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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

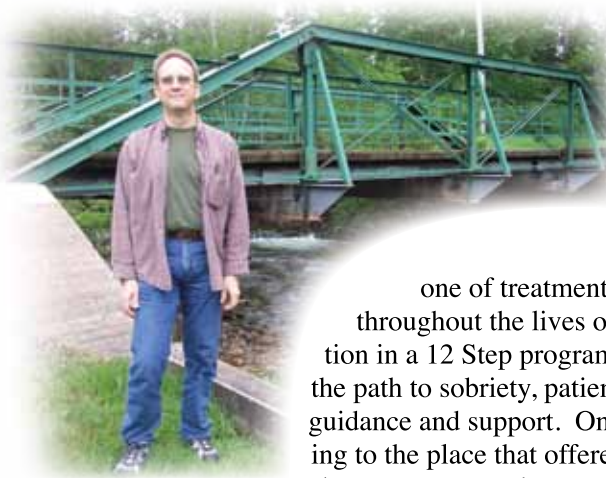
Serenity Lane...
1-800-543-9905
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Stepping Together

Winter
2010

Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter

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



Carrying the Message

by Shely Rahimi

The importance of building a strong recovery community begins on day one of treatment at Serenity Lane, and it continues throughout the lives of our alumni through ongoing participation in a 12 Step program. In order to tackle the initial hurdles on the path to sobriety, patients look to mentors and role models for guidance and support. One alumnus has answered this call, returning to the place that offered him the gift of hope and passing on that message to others.

For over 14 years, Pete Ballerstedt has been commuting from his home in Philomath every three weeks to present a guest lecture to Serenity Lane's residential patients in Eugene. "I can't think of anything better to do with one's life than to help other people," Pete said. On June 30, 2010, he celebrated 19 years of sobriety, and we are proud to honor his commitment to our mission and his dedication to the countless lives he has touched along the way.

Pete was born in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His family was deeply affected by his father's alcoholism. His father was removed from their home when Pete was seven, and they would never see each other again. Pete lost his mother to illness in 1969 and spent the remainder of his youth in a foster home. His father died later that same year, alienated from all family and friends. Pete is fortunate that vast strides have been made in the understanding of the disease of alcoholism because it has prevented him from suffering a similar fate.

At 35, Pete's life was on the verge of spinning completely out of control, causing a concerned colleague to perform an intervention at work one Monday morning. The date was July 1, 1991, which he recalled without hesitation. At that moment, Pete made the pivotal decision that would drastically alter his destructive itinerary. Instead of walking away from the situation, clinging to his defense mechanisms, he engaged in a series of profound conversations over the course of the day that reinforced his awareness that he needed help.

The risks to his marriage, his employment and his health far outweighed the escape of daily drinking. When Pete embraced his moment of clarity, his friend arranged an appointment with a counselor who set up an assessment at Serenity Lane in Eugene. Pete was admitted to residential treatment on July 8, 1991.

Continued on Page 4



From your Editor



Dear Alumni,

The foundation of a successful recovery from chemical dependency is the knowledge that you are not alone. Many before you and many after will make the journey from the depths of despair to the heights of fulfillment. By utilizing the support system found in treatment and Alcoholics Anonymous, your recovery will be firmly rooted in the shared experiences, combined strength and profound hope of countless individuals from all walks of life. This common thread weaves a pattern of wisdom and resilience that will reinforce your daily commitment to sobriety.

One way Serenity Lane builds this sense of community is through our annual alumni picnic in Eugene, where graduates of our program are invited to gather in a social setting and witness the remarkable impact of successful treatment from alcohol and drug addiction. On August 29, 2010, Alton Baker Park was immersed in a celebration of recovery, full of happy families, healthy young people and insightful mentors. We enjoyed delicious barbeque from Hole in the Wall, entertainment from the **Amazing Spaghetti**, and generous raffle prizes, ranging from free oil changes at **Oil Can Henry's** to desserts from one of my favorite places in Eugene, **Sweet Life Patisserie**. We would like to sincerely thank the businesses that donated items for our raffle drawing, demonstrating their support for our mission of saving lives and helping put families back together.

