

For the Weekly Calendar:



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 Meeting - 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.

24

hours in a day.

No more. No less. That's all I have to work with. To do my best to keep my thinking in check. To pray often. To trust that God cares about me and wants me to succeed. To hold on and not give up. To do for others what I can. To give God my weaknesses and triggers. To grow humility and a deeper gratitude. To give God all the credit. To have peace at the end of every day.

C.L. Murphy 2014



Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

Elected Board Members:

Rob McCreadie – President
Jeff Radtke – Vice President
Secretary – Laurie Schammel
Treasurer – Jamie Walker
Jennifer Evancy
Scott Elston
Michael Ingrilli
Phil Grabski
Kristin Simons
Mary Lee Grady
Glen Taylor
Cindy Wadd
John Hopkins – Past President
Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist
Bob Olson – Past President

Advisors:

William Aspley
John Movroydis
Jerrett Fernandez
James Dropik
Matthias Scheuth – Director of the Rogers Foundation
David B. Bohl, MA - Director of Addiction Services

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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Summer Edition, 2017

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Rob McCreadie

Hello Friends!

This will be my final letter from the President's Desk as I am coming to the end of my term as president. I will remain active on the board, around Herrington and in the recovery community as a past president. I am proud of what my fellow board members, advisors and I have accomplished over the last five years and look forward to a long continued affiliation with the HMAA. It has been an honor to serve as your president and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been of service to such an outstanding organization and community. I am not going away, simply changing roles as we continue to support alumni as they transition into the recovering community near and far per our mission. "The Alumni find themselves in locations across the United States and outside close proximity to each other. 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." I've said it many times before and I'll say it again...individuals who remain connected to the facility and community where they went to treatment stand a dramatically greater potential for remaining successful in recovery than those who do not.

If you happen to see me at a meeting, a function or in the community at large, please do not hesitate to come up and say hello. I value all of you and your contributions to our community no matter how large or small. Remember, "we can do together what none of us could do alone" and I would not have the life or recovery that I am so fortunate to have without the love and support from all of you.

I am looking forward to the Herrington McBride Alumni Association Reunion Picnic on June 17, 2017. This year will mark the 32nd reunion for the HMAA. Festivities of this annual daylong celebration of recovery will start with a continental breakfast at 9:30 am. We have speakers,

your annual Herrington McBride Alumni Association board meeting, Mike's gourmet picnic, games, activities, scavenger hunt and fellowship for family and friends of all ages. A recreational therapist from the Rogers Hospital staff will be on hand to provide activities for kids throughout the day.



RAP speakers continue to receive positive responses from Herrington residents and staff. Willingness to speak has been so great from Herrington and Rogers alums interested in sharing their experience, strength and hope that sign up the for RAP speakers for the rest of 2017 filled up in about a day and a half. While the RAP sign up is full through the rest of 2017, speakers are also needed for Herrington's Family and Friends Program, which meets every week and has created a need for more AA/NA and Al-Anon/Families Anonymous speakers. If you are available to speak on Saturday mornings and meet the above criteria, please contact me at clean@wi.rr.com and I will forward your information to HRC staff for scheduling. Please keep in mind that due to the high volume of qualified graduates, openings to speak are limited.

If you are able, will you please consider making a donation of any size to the HMAA? We are supported through donations from members of the recovering community, family and friends. 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.

Thank you for your continued support of the Herrington McBride Alumni Association in furthering our mission. Thank you also for allowing me the opportunity to have served as president for the last 5 years.



Meditation

Meditation, like working the steps, is “training” because it requires practice, ongoing effort. I see my meditation practice and, indeed, my entire 12-Step Program, as training my thoughts and actions. We cannot get recovery except through our own experience. This is why we practice spiritual work. From: Pg. 60, An Introduction to 11th Step Meditation by Laurence Sanger

Forgiveness meditation starts by connecting with the heart:

- Begin by settling in to a comfortable posture where you can stay alert. Consciously relax with some deeper breaths, releasing any tension in the body.
- Feel the breath in the center of the chest, the Heart Center, and have a sense of softening and opening in that place.
- Once you’ve settled in for perhaps 3-5 minutes, begin to work with the following imagery and phrases. The three aspects of forgiveness, forgiving ourselves, forgiving others, and asking forgiveness, can be done in any order that works for you. I present self-forgiveness first because it’s so often the most difficult for people.
- Repeat these phrases to yourself: Forgiving ourselves: for all the ways I have harmed myself through thought, word, and deed, I forgive myself, I forgive myself.

Forgiving others: for all the ways you have hurt me through thought, word, or deed, I offer my forgiveness. I forgive you.

Asking Forgiveness: for all the ways that I hurt you, through thought, word, or deed, I ask your forgiveness. Please forgive me.

Condensed from the chapter on Step Nine, Buddhism & The Twelve Steps Workbook by Kevin Griffin.



