



Pine Grove

Alumni Program

Forrest Health®

Winter Issue
2023

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Regina “GiGi” Johnson, B.S.W.

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Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services*



I have gotten to know Gigi by being at the Women’s Center for a Wednesday group each week. She is so easy to like, even when you first meet her. I learned her real truth when I interviewed her for this article. I felt like I had a new friend at the close of our time together. We all know that we represent Pine Grove and Forrest Health when we are out in the community—Gigi does this very well. I ran into her and her mother shopping one Saturday, and she gave me that smiling, happy face. I felt like she was genuinely glad to see me. Gigi is that warm, welcoming face of Pine Grove!

She was born in New Orleans, and she is an only child. While still a baby, she and her parents moved to Detroit, Michigan, for her father to begin working in the automobile industry. Gigi and her family moved back to the south when they came “home” to Hattiesburg in 2011.

She holds a B.S.W. from Spring Arbor University in Michigan. She started working at Pine Grove in 2012. She worked at the main campus for a couple of years before transferring to the Women’s Center, where she loves to be. It is so very evident that the patients in that program love her—she is calm, easy-going, and is always approachable.

TELL ME ABOUT A BRIGHT MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER.

A patient ask me to pray with her one time and I was touched by that. It is always a bright moment to see the transformation in our patients.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A YOUNG GRADUATE WHO ASPIRES TO WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTION RECOVERY?

Make sure this is what you want to do. Listen and do not be judgmental—we all have a story. As staff, you will be part of their journey.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GREATEST MENTORS.

My mother is my greatest mentor. She worked in a nursing home that was right across the street from my elementary school. I walked to the nursing home after school and did my homework until mother finished her shift. I was witness to her feeding people, her kindness, and her willingness to help others. She always finds the good in people

TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF THAT MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW.

I LOVE to watch cartoons and old Karate movies where the words are not in sync with the sound. I love to watch these with others or by myself. I also love musicals—my favorite is *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang!*

WHAT HAS BEEN THE GREATEST TRIAL IN YOUR LIFE??

The death of my aunt and uncle. We were very close and I mostly took care of them. They died within three weeks of each other. My aunt passed first and then my uncle—I think he died of a broken heart.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

Bake, cook and watch movies with my grandchildren.

WHAT BRINGS YOU THE GREATEST JOY?

Helping and being a blessing to others. My parents taught me to be kind and to treat others the way I want to be treated.

Well, there you have it—now you know who Gigi really is. I am so pleased to be on a team with her. Be careful the next time you see her in the halls, she just may throw a KARATE CHOP your way!

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

Shame dies when stories are told in safe places.

– Author Unknown

If you don’t heal what hurt you, you will bleed on people who didn’t cut you.

– Author Unknown

If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.

– Albert Einstein

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

– Helen Keller



Save the Dates

Days of Hope

March 10, 2023

June 9-11, 2023 *(Reunion)*

September 8, 2023

December 1, 2023

Peace Within Peace Without

Mental Health is intricately linked to physical health, it is vital and we all strive to achieve it. However, for some people attaining positive mental health is a daily struggle. Take a level, for example, like the ones used by carpenters and notice its sensitivity to movement. The little bubble in the center of the instrument moves to the right and left with just the slightest touch.

We want to attain mental health that feels like a nice warm bath, or the sounds of classical music being played on a piano. It's a peaceful state of mind, making us feel confident and happy.

When there is a disturbance in the level and the bubble moves off center, the equilibrium is gone, much like our inner tranquility. The disturbance may be represented by a snide comment, stormy weather, or upsetting news. When this happens, the goal is to recapture that peaceful state despite the circumstances.

Carpenters often say a steady hand produces a level shelf. Everyone should continually develop a steady hand, so the journey we call life doesn't disturb our inner bubble.



Dr. Tony Calabrese *Director of Psychology and Outpatient Services, Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services*

Pat Calabrese, PMHNP
*Child and Adolescent Nurse Practitioner
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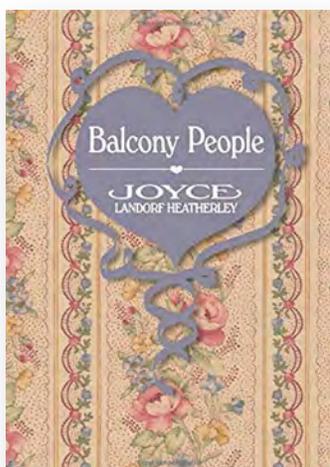
Book Review of

Balcony People

Author: Joyce Landorf Heatherley

Written by: Eileene McRae

Alumni Coordinator, Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services



"...we need to deal with our own brokenness in order to move out into the world of affirmations."
Balcony People

"This book was recommended to help me deal with some family members. Mission Accomplished." - Mary Muir

This is a very quick read having to do with the affirmers (balcony people), and the evaluators (basement people) in our world. I found this to be an unusual way to identify the people in our lives who lift us up, as well as to identify the ones who are negative, bringing us down with their evaluations of us. We all know who our affirmers, or cheerleaders, are. Most of us have only a few affirmers, but having only one affirmer is worth a thousand evaluators.

Author, Joyce Heatherley, makes it clear that there are only two types of people, and yes, you guessed it—they are affirmers and evaluators. We all have our own goodness, or light, about ourselves, and our affirmers help us see that goodness in a truer way. Very simply put: when we are affirmed by one of our cheerleaders, they are just saying, "I love you."