In this issue of our newsletter, we expand on the theme of unity through sobriety as we approach the holidays. Although this season is characterized by greater opportunities for fellowship, I encourage you to practice this principle with the same energy and intensity throughout the year.

Happy Holidays!

Shely Rahimi
Alumni Coordinator

Newsletter Committee:

Shely Rahimi
Angie Delaplain
Mary Daniels



Eugene picnic entertainment: "The Amazing Spaghetti"

Outpatient Happenings

Bend

The Central Oregon Alumni organized an end of the summer picnic in Sun River. The event was held on Sunday, September 12th with an attendance of about 30 alumni and family members.

Call your nearest outpatient clinic for information about upcoming holiday activities.



Dear Serenity Lane Family & Friends ~



Most of you are aware of the *Bridge to the Future Campaign*. This is an important chapter in the life of Serenity Lane. Our need to relocate our residential campus is urgent, and our plans are underway.

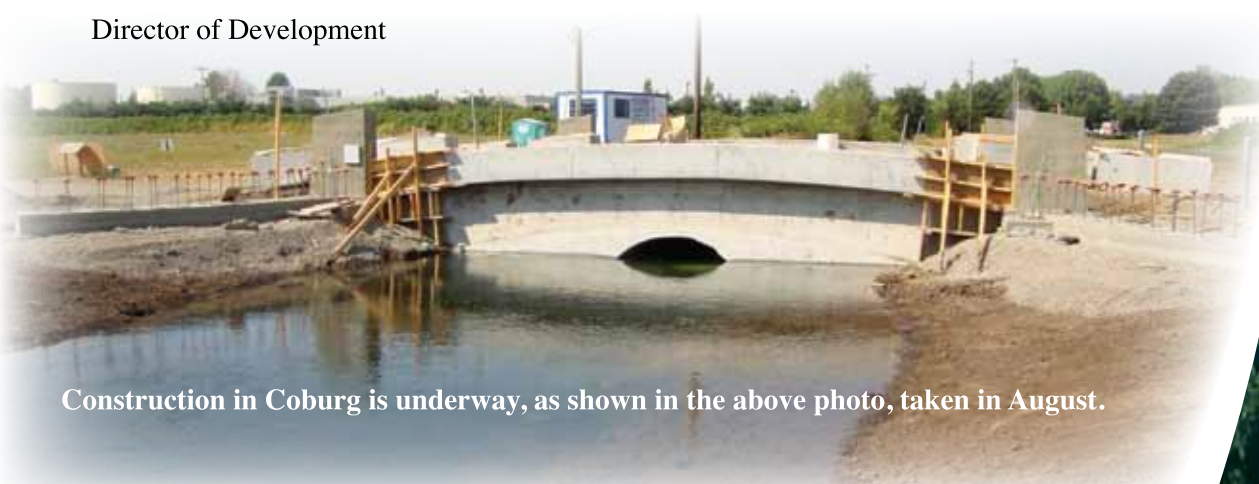
For those of you who began your treatment here, you fully understand the need to move our residential treatment center. There are two goals of our new campus: 1) never again delay someone's admission because of a lack of space, and 2) provide an appropriate environment where healing can take place that will mark the beginning of the road to recovery for the many working men and women living in the Pacific Northwest. Our new campus will double our capacity from 65 patients to 130 patients.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, **Oregon is the second most drug-using state in the U.S.**, and because substance abuse is the number one health care issue in the country overall, our new campus plans are drawn with the anticipated need to expand in the years to come, thereby **doubling our capacity again**. We are confident that this campus, with the provision for future expansion, will provide the necessary elements needed for healing to take place for generations to come.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all of our alumni who have generously supported our *Bridge to the Future Campaign*. Your support and personal notes of encouragement mean so much to our effort. If you haven't made a contribution, we invite you to use the envelope inside this issue. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact our Development Office by phone at 541.284.8619 or by email at jcook@serenitylane.org.

