

Herrington McBride

29th Annual Winter Retreat

The Holiday Gift to yourself or someone you love,
to begin the New Year celebrating Recovery!

January 8 - 10, 2016



The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Winter Edition, 2016

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly

Friday Registration 3:00 - 6:00 pm until Sunday 1:00 Afternoon 1:00pm

(Attendees must be recovering from their Addictions)

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21st, 2015

There can be no Exceptions.

Redemptorist Retreat Center

1800 Timber Trail Lane - Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

“Came to Believe”

Keynote Speaker: **Kent & Debbie S. (Tag Team)**

Cost is \$225.00 which includes all meals & 2 night's lodging.

A limited Number of scholarships, through “The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund” are available for those who require some financial assistance to total the cost of registration. Those requesting scholarships are asked to contribute what they honestly are able to, if possible, and the individual applying to our scholarship committee must do so in writing and send your requests c/o Jim Dropik – 3626 S. Brust Ave, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207. Requests are confidential, and please include your reason and how long you have been on your recovery journey – including the amount you're able to contribute. We set our rate to just cover costs.

Please Note: Anyone arriving under the influence of any mood-altering substance will be asked to leave immediately – no refund will be given. Refunds will be made only up to two weeks prior to the retreat, as we have to pre-pay at the retreat center.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

Need a 1st floor room? Yes _____

Roommate? Yes _____ Roommate's Name: _____

Willing to share a room? Yes _____ No _____

Registration Fee: \$225.00

Donation to Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund : _____

*Donations will help those needing scholarships

Total Amount of Check \$ _____

CHECK MUST
ACCOMPANY
REGISTRATION

MAKE CHECK
PAYABLE TO
HMAA.

Send directly to:
Jim Dropik
3626 S. Brust Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53207
jamesdropik@sbcglobal.net
(414-640-3055)



From the Desk of our President

By: Rob McCreadie

Hello again !

I hope you all have a safe and wonderful holiday season! One of the many gifts of recovery is the ability to celebrate gratitude every day, not just once or twice a year. Those of us who woke up today or those who will lay their heads down tonight without having to put a mind or mood altering substance into our bodies have at least one thing to be grateful for.

On Saturday 10/31/15 we held our second annual “Scared Straight Halloween Party” at Herrington Recovery Center. Laurie Schammel and her husband Dave did another amazing job of organizing and executing the event! John Aschenbrenner took residents to Goodwill and provided each one with \$20.00 donated by the HMAA with which to purchase Costumes. Dinner, games, karaoke and fellowship were all in abundant supply. Zorro was spotted in attendance and even sang karaoke! All in all, another successful board sponsored event that provided an opportunity for Herrington residents to enjoy fun and fellowship in a safe environment, proving that you can have a great time free from alcohol and other drugs.

Save the dates of January 8th – 10th, 2016 for the 29th Annual Herrington McBride Retreat held each year at the Redemptorist Retreat Center in Oconomowoc, WI. If this year's event is any indication and I'm certain that it is, you'll want to secure your spot early for next year's retreat. This event is open to all those who are recovering from addiction. See the enclosed registration form for details!

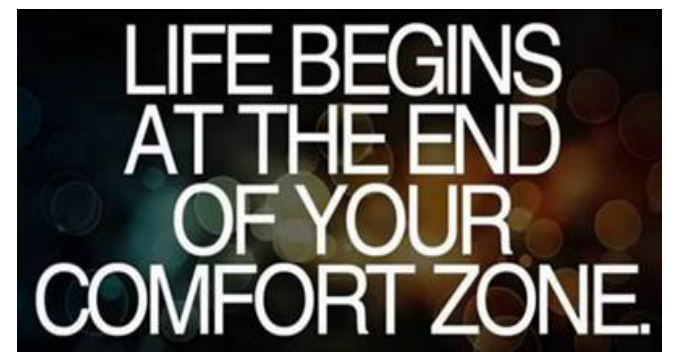
I'm pleased to report that support for the RAPs continues to be overwhelming! Contact me now to sign up for a chance to speak during the first half of 2016 as spaces are going fast. All of your support warms my heart and affirms what an amazing group of people makes up our community. RAPs provide an opportunity for alums and members of the recovering community to come in and share what their life was like, what happened and what life in recovery is like with current residents at Herrington Recovery Center. If you've got at least one year of solid recovery and are willing to share your experience strength and hope, please feel free

to email me at clean@wi.rr.com in order to begin the process of being approved to speak at the house. The speaking spots have been filled for the rest of this year, but there is always a need for stable, recovering members of our community to keep what we have by giving it away.

