

## Contact Numbers

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## National Websites:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)  
www.aa.org or  
www.alcoholicsanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)  
www.na.org

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)  
www.ca.org

## For Family & Friends:

Al-Anon & Alateen:  
www.OregonAl-Anon.org

Adult Children of  
Alcoholics (ACA)  
www.adultchildren.org

Serenity Lane...  
1-800-543-9905  
www.serenitylane.org

# Stepping Together

Fall/Winter  
2009

## *Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter*

*We've been saving lives and helping put families back together since 1973*

## This may be the best gift you'll ever give - or get!

by: Jerry Gjesvold,  
Manager of Employer Services

Kids making lists for Santa Claus. Spouses dropping hints. Family members forwarding website links. These are just some of the ways people tell us the gifts they hope to receive this holiday season.

But one of the best gifts we can give is almost never on anyone's list. Sometimes the ones receiving it didn't even know they wanted it. It can't be bought – yet it can heal years of suffering.

The gift? An amend, done properly, to those we have harmed. In my work at Serenity Lane, I've seen countless alcoholics and addicts make such amends – doing so is critical to staying sober. And along the way, these same people, known for the damage they've done, can make a lasting, positive difference in the lives of those they've hurt.

It makes sense. How many times have you had someone come to you and sincerely apologize for how they harmed you – then back it up with different behavior that lasts? That's the heart of an unconditional amend.

They're hard to do well, of course. Mistakes are so easy. Probably the most common is asking for forgiveness right away, and getting angry when it doesn't happen. When we make amends this way, we're actually attaching strings to our gift. We're asking for yet another thing from the person, but disguising it as a gift. No wonder it doesn't feel right.

There are other dangers, too. Depending on what we did, it's possible that the person to whom we're making the amend doesn't trust us. If our motives are clean, we'll be able to respond with something like "I understand how you feel. I wouldn't trust me either if I were you. But I'll make every effort to earn your trust again with my actions." Then back it up. Let the new behavior continue the gift.

It may be that we don't know what kind of amend to make, or that we feel so guilty that we promise too much. If you have any doubts about what

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# From your Editor



Season's Greetings Alumni,

In the last issue of our newsletter, we featured the winner of our "Aha Moment" contest, Don G., who received the highest grand total rating from our panel of judges. We were thrilled to receive so many inspiring and thoughtful submissions, so in this winter edition, we decided to showcase the entry from our runner up, Shelley F. We look forward to including more of your stories in our upcoming issues, and we want to sincerely thank everyone for participating in our contest and sharing your experience, strength and hope.

As we get closer to the holidays, I am struck by how quickly time passes. It feels like I just started welcoming the sun, and now I'm unpacking my winter sweaters. However, this doesn't have to be perceived negatively. The most important way to engage with time is by truly experiencing it. Living in the moment is a common mantra, but it's amazing how broadly that one piece of advice can influence your life. People are inclined to constantly reflect and anticipate, but rarely are they simply present. So, instead of waiting for the clouds to clear, I plan to appreciate what each new moment has to offer.

Being present and living one day at a time is also an effective way to manage stress. During the busy holiday season, when projects and to-do lists dominate much of our attention, we can find ways to be productive, while redirecting our focus to what is happening in each moment. When you take your dog for a walk, explore your surroundings as if you're seeing them for the first time. When you get started on the holiday decorations, use it as a way to connect with your children. In our daily activities, there are many opportunities to bring the present to life.

Happy Holidays!

Shely Rahimi

## Newsletter Committee:

Shely Rahimi  
Angie Delaplain  
Mary Daniels

# Outpatient Happenings

**Serenity Lane's Bend Clinic** in conjunction with the Central Oregon Alumni Association is holding a

## Holiday Potluck & Dance

**When:** December 5, 2009

**Where:** The Sons of Norway Hall  
(right behind Serenity Lane's clinic)  
549 NW Harmon Blvd.  
Bend, OR.

**Time:** Potluck starts at 6:00 pm



## Portland Patient & Alumni Holiday Party

**When:** December 19, 2009

**Where:** Community Room  
Tigard Public Library  
13500 SW Hall Blvd  
Portland, OR 97223  
[www.tigard-or.gov](http://www.tigard-or.gov)  
503-684-6537

**Time:** 2:00-4:00 pm

Come see Santa! Door prizes, music, treats & fun.

## Coming Soon!

### Outpatient Treatment in Vancouver, Washington!

After literally years of planning, Serenity Lane will soon have an outpatient treatment clinic in Vancouver. At press time the process of obtaining our Washington license and renovating our building is under way.

