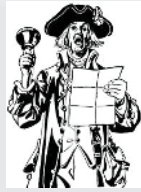


For the Weekly Calendar:



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 contact Rob McCreadie at: clean@wi.rr.com
If you're interested in having Pizza with current residents contact Glen Taylor at: fglentaylor@gmail.com
Pizza nights are every second Tuesday of March, June September and December

OBSTACLES
ARE PUT IN
YOUR WAY TO
SEE IF WHAT
YOU WANT IS
REALLY WORTH
FIGHTING FOR



Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

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Jeff Radtke – Vice President
Secretary – Laurie Schammel
Treasurer – Phil Grabski
Jennifer Evancy
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Michael Miller MD, DFASAM, DLFAPA - Director of
Addiction Program Development

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Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213
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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Summer Edition, 2018

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Kristin Simons

Hello to all our alumni and friends!
The Herrington-McBride Alumni Association's mission is to support residents while in treatment at the HRC and to provide support and fellowship to or 3,000+ members nationwide. June is our BIG EVENT! Mark your calendars to join us for our 33rd Alumni & Friends Reunion Picnic on Saturday June 16th. This is an opportunity for all of us to reconnect with each other back where it all began at the Rogers campus. We want to see you there!

We have planned a full day of recovery fellowship, including the debut of our new Recovery Olympics! We have speakers, food, games, camaraderie, more food, prizes, campfire, and tons of fun in store. Our goal is to stay connected with you. Come share with us your strengths and your struggles. Your family, children, and friends are welcome. Drop in for a few hours, for lunch, or for the entire event. We close with a very moving campfire meeting.

Please come and introduce yourself to me personally at the picnic, I would love to say hello, and I welcome your feedback on how we can better serve our alumni.

For those of you from out of town and out of state, please stop by and sign up for our "Alumni Partners". Our goal is to provide a hometown contact person for recent Herrington graduates who live outside the area. This is not a sponsorship commitment, we are looking for alumni willing to help a new graduate find a few good meetings and get connected in the recovery community in their home area. If you are unable to join us at the Reunion Picnic but are willing to be on our Alumni Partners list, please contact Jeff Radtke (jeff.radtke@yahoo.com)

I look forward to seeing you at the picnic on June 16th!

Blessings in Recovery,
Kristin Simons
drkjsimons1@gmail.com

A Significant and Substantial Opportunity
to Give Back

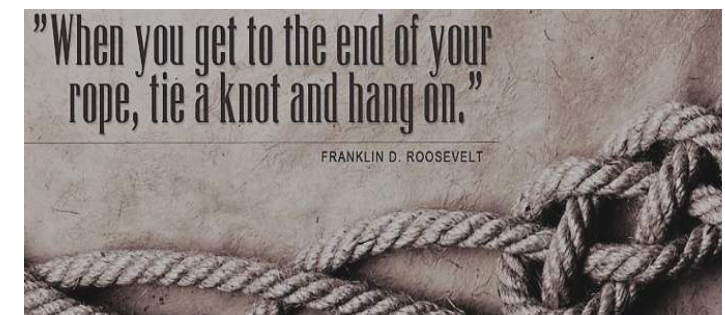


Hello Herrington Alumni,

I was very fortunate to live within a half hour of Oconomowoc when I left Herrington because I could return and attend meetings where I was comfortable and knew people. For people leaving Herrington and living not close enough to attend meetings at Rogers, we believe it would be very helpful if they could get in contact with a past resident in their area who can meet with them and direct them to some good meetings in their area. So, we are looking to create a list of "Alumni Partners", with at least a year clean and sober who are willing to partner with a new graduate and help them find and get to meetings in their area.

If you are willing to help please email jeff.radtke@yahoo.com, and give me your name, and phone number. At any point in time you can e-mail me and I can remove you from the list. We will be sending e-mails to everyone on this list once a year to confirm you want to remain on the list.

Thank you very much for your help, your support is greatly appreciated.





Tyler's Story

As I woke, laying in soaked sheets from my own sweat, wondering how did this happen to me, why me, how does the college student with great potential enter his second detox in as many weeks? I grew up with a loving and supportive dad, went to a world class university and yet, still ended up battling addiction.

I spent many of my early months of recovery looking at all the differences I had with those in recovery. While not wanting to be a part of but rather different from them and therefore, not an alcoholic. This made the early months of my recovery miserable. I had no solution and my chemical solution was gone thus I was faced with two options. One was grim, go back to my old way of life and continue down the road to see how much lower my bottom could get. The other jump into the AA program and being figuring out how to live happy, joyous, and free without the use of any mind-altering chemicals.

