has twin sons and Shannon loves those nephews like they are her own. Shannon has a very close relationship with her mother—she cares for her in their home.

Shannon had completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at The University of Kentucky before returning to Mississippi to help care for her mother who was not well. After settling in “back home”, she decided to continue her education by enrolling in the Master of Science, clinical psychology discipline, at William Carey University.

I met Shannon through a mutual friend several years ago while she was still a student at William Carey University. During that time, she was working in a local gift shop. As it does, time marched on, and one day she inquired about a possible placement for her at Pine Grove to do her internship and practicum. Of course, I put her in touch with our very own, Dr. Anthony Calabrese, and the rest is history—Shannon has been with us since that time, almost three years now.

#### TELL ME ABOUT A BRIGHT MOMENT FOR YOU IN YOUR CAREER.

“The first thing that comes to mind is a thank you note I received from a patient. I was so touched by that kindness—to me, it was almost an acknowledgment or a confirmation of my working in my chosen field.”

#### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A YOUNG GRADUATE WHO ASPIRES TO WORK IN ADDICTION REHABILITATION?

“I would encourage a new therapist to spend time watching a seasoned therapist do his/her work—you cannot learn this from books alone.”

#### TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GREATEST MENTORS.

“The first one would have to be a tough therapist I had when I was living in Kentucky - she was very firm, but

always in a very loving way. Also, my grandmother's cousin, Mr. Belah Chain was a mentor to me. He was so very kind by always helping me financially while I was a student. The library in Olive Branch, Mississippi, bears his name, The B.J. Chain Library—I am so grateful to him.”

#### TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF THAT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW.

Shannon shared with me that her love for outer space is HUGE!! “I would travel in space tomorrow, even if the odds of returning were only 50%.” Several years ago she attended an adult space camp in Alabama. She and the other adults who joined her in that adventure have stayed in touch with each other by email since that time.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN THE GREATEST TRIAL IN YOUR LIFE?

“My father died at age 50 in active alcoholism. The conflict of grief and relief has been my greatest trial.” Shannon can very sensitively relate to families in crisis because of her own personal experience—WE ARE SO LUCKY TO HAVE HER!

#### WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

“My love for humor and laughter creates my fun. I had a cat that lived for 21 years—her name was Skinny Pretty—she brought me so much love and laughter.”

#### WHAT BRINGS YOU THE GREATEST JOY?

“What brings me the greatest joy is my ability to try new things in spite of any fear.”

I am a much better person today for getting to know Shannon—my time getting to know her over dinner was indeed, time well spent. When you see her in the halls of our workplace, ask her about her handsome twin nephews and also ask her how Skinny Pretty got her name. After that, just step back and watch for the smile on her face.

Interviewed by: Eileene McRae  
Alumni Coordinator  
Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services

Fortune always favors the brave, and never helps a man who does help himself.

– P. T. Barnum

Remember that not always getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck

– Dalia Lama

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life

– Steve Jobs



## Mark Your Calendars

Days of Hope

March 18, 2022

June 24 – 26, 2022

(Reunion)

September 9, 2022

December 2, 2022

# It Works If You Work It

## Wisdom from Alums

Take a look at what your Pine Grove Alumni Association members are saying about recovery. We thought you might enjoy their experience, strength, and hope.

Shared by: Alumnus, Rebecca H.

- 1. What did you learn in treatment that you continue today?** I learned to be present with people and to be honest!
- 2. Do you have a daily ritual/routine that is part of your recovery?** Yes! I get up and spend about an hour outside to pray, meditate and just be still in nature. I go to a meeting. Communicate with my sponsor and end the day thanking my higher power for another sober day.
- 3. What are your thoughts / feelings about service work and how important it is for recovery?** I think service work is a key in my recovery. If I want to keep my recovery I have to give it away just as freely as it was given to me. No matter how big or small the service may seem I benefit from getting out of myself. Sponsorship is one of my newer steps in recovery and it is the most rewarding experience!
- 4. Do you have a daily meditation / spiritual routine that works for you or something that you are working toward? If not, what do you do in place of this?** I read out of *A Walk in Dry Places* every day and *Daily Reflections*. My spiritual connection is super important. I realize when I'm not talking to God and asking His direction the squirrels start taking over quick like and in a hurry! So I try to pause and ask His direction. I still have lots to learn and work to do.
- 5. What are some suggestions you have for a newcomer?** I try to suggest to newcomers to get a sponsor as soon as possible! Get in the big book and start the steps. Chase your recovery as hard and harder than you chased your addiction. Go to 90 meetings in 90 days. Listen to your sponsor. It gets better I promise it does! Get a sponsor and call them.