Easily accessible off I-205, and near the Vancouver Mall, the facility has 1,600 square feet of space for assessments and group counseling. Details will be on our website just as soon as things get finalized, so stay tuned!

# Making Recovery FUN!

by Shely Rahimi



When Serenity Lane alumnus Joe C. was preparing to transition from residential to outpatient treatment, he was concerned that he would lose his sense of humor and fun. He quickly realized that those attributes were intact and even magnified

through his sobriety. Now, as Serenity Lane's Recovery Support Liaison in Portland, he shares his enthusiasm with RS patients and sets an example for fun in recovery.

Program Director Karen Willock offered Joe a place on the Portland staff based on the positive impact he had through his community service at the facility, totaling 80 hours of volunteer work. Joe aka "Pappy" is the first person to hold the position of RS Liaison, and with his only formal instructions to "make recovery fun," he has the freedom to define his job description. He utilizes his role as RS Liaison to provide patients with an opportunity to explore different modes of creative expression and recreational activities. The project acts as a catalyst for patients to discover new interests and offers the tools to continue pursuing positive outlets in their daily lives.

As an artist, Pappy chose sculpture for his first assignment, using high quality porcelain clay as a medium to create a physical representation of patients' feelings and express the theme of freedom in recovery. He believes molding allows the mind and hands to speak through the clay.

The project begins with instruction in art techniques and basic methods, but beyond that, there are no rules. Patients are encouraged to let go and open up to each other in the spirit of co-creation. As Pappy observes patients work, he

is rewarded to see smiles on their faces, being uplifted by something so simple. When the artwork has been formed, fired and painted, patients discuss the inspiration for their piece, building a sense of community within their group. Pappy began this undertaking in late August and is proud to report that 102 sculptures have been completed. He will continue implementing his sculpture project at Portland's West and East locations, and every 10 weeks, he will introduce a new creative exercise to Recovery Support groups.

In the future, he plans to instruct patients in hollowing and decorating gourds, making wind chimes, have a potluck with cooking instruction, and bring in guest speakers, including hikers, surfers and a cellist to share their knowledge and expertise. After the sessions, Pappy provides resources for patients to continue their study in these subjects and to promote further participation.

Pappy is thankful to Serenity Lane for its financial contributions, which allow him to facilitate this exciting work. He is developing a well-balanced program that nurtures the physical, mental and emotional health of our patients, and with Serenity Lane's support, he says the possibilities are endless.





# BRICKS!

By Michelle (Shelley) F.

## “Aha” Contest Runner-up

It is my theory that there is an orbit of bricks in the universe and occasionally one goes off course and heads to earth. Fifteen years ago... “WHAM!” shocked and surprised, I was put on a week’s suspension pending a board decision to terminate my employment. And all I wanted to do was drink.

It’s important to note that I had three college degrees, a lifetime of travel and opportunity, had performed on stage and had two beautiful, young children. It’s equally important to note that I had moved out of a lonely marriage and couldn’t hold my hand still to eat or write my name. There was an ever-present knot of panic and fear in my gut that only alcohol could remove. All I could do was drink.

I hit a parked car during a black-out the previous year. My husband called the police. I was handcuffed, ‘escorted’ from my home, and all I wanted was a drink.

There was no one in my life...Loneliness---pain; pain---drinking; drinking---loneliness---get the picture? I could not, not drink.

But, I was fine. I had been in the spotlight on stage, always playing a part. It was much more comfortable to wear a costume and say scripted lines than be me. I was fine---I was smart, talented, well traveled, educated and scared to the depths of my soul. This was the way it was always going to be, pretending and watching life. I could not, not drink.

The costumes wore thin, the lights dimmed and I was so very sick. Upon impact (the brick), I drove home. I was fired – I couldn’t pretend anymore. I was not fine. I accepted that I could not, not drink.

I was a scared and lonely girl full of such pain. Now what? No one was attending the play anymore, the curtain fell.

Serendipity? God shot? My parents had toured the Eugene facility of Serenity Lane and left a phone number on my counter. “You might want to make this call,” they said with hope. All hope was gone.

Arriving home, unable to breathe – I saw the number. I called. I was ‘evaluated.’ “Let us take care of you, you are sick” is what I heard. I clung to those words

with my life. Ten days later I made the endless drive from Portland to Eugene. That was January 30, 1994.