My story is the same as what is so often heard in the rooms of AA. I grew up in a small town in the middle of nowhere Wisconsin. My parents were never together. My mom battled her own demons leaving me to live with my dad. My dad is an amazing man and raised me to the best of his ability. Nothing that has happened to me is what makes me an alcoholic, no circumstance or upbringing will explain why I am the way I am. It's simply just how I am.

In school I never felt like I truly fit in. I would morph to match the behaviors of different people to feel like I belonged. I used humor to mask what was going on inside of me. I thought if you knew what was going on in my mind and what I felt about myself there would be no way you would like me because I did not like me. I was not comfortable with who I was.

My first drink came at about 13 years old. I saw my grandparents drinking often and they always seemed to have fun and live the way I wanted to live. The first drink gave me the ease and comfort the big book talks about. I finally felt like I belonged in my skin after not feeling like that for such a long time. Even with this new-found solution I barely drank from that day until I got into college.

Despite not feeling like I belonged I excelled in school as I hoped that would make people like me. It gave me a sense of belonging for people to come to me with their questions and to have an answer. By the age of 17 I had drove a stake between my dad and step mom, I left him with the choice of me or her not seeing any of the damage that I was causing. At 17 he kicked me out and for a long time I was resentful at my

dad for that. I played the victim saying how could you kick me out I am going to graduate school with high academic honors and have a bright future. I was not able to accept that my actions were the reason why.

At 17 I had to make hard choices without any help such as what schools to apply to, what majors to look into, and how to pay for school. This fact made it very hard for me to ever ask for help as I felt I was "self-made" and knew what was best for me.

The summer after I left for graduation and did not look back. I was finally free to do what I wanted when I wanted with no one to answer to. This is when drinking took off for me. It turned this person with social anxiety into the life of the party. I had found my solution, that was until this solution stopped working. This made me curious about other chemicals that could fix how I feel.

I made the choice to start using hard drugs. The first time I felt a rush I knew I wanted to have that same feeling for the rest of my life. I was forever chasing that same first use high. I could never achieve it again and would mix different drugs in an attempt to get that same feeling back.

My addiction led me to places I didn't even want to believe existed. I couldn't even look in the mirror any more as I hated the person I had become. I was putting myself in high risk situations not even for a second thinking what the consequences could mean. I had worked hard up to this point and had a great academic career. I was putting all that work into jeopardy each and every day.

I finally broke and called my dad to ask for help. However, looking back on it I knew in my mind I wasn't done using yet. I went to a detox and decided to have my drug dealer pick me up from it failing to see that this is a bad idea. I thought to myself that I had this and new what I was doing now. That is how my life went when I ran it by myself, I could never seem to make the right choice and would always end up in the same places. Thus, I relapsed the day I got out of that detox and continued to dig my rock bottom deeper. I ran out of options yet again and reached out to my dad once again for help. He agreed, and I went to my second detox. Nevertheless, I still was not done using and left that detox with a female because I was afraid of being alone and sober. That brought about the worst week of my life. I hit lows that I could not even fathom. I finally had broken. I remember reaching out to my dad yet again, but this time was different. He told me that he realizes that he can do anything in the world for me but unless I wanted this for myself it would never work. I realized at this moment I was truly alone and needed to figure this out. I checked into my final detox.

This time was different, I went in telling them right away that clearly just detoxing and leaving did not work for me. One of the small blessings in my life then occurred; I was able to get into Herrington without being placed on the waitlist. Herrington was great it helped me to figure out what was going on inside of me but most importantly introduced me to the AA program.

While in Herrington I got a sponsor and started working the steps, admittedly because they make you. At first, I didn't want anything to do with AA and could not see past the maze of differences in my own delusional perception.

After Herrington I was faced with the choice of going back to where I was from or moving to a different location. I chose to



33rd Annual Herrington McBride Alumni Association

Summer Picnic June 16, 2018

- 9:30 Continental Breakfast
- 10:30 Welcome from Glen T, Board Member
Opening thoughts and prayer from John A
- 10:45 Keynote address by Kate T
- 11:30 Annual Alumni Meeting chaired by HMAA President Kristin S
- 12:00 Gourmet Picnic Lunch (Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)
- 1:00 NA Speaker – Ian M
Games and activities on the grounds with rec therapist till 2:30
- 1:45 AI-Anon Speaker – Marianne L
- 2:30 Recovery Olympics for present Herrington residents and any interested others till 4:30
See Olympics Activity Coordinators Jenny V and Jimmy D
Other activities available at this time:
Trivial Pursuit (Team Johnny the German vs. Team Johnny the Greek)
Corn Hole Giant Jenga Bocce ball Ping Pong
- 4:30 Bring your own grilling items (grill will be provided and grilling will be done for you)
- 6:00 Recovery Olympic participants return for results and awarding of prizes
(Prizes provided by T-Lon Products Inc.)
- 6:30* Fireside Open Gratitude Meeting hosted by Rob M
*approximate time

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

"The Best is Yet to Come"

enter a sober living house in a town that I was unfamiliar with. This is where the real growth happened for me as I eventually chose to dive deeper into the AA program.