Please visit our website at www.serenitylane.org for updates on the plans and campaign. As time goes by and progress is made, we will be posting news and photos. This is a most exciting time, and we're eager to share it with you. We need your help to make this vision a reality so that Serenity Lane can continue saving lives and helping to put families back together again.

Jo Ann Cook
Director of Development



Construction in Coburg is underway, as shown in the above photo, taken in August.

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Carrying the Message

In the darkest moments of his active disease, Pete rarely made it until noon before succumbing to his first drink, and with a fatal sense of confinement and desperation, he had resigned himself to living out his disease to the tragic end. Now, treatment and the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have given him the tools to cope with life's challenges and to accomplish things that he had never imagined were possible.

One significant illustration of this newly-realized potential is the discovery of his passion for music through the study and practice of an unusual traditional instrument. He first encountered the hammered dulcimer at a Scottish Highland games festival. He started playing shortly after Christmas of 1995 to test a long-held theory that he lacked any musical ability. He quickly learned a valuable lesson: "If you believe a lie, it becomes your truth, not THE truth." Now, he has been organizing and producing a hammered dulcimer festival held outside of Sandy, Oregon for the past 11 years. From his love of expressing himself through music, he has performed in front of audiences and met legendary musicians, and this dream never would have been conceived of, let alone come to fruition, without sobriety.

Pete lives in Philomath with his wife Nancy, and they celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary in May. They met as teens at a summer horse camp in upstate Pennsylvania, where she was a riding instructor and he was the camp horseshoer. They have established strong roots in their community and enjoy supporting each other in their varied interests and activities.

Pete's home group is the Philomath Open Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. At a recent meeting, 5 out of the 15 people present had attended his lectures as patients at Serenity Lane. "I'm not an expert," Pete tells his lecture audiences. "I'm just someone who hasn't had a drink today."

In his lectures, Pete revisits the confusing period of

early recovery when he transitioned from the safe haven of Serenity Lane to the harsher realities of the outside world. Thanks to treatment and working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, he learned a new way of living, reclaiming his sense of purpose and rebuilding his relationships. He is able to share his experience and insight with residential patients, while reinforcing his own sobriety. He says if he can reach one person with his message, then he has achieved his goal. "I didn't come up with the message," Pete said. "I just want to be a good pipe to help carry that message."

Pete said he is alive today, in part, because of the people who founded and maintained this facility, and he is extremely grateful to Serenity Lane. Volunteering as a lecturer is a significant part of his recovery process, and Pete appreciates the feedback he receives from people who listen to his story. "Hope is a tremendously important commodity, and we should never minimize it in ourselves or neglect an opportunity to give it to others," he said. By offering hope and encouragement to those in treatment, Pete is able "to turn the past to good account." ("The Family Afterwards," Alcoholics Anonymous).

How do we find the motivation to exercise?

by: Jason Temchin CADCI
Employer Services Representative

Just like recovery, regularly exercising comes down to your efforts to engage and stay focused on you. There is never a better time to do this than right now. Ask yourself, what kind of life do I want to live? Do I want to feel strong and able to keep pace with all of the demands on my time? Feeling powerful both mentally and physically gives you that daily edge and most importantly improves your quality of life.

Winter can be a difficult season for some of us. The dark, cold and wet days can seem somber, lonely and deplete you of energy. Staying motivated to exercise can be a daily struggle, and this is especially true when we wake up and return home in darkness. My motivation is simple. Exercise makes me feel better. It improves my appetite, sleep and calms my anxiety/stress to name just a few of the benefits. I feel more fulfilled and balanced as a person. Over time, being physically active becomes



▶ a part of your identity, factored into your daily living, along with time spent with family and friends.