Response to the now weekly Friends and Family program has also been great! Family and Friends programming has created a need for more AA/NA and Al-Anon/Families Anonymous speakers. I have been sharing names of interested speakers with Herrington Recovery Center staff who also appreciate the willingness of qualified speakers to share their Saturday mornings with residents in treatment, their family members and friends.

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association is supported through donations from members of the recovering community, family and friends. Please consider supporting us in our mission as “The Association provides each of us as individuals and as a collective community the opportunity to be in contact with each other and provide a supportive environment for recovery.” If you received this newsletter in the mail, you'll find an enclosed envelope that you can use to support our continued work. Our address is also on the back page of the newsletter. The Herrington McBride Alumni Association is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization and any and all contributions are fully tax deductible.

I always welcome feedback and suggestions as to how we can improve our alumni association in order to continue our mission and to support residents in treatment and throughout their transitions into the recovering community. Thanks to all for your continued kindness and support!



Dear Sister Morpheus*,

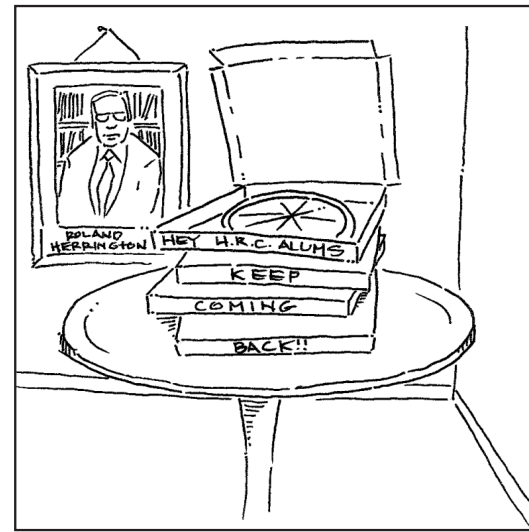
You once were my dearest friend and companion. You made me happy to be alive and had the power to numb all of my pain real or imagined. When we first got together you gave me boundless energy and abilities beyond every limitation I had ever felt before. I was no longer the inadequate and awkward person I had always perceived myself to be.

The things I have done to hide and protect our relationship go against everything that I have ever valued or held dear. I told lies to the people who love me the most. I stole from friends and family. I stole from anyone or anyplace with total disregard for the victims of my criminal behavior. I declined invitations from family members and friends to go out or to go on vacations due to my fear of being too far from you for too long. I closed myself off from the outside world in order to give you all of my time and devotion. I drove away every last friend. I drove away all those who loved me because they could not stand to see me slowly committing suicide from deep within your embrace.

The physical tolls that I have paid, not to mention the emotional and psychological costs, were all part of the bargain that I willingly accepted to keep you close to me. The damage, from which there is no repair, has scarred me forever. The inability to grow and mature as a "normal" person, keeps me bound as a child in an adult's body. I don't know how to interact with people my own age, as I have never had the opportunity to develop the social skills that others take for granted. I lost all ability and desire to enjoy and take part in any physical or sexual activities while we carried on our affair.

The thought of dying in your arms was one so attractive to me that I looked forward to your deadly embrace. I lost all that was dear to me; my family, friends, numerous jobs, my integrity, my home, my possessions, but the most devastating loss of all was the loss of my self-respect. I felt so lonely with *and* without you. I had lost all direction in my life and had lost sight of my values and doubted that I had any intrinsic value as a human being. I felt like a victim and no matter how I bathed myself in your company I could not overcome my insecurity and self-loathing. You took from me my will to live; without hesitation I embraced you and your homicidal plan.