I have come to love AA and what it does for me. It gives me a daily reprieve from my addiction. This is completely based on the actions I take within the program. I work daily to ensure that today I do not have to use. I would love to say that all days are great, but this wouldn't be the truth. Some days suck but today I know that using will do nothing to help me. I have begun to live a happy joyous and free life. This is only the starting point for me and my journey. I am constantly looking for ways to improve and grow. I have begun to become comfortable with being uncomfortable, this is where my growth happens.



Sarah's Story

It's been seven months since I took my last drink. Saying it was life threatening, is to say the least. My disease of alcoholism is progressive and deadly. It wasn't always that way, but over many many years it became just that.

I grew up in a small town in Northern Wisconsin, where nothing really changed but the weather. I lived on one of the many beautiful chain of lakes spending my free time biking, swimming, fishing and just playing like any other regular kid. My family from the outside was a seemingly normal family who loved to host family and friends to a really good party. It was not unusual for me to be the beer maid grabbing drinks for my Dad and all his buddies. Life was simple and somewhat boring for me. As I became a teenager I could hardly stand being there let alone in my own skin. I always felt different. I can't pinpoint exactly why. I had supportive parents, two lovely sisters, along with a group of friends that loved me for me and all my quirks.

By age 14 and starting high school I was almost obsessed with how uncomfortable it was to be me and I not only started drinking but had my first suicide attempt. I was sent to a small local hospital for observation, soon after coming home I started to see that my drinking changed from a beer here or there to black out drunk as much as I could. I knew it wasn't normal. I knew it wasn't healthy, but as soon as I put any alcohol into my system I couldn't stop at just that one. I worried my parents and they got me into therapy as soon as possible. They even took me to an AA meeting at age 14. I was a young girl in a room filled with old sober men and I was more than uncomfortable. At that time I didn't want to stop. Drinking was the only time I felt like myself, and "fit in".

My high school career really consisted of barely scraping by with minimum grades, an unfocused mind, a couple more suicide attempts, and as much partying as I possibly could get

away with. It was starting to be a struggle. My parents were very disappointed in me. I made bad choices when it came to my few good friends and chose the trouble makers over them. I started to steal, lie and cheat. To this day I am unsure how I graduated school. If it wasn't for my love of music and the choir room I am almost sure I would have flunked out. After graduation I was sent to yet another inpatient facility to do adolescent rehab. I lied through it all, made nice with all staff, and pretended that sobriety was exactly what I wanted.

I tried to move away and do my try at College. I wanted to become a music therapist. But with the new-found freedom being away from home I found the love of the party life and flunked out within three months. During this time I asked for help and was put on another 72 hour hold and by the time my father came to pick me up I was a shell of a shaking mess and needed more help than I ever realized.

A few months went by living back at home. I saved up enough money to move as far away as I could. I started beauty school. I started thriving. I was actually good at something and started to make friends and gain confidence. I was still partying through this period, but I was under the assumption that I could handle it and since I was doing so well, so why the heck not? After graduation and starting a great job I met a man who I would move to Milwaukee with. It was a sketchy situation from the start, but I wanted to find love now that I found my "passion" in life. Within a year of us moving to Milwaukee I found out he was a scam artist, stole and lied to me and everyone we knew, and that was over.

My drinking excelled dramatically. I was a single girl living in the city making good money. All I did was go to the bars and continue to look for love in all the wrong places. I am so thankful I lived thru the many dangerous things I would do in black outs. Waking up in strange places, not being able to find my car. Also, I would no call no show to work. I kept my job through this whole time and I didn't have any of the consequences that we as alcoholics encounter, yet. I was wild and had not a care in the world. Until that all came to a screeching halt and I met the man who I would marry.

Of course, we met at a bar and spent the first four years of our courtship drinking in bars and thinking life was good and we were madly in love. Soon my thinking started changing and I wanted to settle down and get healthy. That worked out because I woke up one day and found myself pregnant with my first daughter. It was the best moment of my life. Everything seemed to be falling into place. My boyfriend and I got married, and she came into this world very soon after. I went from party girl to mommy in a heartbeat. Finally, something I could do well and sober. I ended up having two more babies very closely thereafter and by the time the third daughter came I found myself overwhelmed and blasted with post-partum depression. I was way out of my element here. Three babies under three and not a clue with what I was doing. This is when the party Sarah



turned into an isolated Sarah drinking wine after a day filled with diapers, potty chairs, and bottles. It was a slow turn of events, but I could see myself slipping back into out of control drinking.