You know that working a strong recovery program takes commitment and dedication. Memories of miserable times in the midst of the disease keep many from returning to use. Engaging in regular physical activity takes a very similar commitment from our mind and body. When we reach our goals, we remember how we felt before starting a fitness program. Now that we are maintaining our fitness, we do not want to return to that feeling of low energy.

As in your recovery, I challenge you to do whatever it takes to stay motivated. Exercise with a partner. Do many different activities to keep you interested. Have clothes to keep you warm and dry when dealing with the elements. Arrange a collage of inspiring words and pictures. Keep a daily log/journal...whatever it takes. Remember to get out there, move around and have fun! ■

Jason Temchin is the Employer Services Representative for Serenity Lane. He loves riding his bike, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing and riding motorcycles. He is planning a trip with his girlfriend to hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru in December.



Jason Temchin on one of his adventures

The pomegranate fruit season in United States is from October through January. Check your local grocery stores now!



Mixed Baby Greens with Pomegranate Seeds, Gorgonzola and Pecans with a Pomegranate Vinaigrette

This salad is simple yet elegant and perfect to serve as a first course for the holidays. Pomegranates are loaded with vitamins, antioxidants, potassium, folic acid and iron. Servings: 8 servings • Time: 10 minutes

- * 5 cups mixed baby greens
- * 5 cups baby arugula
- * 1 cup fresh pomegranate seeds
- * 2 oz pecans, chopped (about 28 halves)
- * 1/2 cup (4 oz) gorgonzola cheese, crumbled

Pomegranate Vinaigrette:

- * 5 tbsp of fresh pomegranate juice
- * 3 tbsp of apple vinegar
- * 1 tbsp shallot, finely minced
- * 1 tbsp honey
- * 5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- * salt and fresh pepper

For the vinaigrette, combine pomegranate juice, olive oil, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a small glass jar and shake vigorously.

Toss mixed greens in a salad bowl and top with pecans, gorgonzola and pomegranate seeds. Drizzle with vinaigrette right before serving.

Surrendering to Recovery



by George Callanan, CADC II

Serenity Lane Alumnus, Albany Program Manager



I would like to relate the events that led to my surrender to recovery. They actually occurred when I was over two years sober. Up to that point, I had done most of what had been required of me, and felt I had a strong recovery. But I had held out in one area. The most important thing in my life at that time was my home.

I believed it was the one thing

I could not let go of, and I made some decisions that were less about my recovery than about keeping my home.

At that time, I was in the Serenity Lane internship program and also had a job selling home security systems to help make ends meet. One Saturday, I was driving to the office to drop off a sales contract when I was involved in an auto accident which destroyed my car. At the time, I did not have any car insurance as I could not afford it. Sitting in my home later that day, I was as depressed and pessimistic as I had been since getting sober. I felt that all my hard work and effort in the past two years would be for naught. I had no car, no job, no money. I would not be able to continue in the internship and would probably lose my house as well.

I remember feeling sorry for myself and contemplating all manner of unhealthy behaviors. I was, once again, looking into the abyss. Then, I had a moment of clarity. I fell to my knees and said, "God, if you need to take my house so that I can truly find recovery, then take it. I give up." It was a sincere prayer of surrender

on my part. I was, in that moment, willing to go to any length. What followed were a remarkable series of events that showed my Higher Power was active in my life. Literally moments later, the phone rang. It was a person new to recovery. He had gotten my name off a phone list from an AA meeting. He said he was struggling to stay sober and needed some experience, strength and hope. I had a moment of resentment that this person would be calling me when my life was falling apart, but then I just talked to him about the Program and how it had worked for me and how it could work for him too. We spoke for about 10 minutes. This is the only time I have ever received such a phone call. After we hung up, I knew I would be all right. I didn't know how that could be because things still looked pretty bleak, but I knew.

