

The Moving Finger

MCBRIDE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION & FOUNDATION

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EVERYBODY HIT THE JACKPOT....At least it appeared as though everyone who cashed in on the opportunity to break the winter doldrums and spend an evening with Lady Luck came out a winner in the good times department. The event, of course, was the McBride Alum Casino Night party at Dretzka Park Pavillion. Even the weatherman dealt us a fairly decent hand, considering it was February 22 in Milwaukee! It was actually a double payoff -- in addition to the camaraderie, we managed to come up with a surplus in the cash (the REAL kind) department and the foundation netted over \$100 when the chips were finally counted.

As is usually the case in projects of this nature, there were many individuals who contributed a lot of time and effort to assure success. Special thanks, though, must go to Natalie Z., Marleen S. and Chris Z. who co-chaired the subcommittee in charge. We also are indebted to the fine businesses and generous folks who donated gifts for the "big payoff." And, of course, Divine Savior - Holy Angels School for letting us use their "equipment." (A special tip of the hat to Mary Lee G. for liaison work.)

The Mississippi Gamblers of the group -- those whose wagering skills put them in the winners' circle for prizes -- included Bob E., who parlayed his meager stakes into a veritable fortune and took top honors, Ken K., Dan M., Jamie D., Russ L., and Mary K., whose claim that she had "never even seen" a blackjack table before is now highly suspect.

Special gratitude also to John C., Rick J., Sharron B., Deacon Claude, Dr. Herrington and Lee L., who sent party contributions even though they couldn't attend.

THE STRUGGLING FOUNDATION TREASURY....was also bolstered by generous donations from many of those responding to the membership survey just completed. After managing to do no more than meet expenses those early months, we can now start thinking about acting like a real foundation. "Thinking," that is. We still have a long ways to go! As we grow in numbers, however, it is hoped that we can make our presence known as a truly "grateful recovering GROUP." Financially, as well as through our volunteer work, we should serve as an inspiration to those yet to reap the rewards of sobriety. A list of all those who have contributed will be included in a foundation annual report to be put together later this year. We will also have some ideas on how to put those dollars to the best use and perhaps set a goal of some sort. (No, Dr. Benzer...it's still too early to talk about that \$3-million expansion of the Recovery House.)

ONE PATIENT AT A TIME....Thanks, no doubt, to the tremendous drawing power of so illustrious an alumni group, McBride continues to grow in strength and numbers. For the past several months, there have been several occasions when the unit has overflowed into other "holding areas" in the hospital, and the Recovery House remains at or near capacity. Though rumors abound regarding possible expansion plans, the powers-that-be ("Lower Powers?") have been silent about anything definite. A new outpatient program has been mentioned frequently, and something in the way of additional recovery-house-type facilities have been included in the "maybe" discussions. We'll keep you posted.

DR. H'S NET GETS LARGER AND LARGER....National recognition, of a sort, comes with an arrangement worked out with State Medical Society impaired physician programs in Colorado and Florida. The McBride program, and its physician group, have been designated as the "proffered provider" of treatment and recovery services by the societies in those states. Talks are in the works elsewhere, as well. (In case you were wondering, "THE MOVING FINGER" mailing list now includes nearly 150 alumni in 10 states.) Remember -- YOU knew McBride when it was simply regional!

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY....for alumni activity, and a solid share of 12th Step work, has been implemented in the form of Tuesday evening "rap sessions" at the unit. The 6-6:45 p.m. chats with the inpatients, inaugurated in February, supplement the Saturday afternoon sessions begun last fall. Patients and alums alike are the beneficiaries in this project, and all concerned have expressed appreciation for the chance to share experiences and feelings. Anyone wishing to participate in this worthwhile volunteer effort on either Tuesday evenings (it's conveniently scheduled to precede the AA meeting at 7:30 that night) or Saturday afternoons at 1:15 p.m. should contact Natalie Z. at 781-2091 (for Tuesdays) or Marleen S. at 1-628-1556 (for Saturdays).

Alums are also always welcome to drop in anytime, especially weekends, to simply share conversation on the unit. The only requirement for participation is sobriety and the desire to be helpful (to yourself, as well). It would probably be a good idea to give a call first to one of the unit staffers to check the day's schedule. A good guideline, or motivation, for this sort of thing is to simply look back to your own treatment, and how a chance to unwind with an outsider often seemed like it would change the pace a bit.

SEVERAL NEW FACES....have joined the McBride team. At least they're new if you haven't dropped in lately. Dr. Al Sandler has filled the void left when Dr. Hauser moved over to Dewey and Roger Glazer (at the Recovery House) and Colleen Mangrum are serving as counselors. If you haven't already, stop by and get acquainted.

MEETINGS GET BIGGER, TOO....as our membership grows. It's often been standing-room-only for the Milwaukee Professionals in AA group on Tuesday nights and we've spilled into the cafeteria. AA "anniversary key-chains" are now being given at one, two, three and six-month intervals, as well as the cherished one-year medallions (and, of course, a congratulatory hug from Secretary Ed F.). It adds another opportunity to share in the warmth and gratitude that goes with those events. Atten-

dance by many non-McBride folks (a credit to the fine fellowship of the group) has helped swell the ranks, and several suggestions for further accommodating the overflow crowds are being discussed.