Shared by: Alumnus, Andy L.

- 1. What did you learn in treatment that you continue today?** I learned a lot in treatment that continues to be critical in my recovery. Probably one of the most important lessons was to, "Live in consultation". This is something that I've taken to heart because my best thinking got me to treatment for my addiction. Now I don't make any important decisions without talking to someone else. Also, when something important or emotional is going on with me, I check it in with someone such as my sponsor, my therapist, or a recovery peer. I don't try to deal with it myself. The other most important lesson that I learned is that recovery is not a task, it is a way of living. If I look at it as just a box to check, I'm thinking like my addict self. I need to approach life as a whole with a recovery mindset, living the principles embodied in the twelve steps and twelve traditions.
- 2. Do you have a daily ritual/routine that is part of your recovery?** Absolutely, and I think this is critical to my recovery. It starts with prayer and meditation in the morning. I attend a daily twelve step meeting. I contact at least one recovery peer a day. I also try to journal daily but find that I miss a day or two a week. Journaling is usually done at the end of the day and includes an inventory of my emotions that day, a gratitude list, and a list of three good things that have happened that day. I also finish the day with a prayer to thank my higher power for my sobriety and other positive things that have happened. Another thing that I have tried to incorporate

is daily reading of some recovery-oriented literature. I accumulated a long list of books when I was in treatment and have added to it since I've been out. I am working my way through the list.

- 3. What are your thoughts / feelings about service work and how important it is for recovery?** My first sponsor loves to say, "Service keeps us sober". He is a living example of this. I have tried to incorporate this by leading and hosting twelve step meetings, and volunteering for tasks that need to be done. I also pray daily for opportunities to be of service to others. I have tried to find opportunities to volunteer. The reason for all of this is that I feel that service work is an important component of recovery. If I am focusing on helping others, it keeps me from focusing on myself which was an important characteristic of my addicted self.
- 4. Do you have a daily meditation / spiritual routine that works for you or something that you are working toward? If not, what do you do in place of this?** As I mentioned above, I have a daily routine of morning and evening prayer. I do at least the morning prayer on my knees, which I think is an important symbolic gesture for surrendering my will to my higher power. Based on the comment of a recovery peer, I have also recently been saying my prayers out loud, hoping that will help ME to hear them. In the morning I include a request to God to keep me sober that day and to provide grace to specific people in my life who may be struggling with something. In the evening, my prayer includes thanks for keeping me sober that day, and a plea for forgiveness for any transgressions I may have made. I also do a guided meditation each day using one of the many apps that are out there for that purpose. Recently, and based on my introduction to it in treatment, I have also started a daily yoga practice. I hope to keep this up as I find it very helpful.

- 5. What are some suggestions you have for a newcomer?** Two main things. The first is, create a daily sobriety plan or routine that works for you. I don't think recovery is one size fits all. Based on your own beliefs and schedule, figure out several things that you will be able to accomplish. Initially a checklist will help with this until it becomes a natural part of the day. Trial and error are important. Don't be afraid to get rid of things that don't work and put in others as you learn about them. Also, don't try to make this plan by yourself. Use resources such as recovery literature, a therapist, a sponsor, and other recovery peers to help you develop your individual plan. I have learned so much from my brothers and sisters in recovery. Once you have a plan, and even as you are developing one, work it daily. The slogan "It works if you work it" is a conditional statement. It doesn't work if you don't do the work. The second thing is connection, connection, connection. I have heard many times that connection is the opposite of, or cure for, addiction. Of course, I didn't listen to this at first, and it cost me. Now I have developed a robust network of recovery friends, and I am in touch with at least one of them every day. An important part of this group is the group of friends I made in treatment. We maintain a group chat, and I see them weekly on the alumni zoom calls. I also talk to them individually on a frequent basis. I have learned (the hard way) that recovery is a WE program. I cannot do it by myself.