Help came from unexpected directions. An AA friend gave me a car to use. The driver who hit me had no insurance, but his mother did. Her insurance company paid me enough to cover the rest of my bills during the internship, pay medical bills and get another car. I finished the internship and have been employed by Serenity Lane ever since. And by the way, I didn't lose my house. But I firmly believe that I had to be willing to lose it in order to fully enter recovery. I am very grateful that my Higher Power put experiences in my life that forced me to decide what was really important to me and the strength to "let go and let God." ■

*Compassion is not religious business,
it is human business, it is not luxury, it is
essential for our own peace and mental
stability, it is essential for human survival.*

~Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet



Growth, our Greatest Gift



by Kathleen Smith, R.N., M.F.T.
Director of Hospital Services, Serenity Lane

Growth and change are painful and frightening. The human psyche rebels against both since both threaten homeostasis, promise pain, even defeat in some instances. Growing pains, the term used to illuminate the process of physical and emotional changes during puberty aptly describes the internal processes of our psycho-physiological development. As an organism at rest (homeostasis –for the purpose of this article, the continuing use of drugs and etoh) evidences minimal outside stressors and the component parts appear to function adequately to a brain fooled by mind altering substances. But, growth and the inevitable change focus stress and exacerbate actual or perceived weaknesses and inadequacies. As we approach a clean and sober healthier way of being in this world, accepting the challenges of life with equanimity regardless of the stressors becomes the goal.

Behavior, the total sum of everything we do and everything we avoid doing consists of 2 components: intention and impact. The results of our choices, good or bad, become the measurement of success or failure. What outcome did I wish for when I made the decision to exhibit that behavior? Was the actual outcome what I imagined or was I totally surprised? Did I learn anything about myself? Will I change my behavior in the future? What tools do I need to make the necessary changes? Honest answers to these questions can provide an objective assessment of where on the continuum of growth we have landed.

Growth by definition requires an alteration in behavior; ultimately transforming our perception of ourselves and demanding an ongoing examination of the intended impact our behavior has on those with whom we interface on a daily basis; family, friends, colleagues and co-workers (step # 9).

After the initial excitement of recovery aimed at making behavior more acceptable to ourselves and those closest to us, difficulties are encountered with a predictable period of malaise often causing feelings of apathy; emotionally transferring the responsibility to carry the weight of recovery to others with the self indulgent belief of entitlement to this lack of commitment towards continuing the metamorphosis. Having escaped the immediate perils of addiction, the psyche has little impetus for change which in contrast to how we began now seem so perilously slow. Only by reinvigorating our sense of exigency and emergency with AA/NA, counseling and living the 12 steps can this journey towards physical and emotional health continue.

Address Changes/Deletions

Help us keep our mailing list current: send changes or deletions to:

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or email to: alumni@serenitylane.org

or call Shely at **503-244-4500** ext 8103

February 1, 2010

AA Attendance Cuts Drinking and Depression, Study Finds

Research Summary:

People who attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings drank less -- and less frequently -- than those who did not attend AA, and also were less depressed, according to research based on the federal Project MATCH treatment study.



The Los Angeles Times reported Jan. 28 that a study on AA's impact on drinking and depression, conducted by John F. Kelly of Harvard Medical School and colleagues, also found that AA participants who attended more meetings also drank less. Abstinent AA attendees had fewer symptoms of depression than the general population, but those who continued to drink did not, the study found.

"Some critics of AA have claimed that the organization's emphasis on 'powerlessness' against alcohol use and the need to work on 'character defects' cultivates a pessimistic world view, but this suggests the opposite is true," said Kelly. "AA is a complex social organization with many mechanisms of action that probably differ for different people and change over time. Most treatment programs refer patients to AA or similar 12-step groups, and now clinicians can tell patients that, along with supporting abstinence, attending meetings can help improve their mood. Who wouldn't want that?"

The study was published online in the journal Addiction.

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- Surrendering
- Growth Our Greatest Gift
- Research Study

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