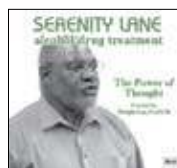
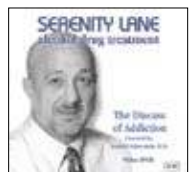
Surrender – admission – acceptance. Recovery began. “Recover” – to get back that which was lost or taken away. I was given the freedom to live life ONE DAY at a TIME and to be ME.

THANK YOU for this most miraculous gift of life! ■

*“I saw the number. I called. I was ‘evaluated.’ ‘Let us take care of you, you are sick’ is what I heard. I clung to those words with my life”.*

**Available Now!**

54 min. DVD - \$9.95  
*The Disease of Addiction*  
by Ron Scherzler, MD



52 min. DVD - \$9.95  
*The Power of Thought*  
by Dwight Lee CADCE II

**Available in the SL store at our main facility in Eugene or send email to: [info@serenitylane.org](mailto:info@serenitylane.org)**

# The Benefits of Leisure for Managing Stress

While most of us don't consciously think about the benefits of leisure activities for managing stress while we are engaged in an activity, listing the benefits will assist you in choosing meaningful and satisfying ways to spend your free time.

Think about leisurely activities you enjoy for the following situations:

- TO RELAX
- TO SOCIALIZE
- TO BE PHYSICALLY FIT
- TO BE MENTALLY STIMULATED
- TO COMPETE
- TO BE CREATIVE
- TO BE ALONE
- TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW
- TO HELP OTHERS
- TO HELP YOU SPIRITUALLY
- AS A SPECTATOR
- FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

Engaging in leisure activities can make an important contribution to your physical and mental well-being and is a major stress management technique!

Back issues of our alumni newsletter are available online.

Go to [www.serenitylane.org](http://www.serenitylane.org), click on the Alumni tab and you'll find pdf files of many past issues.



## Hot Apple Cider

- 1 gallon apple cider
- 12 whole cloves
- 2 lg. apples (Granny Smith or Rome Beauty) peeled & left whole
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- ground nutmeg

Pour apple cider into a large pot. Insert 6 cloves into each whole apple and add to cider with cinnamon sticks. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, cover & simmer over low heat for 1 hour. Ladle into heat-resistant mugs, dust with ground nutmeg to serve.

## Winter Raspberry Sparkle (Non-Alcoholic)

- 1 (25oz) bottle of sparkling white grape juice.
- 3 cups red raspberry juice drink, chilled
- 6 tablespoons of red raspberry syrup
- 2 tablespoons of freshly squeezed lime juice
- ice cubes
- 2 limes, sliced

In a 2-quart pitcher, stir together sparkling grape juice, red raspberry syrup & lime juice.

Pour over ice in glasses. Garnish each glass with a slice of lime.







*The Best Gift Ever... continued from page 1....*

to do, discuss your plan beforehand with a trusted friend, counselor or clergyperson. Someone with solid 12-step recovery can be very helpful. The rule to follow is this: a true amend never causes more harm to others – especially the person it's made to.

The moment we begin making these kinds of amends, we experience some interesting –and sometimes amazing – things. People learn they can trust us more than they have before. Our relationships deepen. Even if some are still angry, we find that we can hear their anger without getting defensive.

And then, beneath it all, we start to feel real self-esteem. In this cynical age, it may seem quaint or even foolish to admit we were wrong and really try to make up for it. So few people seem to do this anymore.

But some of these old ideas are still with us because they provide the best way to act in life. For generations, they've offered ways for imperfect people to move forward without such a heavy burden of guilt and shame. May we all give such a gift to ourselves this holiday season – by making real amends to those we've harmed. ■

*Jerry Gjesvold writes a monthly column for the Register-Guard newspaper in Eugene and is featured regularly on radio in Eugene and Salem.*

## You're in good hands at Serenity Lane...



**Ron Schwerzler M.D.**, Serenity Lane's Director of Medical Services, is among the first physicians in the United States to be certified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine, a new independent medical specialty board. He is one of several physicians in Oregon with the new certification and currently the only one in Lane County.

The American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM) has begun to certify addiction medicine physicians from several specialties. Previously only a psychiatrist could earn an addiction-related board certification. ABAM sets standards for physician education, assesses physicians' knowledge, and requires and tracks life-long continuing education.

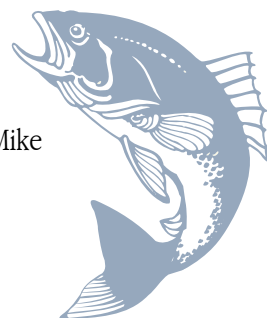
Dr. Schwerzler is board certified in both family and addiction medicine. He is president of the Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine and a member of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. He is a member of the Oregon Academy of Family Practice, the American Academy of Family Practice, the Lane County Medical Society, the Oregon Medical Association and the American Medical Association. Dr. Schwerzler has worked in the addiction field since 1988.