# The Role of the Family in Addiction Recovery



Amanda Watts, Psy.D., BCBA, *Postdoctoral Fellow, Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services*

I want to start off by giving a sincere thank you to the families who have chosen to stick it out. Addiction isn't easy on anyone—not the addict, and certainly not the families who have to watch the addict implode. Often times, the addict goes to treatment and gets help and support, while the families get a fraction—or sometimes none—of the help and support. And then there's the burden that families often get confronted with: the blame for the addiction.

You're probably reading this because you want to learn how to:

- Support without enabling
- Have boundaries instead of cutting the addict out of your life
- Forgive yourself for not being enough to keep the addict sober

I have heard many desperate pleas from families over the years around these issues. There are narratives out there that can be confusing to a family who is new to the topic of addiction and recovery. Traditional wisdom like how you should cut the addict off, force them to face their consequences, stop being part of the problem, etc. And those may work for some families. But in my experience, telling the families to stop caring is a bit like telling the addict to stop using.

There is hope for families. Ditching the addict ideally should be a last-stop scenario, when all other attempts to support the recovering addict have failed. It should be reserved for when the family has to make the difficult choice of either saving itself or saving the addict. The perseverance of families who choose to help the recovering addict while their brain is healing, while they are not themselves, and while they repeatedly make irresponsible and selfish choices, is often misunderstood and underappreciated.

Below are some of the biggest myths I feel families are faced with early on in recovery.

## **Myth 1: *You're just enabling the addict to stay sick.***

No, you just need to learn boundaries. This means that you can help, but not at the expense of your own welfare. To learn how to do this, pick up a self-help book or two on boundaries, and consider finding your own therapist who can help you figure out what boundaries would be right for you.

## **Myth 2: *You have to back off and let them sink or swim.***

Is this even realistic? If the addict could figure this out on their own, wouldn't they have done it by now? This is like rolling a cancer patient outside of the hospital and leaving them on the sidewalk. Maybe they'll survive, maybe not.

## **Myth 3: *You're to blame for their addiction, so you're responsible for their recovery.***

If you follow around after the addict to make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, they're just going to resent you for trying to police them. And then they may use that as an excuse to relapse. This is a problem so many families face. It's a damned-if-you-do-damned-if-you-don't situation. Addicts *do* have to be responsible for their recovery. They *do* need structure and accountability. But *they* need to build it for themselves. You can support them by encouraging them to help themselves.

Examples of ways you can be supportive:

- A ride to a 12-step meeting or therapy appointment
- Encouraging them to use the tools they learned in treatment
- Pointing out changes in their behavior
- Going to your own support meetings (Alanon, COSA, etc.)

Examples of things you aren't responsible for:

- Scheduling their appointments
- Paying their bills
- Breathalyzing or drug testing them

This is where family therapy can be helpful, because you aren't always going to know what's appropriate and what's not. Structured Family Recovery is also a good option, and it's designed to help families with this very thing.

## **Myth 4: *Treatment is the cure.***

I wish this were true. I really, really do. But the sad reality is, this is a relapsing disease. Now, this isn't an excuse or permission for relapse. A relapse is also not the end of the world—it's a lesson. And each time the addict (and the family) learns from this experience, they grow stronger. They get better. Things start to make sense. And life gets better.