I can't explain why the people I had hurt the most never lost sight of the qualities in me that I could no longer see or feel in myself; they never lost hope that I could somehow be rescued and saved from your chains and my own self-destructive behavior. Many people continued to pray for my return to sanity even when I did not believe a reprieve from your grasp could ever truly be possible. The mere fact that I am still alive is evidence that there is a plan far greater than mine at work. Left to my own devices I would surely be dead. I have stopped using, lost the desire to use and have been shown a new way to live. I am free...I am clean... Just For Today. -Rob M. *Morpheus is the God of Dreams.



Handwritten thank you notes from residents:

- IC call your... keep coming back!!
- You are my hope + inspiration. Thanks so much! Madi
- Thank you for coming! Evanna
- Thanks for your support! Tony
- Thank you for your support! Jenny
- THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!
- Thanks! A lot! BOB
- Thank you NATE
- Thanks for filling me up and the words of wisdom. BOB
- Thanks for everything. Pizza + support included. -Celia
- Enjoy! Be happy healthy Heidi
- Thanks! Kerri
- Thanks for giving me up and the words of wisdom. BOB

-Hand drawn thank you card from residents after HMAA sponsored pizza night:

To My Children...

Andrea, John and Michael,

I am writing this letter during the infancy of my sobriety as a reminder to myself and as a warning to you, in full detail, how alcohol has affected my live and why I made the decision to live without it. This was not an easy decision, nor one that came without many failed attempts. I had let alcohol define my actions and consequentially my life. I feel it is important to share with you the reasoning behind my decision and hope that someday you will be able to look back on this letter as a guideline for your relationship with alcohol. I can only pray that this drug will not be the crutch you use to obtain a sense of self-worth and acceptance in this world, as I have. I fell prey to that muse known as alcohol only to find out I am a better person without it. Only through self-love and acceptance of how God made you, can you truly find happiness in this life.

Mark Your Calendars:



AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Monday – 7:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:00 Evening

Thursday – 6:00 Evening

Saturday – 7:04 Morning (Nobody makes it by 7:00!)

Sunday – 8:30 Morning

NA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Saturday – 7:00 Evening

Rogers Hospital – West Allis

Sunday – 6:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:30 Evening (NA Meeting)

Saturday – 9:00 Morning

Al-Anon Meeting-Rogers Hospital Oconomowoc

Tuesday – 7:00 Evening

Alumni interested in doing Tuesday Evening RAPs with current Herrington Residents or if you're interested in having Pizza with Residents every first Tuesday of March & September, contact Rob at: clean@wi.rr.com for information on how to proceed.



-HMAA Annual "Scared Straight" Halloween party brings fun and frights to HRC!



Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

- Rob McCreadie – President
- Phil Grabski – Vice President
- Secretary – Mary Lee Grady
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- Jamie Walker
- Scott Elston
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- John Aschenbrenner – Past President

- Advisors:
- William Aspley
 - James Dropik
 - Matthias Scheuth – Director of the Rogers Foundation
 - Cindy Suszek – Manager of Herrington Recovery Center

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pgrabski1@gmail.com

Send name, telephone, address & email changes to:
HMAA Box 13581
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213
or by email to Wemart@aol.com

When I look at each of you, I thank God every day for your unique personalities and gifts and realize just what perfect imperfections of life you are. If you ever got to the point where you thought alcohol could enhance any aspect of your being then somewhere along the line you lost touch with your true self. May you always turn to God to return you to your path. Life will not come without its share of struggles and heartbreak; Alcohol will never solve a problem nor care about the consequences when you choose IT over strength.