In addition to his duties at our main facility in Eugene, Dr. Ron is available for electronic consultations with patients in our outpatient clinics, when needed. He also gives presentations for family program participants, and offers grand rounds at many hospitals in Oregon, educating the physicians and nursing staff about the disease of addiction.

- Serenity Lane's other staff physician is **Dr. Mike Price**, who has worked part-time as an addictionologist for us since 2004. He was recently board certified in addiction medicine in addition to his certification in family practice medicine. Dr. Mike works seven days on/ seven days off, including several weekends. He was a family practitioner for 30 years.



Dr. Price and his wife, a respiratory therapist, live in Redmond and have four children. Dr. Mike enjoys fly fishing, fly fishing and fly fishing!



# Join us ●●●●●●●●

**Serenity Lane** is partnering with **PeaceHealth** to bring you a 6-week educational series titled "**A Life Unraveled: Aspects of Addiction & The Path to Recovery**." This series is open to the public, business and industry, healthcare professionals and all those working in the field of addiction.

**Tuesday Evenings: 6:30 - 8pm**

**Jan 5 - Feb 9, 2010**

**Sacred Heart Medical Center**

**University District Auditorium**

**1255 Hilyard St, Eugene**

Please join us for a fascinating look at the complex issues surrounding today's addict and how addiction treatment is evolving to meet the needs of this devastating and sometimes deadly disease. Topics include:

**Jan 5:** *Addiction, Prevalence, Diagnosis & Treatment*: by Ronald Schwerzler, M.D., Medical Director at Serenity Lane.

**Jan 12:** *Family Dynamics & The Effects of Addiction*: by Joe Steiner (Jr.) M.S., Licensed Psychology Associate

**Jan 19:** *Co-occurring Disorders & Treatment of the Chemically Dependent*: presented by Kara Litwiller, LPC, Director of Assessment and Admissions, Serenity Lane.

**Jan 26:** *Addiction-Free Pain Management*: by Rip Sawyer, CADCI, Certified Addiction-Free Pain Management Specialist.

**Feb 2:** *Prescription Drug Dependence, Chronic Pain & Addiction*: presented by Ron Schwerzler, M.D.

**Feb 9:** *Medical Marijuana & Drugs in the Workplace*: presented by Jerry Gjesvold, Manager of Employer Services

**CEU's** are available for those working in healthcare and the field of addiction and as of this writing **CME's** are in process. Full details will be listed on our website at: [www.serenitylane.org](http://www.serenitylane.org)

**RSVP to Mary Daniels: 541-284-8613**

**or email: [mdaniels@serenitylane.org](mailto:mdaniels@serenitylane.org)**

**Serenity Lane** launched a **Facebook Fan Page** in September. Not specifically for alumni, it's open to anyone who supports recovery. The home page contains general information and public comments. There are also links to Serenity Lane's YouTube channel for video's, including overviews of treatment and several TV commercials. Photos of all facilities and patient testimonials are included on the site, as well as a discussion section with topics like "drinking and sports" posted after Jerry Gjesvold's radio interview on this subject.

**Become a fan!**



# How to cultivate Gratitude

Depression is defined as a mental state characterized by a pessimistic sense of inadequacy and a despondent lack of activity.

Gratitude is defined as a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation for what we have.

The cure for feelings of self-pity and lack of motivation, otherwise known as "stinking thinking" is to create a Gratitude List.

I am grateful for: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Remember all that you are thankful for and enjoy life!**

## Address Changes/Deletions

Help us keep our mailing list current: clip and send this form to:

Serenity Lane Alumni Office  
2133 Centennial Plaza  
Eugene, OR. 97401

or email us at: [alumni@serenitylane.org](mailto:alumni@serenitylane.org)

We're going all digital soon. We encourage you to send us your email address, so you don't miss out on future issues.

Change ☐ Add ☐ Delete ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Ways to have fun**
- **Story: Bricks**
- **Managing Stress**
- **You're in Good Hands**
- **Join Us! 6 Week Series**
- **Cultivating Gratitude**

## **Post-It for change or a new resolution.**

*If you want to make a change in your life, write your resolution on a sticky note and post it on your bathroom mirror. It will subconsciously remind your brain of the change. Concentrate on your resolution and affirm to yourself that you will make that change and that it would be most beneficial for your mind and body to commit to the new resolution. **It works!***