On Sunday nights, the 9 p.m. meeting (held at the late hour because it was begun as, and remains, a Recovery House meeting, and those folks are generally away on pass for the weekend and appreciate the extra hour before returning to the nest) has been shifted up to the hospital auditorium -- again because of the size of the group. Alums, especially former residents of the House, are always welcome, and it provides a good way to maintain those cherished ties to those with whom the treatment and recovery experience has been shared.

YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE...has been hard at work (slow, perhaps, but getting there) and several important steps have been taken or planned. We were joined at the April meeting by Ann Kavinsky, director of marketing and public relations for Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital. Many of the particulars are yet to be worked out, but Ann offered her full cooperation plus some much-needed assistance from the hospital. As our membership has grown, for example, our printing and mailing has become a major expense and both may be taken over by the hospital. Several opportunities for recognition of the alumni work (as a group, of course, not as individuals), and ways to expand it into new areas, were discussed. You will be hearing more about this aspect of association growth as it takes shape.

OFFICIAL FOUNDATION STATUS...is nearing reality. Chris Z. has been spearheading this project and word is expected soon as to what legal steps remain before we are actually recognized as a functioning foundation. It appears that, in this regard, we will become an arm of the hospital and will share in the benefits of its legal identity. Hopefully, this move will serve as an impetus for greater participation on the part of members. Gratitude plays a major role in the recovery process, and what better way to practice it than by directing our expression to those who are following in our footsteps. As we all know, there is a great personal need during this critical inpatient period. These folks need to know they are "not alone" and, indeed, that they are in pretty good company.

THE SECOND ANNUAL MCBRIDE ALUMNI PICNIC...has been scheduled for Sunday, August 17, at Milwaukee's Kletzsch Park (on the far northeast side). Barring unforeseen conflicts, that date is firm, so mark your calendars now and look forward to a day of great fellowship. This year, we're looking to an expanded activities agenda and hope to have a "Renewal" get-together in the morning, perhaps at McBride, with a breakfast and special AA meeting or program to recharge our recovery batteries. A full-family outing would then follow in the afternoon. For you out-of-town folks, this would be a great chance to renew those ties that were so close (Can you get any closer than GROUP?) Again, details about time, plans, a map, etc., will be covered in a future mailing. Contact any Steering Committee member if you have any suggestions (or offers to help).

WITH OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY...as an alumni association approaching, the Steering Committee has decided it is time to do some "moving on." We set September 1 as the start of our official fiscal year and some

changes are anticipated. These are still in the discussion stage but the following is being investigated:

-- Since "steering" is no longer appropriate for our designation, the committee will become a board of directors (as required by the foundation criteria). Membership will be expanded from six to nine, and the positions will be for terms of two years each, with the terms to be staggered to assure continuity. This will require several terms of other than two years at the outset so that the format can be implemented over the first few years. A call for nominations to the new board will go out shortly, and anyone wishing to serve will have the opportunity to volunteer.

-- Definite goals and objectives will be established and a mission statement will outline our purpose and commitment. Several alums have expressed a desire to more actively participate and have shared our concern that the alumni identity should be more meaningful. We hope to fulfill those wishes.

-- Though we have decided against a specific dues structure, we expect to require an annual donation to the foundation as a requirement for membership in the Alumni Association. This is to not only cover operating expenses but will enable us to make our existence known through material contributions to the amenities of the treatment Center. "Recently-graduated" or other alums who are in the process of putting their lives back together will not be expected to necessarily comply with this format, but we feel that those who recognize an allegiance and responsibility to McBride and the role it has played in their recovery should have a visible motivation to participate.

-- A greater effort will be made to provide opportunities for alumni involvement, especially among the more recent "grads." The "treatment center experience" is really only a beginning, a start in the right direction toward recovery, and many have later discovered that the continuing contact with McBride and fellow alums is one of the best assets we can have, once we're back in the "real world." It's a whole lot easier to simply hang onto something than it is to misplace it, and then not have it handy when you really need it.

IN CASE YOU'VE HEARD....some familiar voices on radio and TV lately, the McBride Treatment Team have become virtual regulars when the Milwaukee media need spokespersons to discuss alcohol and drug dependency on newscasts and talk shows. A tribute to their expertise and credibility in the field!

THANKS TO THOSE....who have kept us updated with address changes. In addition to keeping our roster current, it's a way of letting us know you're out there and interested enough to assure continued contact with the association. Please check your mailing label and pass along any changes to: Ken Zimmerman, 17935 Country Lane, Brookfield, WI, 53005. And, as always, that's also the address for any items, comments or suggestions for "The Moving Finger." (Maybe we could even start a letters-to-the-editor column.)

--KZ.

"The moving finger writes, and having writ.....MOVES ON."

-- Omar Khayyam