One Day at a Time

It all started after I broke my finger. I was drinking, a lot. Almost every weekend; living the life. I was a new nurse; a young professional. I had a great boyfriend with whom I loved fiercely and fought with all the more fiercely. I didn’t recognize it at the time, but it was because I was under the influence. I had such high anxiety; I worried about everything; even about how much I worried. My family, my parent’s health, my job, what people thought of me, how I could be better, and why I was never enough. The biggest question that continued to circle my mind was why I couldn’t just appreciate life and let go of the littlest things, like a messy drawer, or a few dirty dishes. I felt like I needed to turn the volume down in my head.

I can remember the moments that started the cycle of addiction. I was running late for work. I only lived a few minutes away but somehow always managed to be cutting it close. It was usually related to something I was obsessing about, some mess. I got in the car, put it in reverse and sat there. I knew I had to get back inside and “fix” something that I “messed” up. Sure enough, I didn’t rinse the sink after I brushed my teeth. I couldn’t



32nd Annual Herrington McBride Alumni Association SUMMER PICNIC June 17, 2017

- 9:30 Continental Breakfast
- 10:00 Welcome from Glen T., Board Member
- 10:30 Keynote address by Jimmy D.
- 11:30 Annual Meeting chaired by HMAA President Rob M.
- 12:00 Gourmet Picnic Lunch (Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)
- 1:00 Al-Anon - Sarah N
NA Speaker - Adam W.
(Games and activities for children on the grounds with a Rec. Therapist (1:00 - 2:30))
- 2:30 Annual Scavenger Hunt for present Herrington residents and any interested others
- As in years past, the scavenger hunt list is kept under lock and key until just before the groups are sent out to collect the items.
During this time you are welcome to stay and engage in any or all of the following activities.
*Trivial Pursuit *Corn Hole *Bocce ball *Music *Giant Jenga *Ping Pong
- Bring your own grilling items for dinner (grill will be provided and grilling will be done for you)
- 6:30 Scavengers are due back with their “loot” for judging and awarding of prizes (Prizes provided by T-Lon Products Inc.)
- 7:30 Fireside Open Gratitude Meeting hosted by Rob M.

We welcome not only recovering alums but family and friends of Herrington/McBride

ALL EVENTS WILL BE HELD INSIDE THE MPC IF THE WEATHER IS INCLEMENT

Reunion Co-Chairs: Mike Ingrassia, Kristin Simons, Jenny Evancy, Jeff Radtke

“Celebrating Recovery”

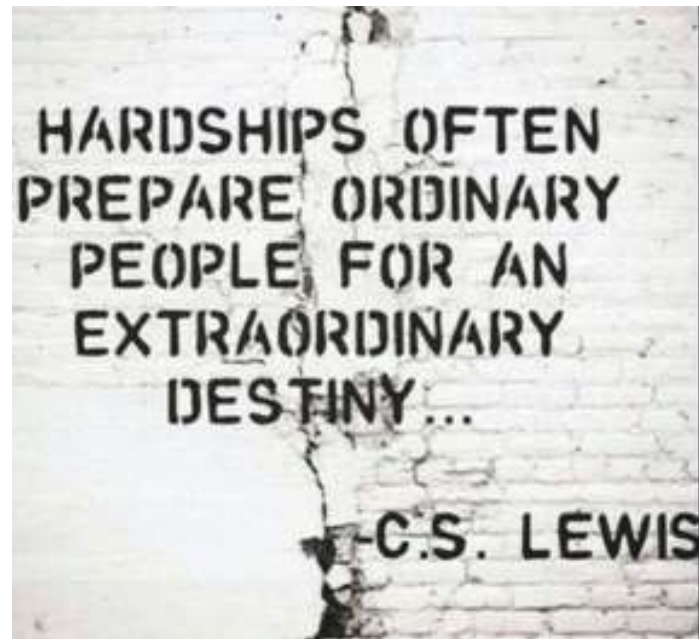
just leave until that sink looked just right. I intensely recall telling my boyfriend, I have to do something about this obsessive compulsive issue.

I went to see my primary doctor and he prescribed a combination antidepressant and anti-anxiety medication. I started taking it right way, and within days, I started to notice that my emotions were even more out of control. I continued on the medication hoping it would eventually help. Just days later after breaking my finger during a wicked fight with my now fiancé, I was prescribed Vicodin for the pain. The striking change occurred in me after just taking half of a tablet. The volume had been turned down. So I took a few more, and in no time I realized that what I needed to help feed my emotions was an opiate.

Within the next few months I was preparing to get married. We knew that we wanted children right away so I decided it would be best to take myself off "any medication that could hinder or harm my chances of having a baby. Of course, opiates were not included and somehow justified in my newly addicted mind. Without following the doctor's advice of tapering my antidepressant, I took myself off of the medication and within 2 days I found myself crying uncontrollably on the bathroom floor, curled up in a ball.

The series of events that took place in the next few years were not progressive, they quick and wreckless. I found a few bottles of medication, and used them up, then I found a way to get more from my doctor... after that; I began taking the remainder of medication waste from the hospital. This wasn't every day. It was sporadic, but it quickly became a thought that would be heavy on my mind. At the time, I was working night shift, and having trouble sleeping. It became a pattern to have pain medication to get through the night.