Years went by just like this. Mommy by day, twirling around the house getting everything just perfect, working in the evenings pretending everything was all right. Then tucking in my lovely daughters at night as fast as I could in order to dive back into the bottles of wine to blot out how incredibly sad, bored, and filled with self-hate at night. It also became the time where my husband and I would connect. We had nothing but babies and booze in common at this point. It was unhealthy and toxic, and I knew it in my heart of hearts, but could not stop. We formed a codependent way of life and I wanted him to stop drinking so I could stop. Or I would find a book that would save my soul. I was online looking for people just like me that could help me figure out a way to stop this insanity and none of it worked.

Then in 2014 our world came crashing down and my husband went into kidney failure and was told his illness would kill him maybe slowly, perhaps quickly. He was in and out of the hospital for months on end almost biweekly. I jumped into crisis mode. The twirling that I did before in life amped up and I needed to keep this family afloat and the only way I knew how was to numb out any true facts with the booze at night. I soon found his opiate pills that would help him live comfortably. The second I put the medicine into my body, my brain completely changed. I was absolutely hooked and somewhere in my addict brain I thought the pills would help me stop the drinking, but I was so wrong.

For two years I was living on pills to get me thru the day, and booze at night to get me to sleep. I became a shell of a person. I thought I was handling my family and myself. I felt alone. Why wouldn't I? I couldn't find it in me to ask for help. This is when I decided to start smoking marijuana to help with the anxiety, and perhaps stop the pills, which would help me quit drinking. Complete and utter madness. My daughters were already suffering having a chronically ill Daddy. Now they (even though I believed they had no clue I was drowning) have a chronically ill Mommy spinning thru life unable to control a thing. I actually believed I could handle all of this on my own.

Finally, after almost 3 years of this madness we were gratefully able to convince my husband to go to Mayo Clinic for a third opinion. We found out he was misdiagnosed and was being poisoned by the medication that they were giving him for the auto immune disease he did not have. Life was about to change for the better and the worse. He was going to live and I was still dying from the poison that I was putting into my body.

Soon thereafter I found myself unable to get out of bed and hoping that I would have fallen asleep and never wake up. My addiction had me in a state of desperation. This is where I finally asked for help. I told my husband everything and that one faithful morning I got myself into detox at Rodgers Memorial in Oconomowoc. This would be the start of a new life for me. Detox was the scariest moment in my life. I was blinded by what exactly the opiates and booze were doing to my body. I was in there for 10 days to remove the toxins from my system. I was to be sent home with outpatient set up and that is when I met Doctor Miller. He suggested I go to Herrington and I knew I had to completely change up everything in my life so I begged to go. Within 5



minutes I was told it was a go. I was going to remove myself from my beautiful family to finally focus on myself.

Herrington was a life changing experience. I learned about AA and the 12 steps. I learned that I MUST ask for help, it is always there for the asking. I learned that I must put recovery first or I will lose all that is near and dear to me. I learned that I am worth it and not alone.

I relapsed almost a year later. I forgot all of the things I had learned, and I was hiding the fact that I was miserable. I stopped going to meetings. I stopped calling my sponsor. I started sneaking weed and booze again. I started binge spending money and was living life at full force. I was completely out of control once again and I didn't see it happening. Depression set in. I didn't tell my husband, who by the way was one year sober at this point and was doing amazing. I wanted to run away from the beautiful life that took me so long to rebuild.

I was on the brink of disaster and needed outside help once more. I went back to Rodgers Memorial Hospital for yet another detox. This is where my life changed once again and by the grace of God and the amazing professionals at the hospital was finally diagnosed with Bipolar and started medication right away. I was scared but also prepared to do whatever it took to get better and was given the gift to return to Herrington Recovery Center for a tune up.

This time around I decided to listen to everything I was told. I was prepared to put the work into action as soon as I returned home. I got a new sponsor. I started working the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and I have yet to look back from that way of living. This disease mixed with mental illness will take me out if I am not vigilant. I understand that there is a stigma wrapped around both diseases, but I am ready to stand tall and fight it as best as I know how. That is asking for help. Giving my will and my live over to the God of my understanding. Staying mindful and present in life and enjoying the little things. Remembering that life isn't perfect, and nor am I. Just remembering to breathe. I keep it simple today. I do what is the next right action. I am able to be the Mother and Wife I always dreamed to be. I am the woman I was searching for since a very young age, filled with peace and love and confidence.

Love and Light
Sarah, Alcoholic/Addict