# Reading And Recovery:

## *Waking Up Just In Time*

Author: Abraham J. Twerski, MD



Written by: Eileene McRae

Alumna Coordinator, Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services

### QUOTES

In Gateway Rehabilitation Center there is a sign: "The Elevator to Recovery Is Out of Order. Please use the Twelve Steps." Improving one's personality is not an easy ride. One must make the effort to climb.  
- Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

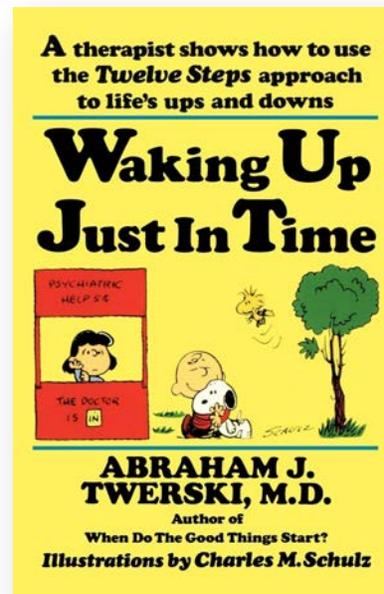
...It is a must read for all of my sponsees, just to get them to thinking with a more open mind. Great book to help the agnostic find a God of his or her understanding. The book will never replace the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (the basic text), the Twelve by Twelve, or any other program approved literature, but it is fun to read and makes its point in a whole different light. I bought ten of these and I need to get another order—great program gifts.  
- Ed Thibodo

The late Dr. Twerski was a psychiatrist, an ordained rabbi, and founder and medical director of Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pennsylvania. I introduced Dr. Twerski to you many months ago when I reviewed his book, Addictive Thinking.

He wrote prolifically about addiction recovery. However, *Waking Up Just In Time* is unusual in that Dr. Twerski partnered with Charles M. Schulz (an unlikely duo) and his Peanuts comic strips to illustrate his explanation of codependency, the slogans of AA, and each one of the twelve steps, as written in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We all know that addiction recovery is a very serious endeavor, but sometimes it's helpful to approach recovery in a light-hearted way. In fact, on page 132 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, you will find, "...We aren't a glum lot. We absolutely insist on enjoying life."

Life certainly does have its ups and downs. *Waking Up Just In Time* will help readers learn to prioritize, to replace rationalization with honesty, and to rise above failure. This book is a practical and insightful guide to help look at the nature of one's own spirituality—I GIVE IT TWO THUMBS UP!!

This book can be purchased at Pine Grove's Books and Gifts at 218 S. 28th Ave., Hattiesburg, MS, or by calling Grace Blackshear, bookstore manager at 601-288-4942.





# MILESTONES

## JANUARY 2022

Ralph G	1 year
Brandon P.	7 years
Michael A., Sr.	10 years
Armand H.	13 years
Rudy C.	11 years
David N.	13 years
Dan L.	1 year

## MARCH 2022

Ryan M.	7 years
Katie K.	90 days
Phil A.	11 years
David N.	13 years

## FEBRUARY 2022

Michael M.	18 months
Christopher M.	9 years
John L.	1 year
Michael W. III	4 years
Alex W.	3 years
Tim S	4 years
Helena B.	2 years

If you have a milestone in **April, May, or June** please email your name and date to [alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com](mailto:alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com)

## Write on Our Wall

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

Email [alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com](mailto:alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com) for access to our private group.

1-888-574-HOPE  
[www.pinegrovetreatment.com](http://www.pinegrovetreatment.com)

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## Intensive Workshops



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Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit [www.pinegrovetreatment.com/self-improvement-workshops.com](http://www.pinegrovetreatment.com/self-improvement-workshops.com) for information. Please note schedule is subject to change based on registration.

## Gratitude – COSA

(All Gratitude/GP Spouses and Family Welcome)

- 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 a family alumnus and is not associated with Pine Grove/ForrestHealth.**

## Alumni Aftercare Meeting

Please join us on Thursdays 12:00 P/M CST for the Alumni aftercare zoom meeting, while we discuss recovery topics such as relationships, self-acceptance, setting boundaries, greed, spirituality, expectations, surrender, forgiveness, ego, and so many more.

- Zoom information
- Meeting ID: 856 4693 6811
- Passcode: 856598
- One tap mobile
- +13017158592, 85646936811# US (Washington DC)
- +13126266799, 85646936811# US (Chicago)