My wedding came and went. It was a wonderful time. Looking back at the last 10 years of my life, my wedding was the very best moment in my life. I don't regret for one second marrying my husband. The continued pain I cause him is something I deeply regret. I remember thinking about packing some medication for the honeymoon but decided alcohol would be enough for me. It wasn't long after that it became obvious that I preferred pain medication to help me get by. Looking back I was starting the addiction cycle. Everything I did became an addiction. About 6 months after we were married, I took a pregnancy test because I knew that we were not protecting against pregnancy but I also planned to drink. I could never just have one drink, it had to be to get drunk. We had



two weddings to go to in one weekend. The Friday night wedding, my test was negative. I proceeded to drink till I threw up and even drove myself home. That morning I woke up, took a pregnancy test and it was positive. I was so excited. I didn't care about drinking after that. It was easy for me to stop. I was even able to give up narcotics. I ended up having an emergency C-section, being placed on a pain pump, and given a prescription upon discharge. In hindsight, it was then that I was about to run head-on into the speeding train called addiction.

Within just a few days I had finished 30 Percocet tablets. I took 2-3 tablets every two hours because it made me feel like supermom. The agony of not being able to breastfeed my baby like 'everyone' else cut me like a knife. But, taking the narcotics made me forget how much of a failure I was. Six weeks later, I was working night shift full time and in school for my master's degree. Within 3 months of delivering my child I was pregnant again. The thought of doing it again so soon, and the stress of life and school and a newborn was so overwhelming. The only way I could really see getting from day to day was to use. By this time, if I stopped taking I felt worse. I was fighting to look strong, and be perfect every single day. I didn't ever want to tell anyone what I true failure I was. I knew I had to get it under control before I was too far along with my second child. As cliché as it sounds, I kept telling myself I could stop. I would actually plan out the when and the how. I had to tell my family I had the flu in order to deal with the agony of withdrawal. It was the only way. But when I needed more time, I found it

was easier to start using again. Every time I stopped the cycle, going back made it so much worse.

About a year later, my addiction was in full swing. It was every day, all day. I was exhausted from trying to find drugs, and hiding my secret. After all, being a nurse was my whole identity and it was as if the sweet competent nurse everyone liked, had been replaced by a selfish monster that would stop at nothing to use. Finally, it all came down on me. At the time, it felt like the time in my life, but looking back, I was grateful it happened. I knew I needed help, but I could not find the courage after all this time to reach out for help. So, like many addicts, I finally got caught.

Within 24 hours, I burdened my husband with the truth and was checked into Rogers Memorial for a 4 day inpatient detoxification. I literally wanted to die. Picking up the phone and telling my parents and my sister was one of the hardest calls I ever made. Somehow, by day three, I made it to meetings, spoke with other patients and felt like I could breathe again. When I was discharged, I felt so alone. My family wanted to be supportive, but I don't think anyone really understands how it feels unless they too went through it. I started IOP immediately after the weekend. Luckily I had good insurance and was able to do over 8 weeks of outpatient treatment on top of AA and NA meetings. I remember my counselor asking me to speak with her sometime around week 4. She was so worried about me. Worried that I really wasn't talking about how I truly felt. I just couldn't get the words out. Around week 5, after completing a timeline and listening to a guest



speaker about addiction, I felt like I was ready to talk. I went through all of this without my friends knowing. My friends were my group. My friends were my meetings. I started attending Wednesday evening group at Rogers, and that is where I finally felt like myself again. I met amazing people who really understood me. My life started to come together again. I went back to work, and back to being a mother to my children. I went back to being a daughter and a sister. The pain I felt then about what I did was so overwhelming. But, I had to move on. I really didn't feel like I had any other choice. I had a second chance at life. Literally. When I think back to the amount of medication I was taking, I could have died hundreds of times. I could have killed someone else. Sitting with that guilt is all consuming at times. But the biggest and most important message I learned from addiction is 'one day at a time.' You can't do it any other way or it swallows you up and you will end up using again, or dying.

Despite the bridges I burned and the burdening shame I am finally recovering, living, and doing the best I can. As an addict, I recognize addiction as a disease. I know it's seen that way; but more and more as a moral weakness. Addiction is a compulsive disorder, and compulsions overwhelm all other motivations. I didn't wake up one day and say I want to be an addict, I wasn't a cruel person trying to be good, and I was a sick person, wife, mother, nurse, daughter, and sister fighting to get well.

Fast forward 6 years later. I still struggle. But, there are days when I laugh at something and feel a little bit more like me again. I have so many regrets. I have hurt so many people. My life was turned upside down. I can get through that though. I don't always know how, and sometimes why, but my husband never left my side. It has changed our relationship so much. I think what is the most devastating to me is that he never asked for this life. He didn't marry an addict. He had no idea. I don't know if I will truly ever get past that feeling. When I look at my parents and sister, I still think about it, every single time. Will that ever go away? I don't know. I still see a therapist and I still attend meetings when I can. It really does help. It somehow makes you feel human.

My life is one day at a time, and a constant serenity prayer.

~ Anonymous