My struggles with alcohol began at an early age; though I didn't realize it at the time, the way I drank and the purpose that guided it, were warning signs of alcoholism. When I drank, I would at times become belligerent and emotionally hurtful to the people I loved the most. The amount of shame and embarrassment that those moments caused me were not enough to get me to stop. I naively believed that since I did not drink on a daily basis, there was no way I could be an alcoholic and thus, I never tried to quit. The shameful moments aside, alcohol gave me relief from the underlying issue of no self confidence. I believed that when I drank, my personality would be altered in a way that allowed me to be my true self - someone that was outgoing, fun to be with and emotionally secure. Alcohol, in all reality, never allowed me to even come close to being that person. It stripped me down to a shell of my true self and caused me to descent to unthinkable depths of emotional inclusion and depression. People would choose not to be around me for fear of what I would do or what I might say. In the end, alcohol had taken away my ability to be myself, while destroying my friendships in the process. That is the power of this drug. It has the capabilities to make the illogical seem logical. While as a sober father I would never dream to put your lives in danger; that protective instinct would evaporate while under the influence of alcohol. There were numerous times that I would take you kids in the car so I could drive to the liquor store and replenish the empty bottle that was just recently vacated of all its contents. Not until the next day would it dawn upon me the multitude of things that could have gone wrong and the seriousness of my actions. The thought of it still haunts me to this day. My life thus far has been filled with stories like this. I lied to myself for many years about who I was when I drank. The one truth that has taken me many years to figure out is that I am at my best when sober.

It's easy to get caught up in the search for acceptance; we try to fit into the crowd and always want to be liked by everyone. The trick to life is in loving yourself and excepting your flaws for what they truly are: idiosyncrasies that make you who God intended you to be. Acceptance by the whole should never be your driving force in life; individuality will always guide you to the people you should be with and be concerned about. True friendships are built without the corruption of alcohol and therefore will always be the ones that last. There is always going to be some sort of "drug" out there, which we think will make our lives better and more manageable; a chemical escape that will take us away from everyday life. For me, that drug was alcohol. The problems were always there when I returned and usually compounded. What I didn't realize though, is that not only did I escape those problems for a few hours, but I was escaping from everything that makes life worth living.

It is for these reasons that I choose to refrain from alcohol, Andrea, John and Michael: I couldn't imagine a life without you in it. I have never loved anyone as much as I do you. I choose not to drink because life gives me "highs" every day in the form of you kids, which is stronger and more emotionally rewarding than any drug can possibly be. It seems an oxymoron to say alcohol would enhance any moment in my life going forward; it would only hinder or destroy any chance at true happiness. I pray that you realize how truly wonderful you are early on in your life; that you don't feel the need to drink to fit in or use it as a source of false empowerment. For in the end, what I have learned is that my sober life has brought with it more rewards than I ever could have imagined.

~ Scott

IF YOU DO
WHAT YOU
ALWAYS DID
YOU WILL
GET WHAT
YOU ALWAYS
GOT.

Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund

Dan Kenevan remembering his son, Brian:

My son Brian died of a heroin overdose on February 2, 2011. Not only was he my son, he was my best friend. We both played major roles in one another's lives. His death has been devastating to me. I loved him more than anyone could ever imagine.

He was such a wonderful, kind and caring person. He loved people and animals. People and animals loved him. If someone was in need or in pain, he would do whatever it took to help them. I could not believe how many people helped us to celebrate and pay tribute to Brian's life. He helped countless others with their sobriety. The people and the lives he touched are truly amazing. He was such a good person.

If you meet Brian for the first time you would never suspect him of using or abusing drugs. He always had a huge bright smile on his face. His physical condition was second to none. He loved to run marathons and do long bike races. He constantly lifted weights and worked out at the gym. If only his mind had been as healthy as his body. He had his ups and down with substance abuse for the past 8 years. He could do very well for periods of time, but the demons always called him back. I have no doubt he was sincere about achieving sobriety, but, for whatever reason he was not able to maintain it.

The world has a little less light without him; however, heaven has gained a new angel. He now watches over us all. He will always be with us and live on in our hearts and our minds. When I think of him I smile most of the time, sometimes I cry. I miss you!

Love, Dad



Please consider donating to a very worthy cause Every penny of scholarship money donated will help pay for young people who cannot afford the Winter Retreat in January. It's a 3 day event allowing young people to rededicate themselves to their recovery. Make Check Payable to: HMAA, and earmark it for Scholarship Fund. Give to John, Jim or Rob.



**Triumphant Johnny the German
Returning Home - Victorious**

Johnny the German's Troops Fortified Against Johnny the Greek's weakening Forces to win the *Battle of Battles* on the Trivial Pursuit Battlefield

**Time: Saturday Evening,
January 9th, 2016
Place: Alumni Retreat
During the Retreat January 8 -10th**