As I stated in the beginning of this review, this is a simple read, but I do think it is worth it because it can help you seriously identify your affirmers and your basement people. Needless to say, we want to hang with those people who are positive and who point out our true selves.

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, Michael H.

- 1. What impact has your recovery and / or treatment had on your family?** Recovery has put a positive influence on myself and family members. They have confidence, less doubt, and they can see some minor successes in me. Some of these successes include, I follow through with my commitments, people are more at ease around me, the value of trust is being rebuilt, and my integrity has me “doing the next right thing” when people are not looking. Most importantly, I am keeping commitments to myself.
- 2. How do you think your sponsor and / or therapy has helped you?** My sponsor has given his help to me, unselfishly, by taking me through the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Through the influence of my sponsor and AA, I have found a spiritual way to live. This has helped me deal with life situations, which I was unable to face prior to 12-step recovery. I check in with him daily and he encourages me with his experiences. He has taught me the value of staying linked up not only with the God of my understanding, yet also the people in AA.
- 3. What is your first “go-to” recovery literature and why?** The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is our basic textbook, is the solution to recover from alcoholism. This book outlines the 12-steps and teaches us a design for living.
- 4. Which one of the recovery slogans has helped you the most and why?** “Just For Today” This slogan helps remind me that I only have to do any task one day at a time. In addition, it helps me from being overwhelmed and to keep things simple with my recovery and life.
- 5. Have you had an opportunity to use the 12th step (be of service to others)? What has that done for you?** I’ve made myself available to be a sponsor and am willing / eager to do so when asked. My daily recovery plan is to reach out to at least two alcoholics per day to “get out of self.” This not only helps me stay sober, one day at a time, but also gives me a bit more insurance against the mental defense (obsession) for the next drink/drug. My sponsor continues to reiterate that this is a MUST to stay sober.

Shared by: Alumnus, Heidi Z

- 1. What impact has your recovery and / or treatment had on your family?** My treatment and recovery have allowed my family members and me to be more open, honest, and direct with each other. My husband and son have seen a change in me and all of us feel less controlled by my obsessive-compulsive disorder and my perfectionism. I am generally less anxious, which allows others to be less anxious around me. My husband and I are gaining a deeper understanding of each other by not being afraid to share our true thoughts and feelings, past and present. As a result, my relationships are improving and are much more enjoyable.
- 2. How do you think your sponsor and / or therapy has helped you?** Therapy has opened my eyes to things I could not see about myself. I was not aware that people often did not perceive things as I had intended them. This insight has allowed me to focus on what really matters, connection, not perfection. I learned that relationships are not made of glass, and I am enough! My OCD, OCPD, and hoarding were running my life. Now I have new tools to help manage my disorders and take back control over the only thing I have power over - me. I have hope!
- 3. What is your first “go-to” recovery literature and why?** I tend to reach for my daily inspirational reader, first. My morning routine usually starts with prayer, a reading in the Bible, and the reading of the day from a recovery book. Currently, I am using the 50th Anniversary Edition of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon. The daily readings are short, relatable, inspirational, and full of hope. Sometimes I will just look in the index for readings on a topic I am struggling with, to gain some quick insight and access to more recovery tools.
- 4. Which one of the recovery slogans has helped you the most and why?** “How important is it?” - Since I have an obsessive-compulsive mind that seeks perfection, I tend to focus on the details, feeling the need to be very accurate and precise. I have learned that this can rob me of my time and harm my relationships. Sometimes the details don’t matter, but my loved ones always do. Asking myself, “How important is it?” helps me stop and re-evaluate what I am thinking and doing in the moment. Then, I can make the decision to focus my time and attention on what I truly value, and to be fully present.
- 5. Have you had an opportunity to use the 12th step (be of service to others)? What has that done for you?** Sharing my experience, strength, and hope with others reminds me of the progress I have made on my own recovery journey. My family and my recovery friends loved and supported me even when I didn’t believe I was worth it. I had to learn (and I am still learning) that I am enough. Helping others realize that they are not alone, that God can handle anything, that there is hope, and that they are enough, too, allows me to give back to the recovery community that welcomed me with open arms. Being of service continues to give me hope and a fire to persevere in my own recovery, and never give up!



Intensive Workshops



Pine Grove
Intensive Workshops
Forrest Health®

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit

www.pinegrovetreatment.com/self-improvement-workshops.com

for information. Please note schedule is subject to change based on registration.



MILESTONES

JANUARY

Rudy C.	12 years
Nick A.	10 years
Katie K.	3 years
Ralph G.	2 years

MARCH

If you have a milestone in **April, May, and June** please email your name and date to alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com

FEBRUARY

Kevin P.	3 years
Susan D.	20 years
Chris M.	10 years
Michael H.	1 years

Alumni Aftercare Meeting

Pine Grove's Alumni Association's Aftercare Meeting This is a virtual meeting that occurs each Thursday at noon (CST). Clients, who have completed a residential or IOP program and are members of the Alumni Association, are eligible to participate. The purpose of this weekly meeting is to stay connected to staff and to peers, as well as to receive support and guidance. Each week topics related to living in recovery are discussed – some of these topics include sponsorship, forgiveness, self-acceptance, resentments, fear, spirituality, expectations, and ego reduction. Benefits of this meeting are learning to be accountable, to communicate, to listen, and to be open minded in recovery.

Zoom information

Meeting ID: 844 9270 2674

Passcode: 000382

One tap mobile

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