

For the Weekly Calendar:

**For a current list of online AA meetings visit: <http://aa-intergroup.org/directory.php>

**For more information on COVID-19 options from the AA Milwaukee central office visit: <https://www.aamilwaukee.com/>

AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Currently no in-person meetings at any Rogers Behavior Health locations due to COVID 19 Outbreak

NA Meeting-Rogers Hospital-Oconomowoc

Currently no in-person meetings at any Rogers Behavior Health locations due to COVID 19 Outbreak

AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital - West Allis

Currently no in-person meetings at any Rogers Behavior Health locations due to COVID 19 Outbreak

Al-Anon Meeting-Rogers Hospital Oconomowoc

Currently no in-person meetings at any Rogers Behavior Health locations due to COVID 19 Outbreak

Alumni interested in doing Tuesday Evening RAPs with current Herrington Residents,
please contact Kenny Blaine: kennyblaine0@gmail.com or 414-559-5529



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Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Fall, 2020 Edition

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Kristin

I have missed seeing you in person, but yet I have loved the ability to connect via zoom meetings with some of you I haven't seen in years. Hopefully, soon we will be able to resume in-person meetings on the Rogers campus.

It has been almost 6 months since we have had in-person meetings, and because of that, there are many new HRC grads that we were unable to connect with. I want to take a minute to tell you about our organization. The purpose of the Herrington-McBride Alumni Association (HMAA) is to support the residents of the Herrington Recovery Center while in treatment, and as they transition to their home recovery community. We are a recovery network of over 2,000 strong throughout the country who are here to support and encourage each other.

Unfortunately our "usual" activities with the residents have been suspended since March, but we are hopeful that

we will be back on campus with you soon. Our activities with the Herrington residents include: New Year's Eve steak dinner and party, Halloween costume party and tournaments, quarterly pizza night, quarterly newsletter, monthly alumni welcome table, weekly alumni speaker, weekly Family and Friends speaker, one-on-one sponsorship, alumni partners (for out-of-town graduates), January retreat, outpatient program speakers, and our big bash of the year, our Annual Alumni Picnic, which brings between 200-300 alumni back to campus for all day fellowship and fun! Mark it on your calendars for the 3rd Saturday of June each year! (June 19, 2021)

If you are a recent graduate who was unable to take advantage of our (furloughed) activities during your time at Herrington, please contact one of our board members (listed on back) for ways the alumni association can support you in your new recovery. If you are a seasoned graduate, please get involved and tell us how we can better serve you.

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy, happy, clean & sober!

Blessings in Recovery,
Kristin Simons
drkjsimons1@gmail.com



Now you can use your smartphone to donate to the HMAA using Pay Pal. Just use your smartphone to scan this QR code.



Looking for an Opportunity to Give Back? Consider Our Alumni Partner Program!

The Alumni Partners program is a list of past Herrington graduates who are willing to connect with a recent Herrington graduate in their hometown and assist them in finding meetings. Many new graduates have difficulty and some anxiety finding and attending a new meeting for the first time. This is especially true for new graduates who live outside the immediate Rogers area. Please consider adding your name to this list, especially if you live far from the Oconomowoc area! This is not a commitment to sponsor. It is a willingness to meet up with a new alumni member in your area and help them find a few meetings. Remember what it felt like to go to those first few meetings where you didn't know anyone? Let's partner with the new alumni and help them get a good start after they graduate from Herrington. If you have at least a year of continuous sobriety/clean time and are willing to be an Alumni Partner, please contact Jeff Radtke from our board of directors jeff.radtke@yahoo.com

Greetings from Herrington West Allis

It has been nearly 12 months since Herrington Recovery Center at the West Allis location has been open. Herrington West Allis is a 14-bed residential facility in an urban setting. I am looking outside today and smiling as I see the outside garden space begin to develop with river birch trees budding and tranquil lighting being put into place. There will be a beautiful water feature and seating in this urban oasis for our residents to be able to find peace and serenity in the beauty of nature as they begin their journey into recovery.

The current global health crisis has placed some challenges in our community, but we are continuing to serve persons who suffer from the disease of addiction and inspire hope for a happy and healthy life of recovery. I am so grateful for the work that the Herrington Alumni Association does for our residents in Oconomowoc and now West Allis. The passion, compassion, dedication, and generosity of bringing experience, strength, and hope to our people is inspiring. It is empowering to me and brings me unending joy.

I am hopeful that when socialization resumes, that West Allis will be able to continue the Monday night 12 step meeting, the Tuesday night alumni inspired meeting, and perhaps add more fellowship meetings to the calendar. Having the ability to attend meetings in the area and location where sobriety and recovery began is helpful to continued and sustained recovery.

Thank you, Herrington Alumni for all the support, insight, guidance, and continued compassion for our people we serve. I am forever grateful and blessed to be a part of this rich community. I look forward to our doors to be open once again to the fellowship and support being given to our residents as they seek and hope for a better life in recovery.

May you be well
May you be happy
May you be peaceful
“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” Winston Churchill

Blessings,
Jean Pruscha
Addictions Counselor, Herrington West Allis

God's Gift to Me

As I reflect on my life, I look at many layers of a sadness and hopelessness. An existence filled with lies and turmoil. A heavy drinker for over 30 years I was living on borrowed time and my spirituality was on permanent hiatus. My higher power never abandoned me during this time, but I certainly abandoned him.

A failed marriage of 17 years and the loss of respect and admiration from my children are only a small fraction of the cost of my alcohol abuse. The pain I felt was real, however I was only accustomed to drowning it with alcohol, so as it increased, so did the use of alcohol.

About 5 years ago my son fell to the power of opiate addiction and watching this was by far the most painful thing I have experienced. I hired powerful attorneys and pleaded with the system at every turn to keep him from incarceration or worse; all while self-medicating thru heavy alcohol myself. Ultimately, my efforts to help him became futile and he needed more than I could possibly provide.

As my alcohol use increased, so did my self-loathing and despair. I was sick everyday and shaking at every sober moment. I completely broke down and with no hope in my heart. I remembered the one place that helped my son get back his life. I drank that night, but at some point, had an overwhelming whisper saying, “No more.”

With the help of the closest person I had left in the world, a phone call was made and I was at Rogers the next day, and Herrington Recovery Center 5 days later. I spent the next several months at HRC and learned that there is a better life and “I deserve it.” The clinical and support staff there gave me a gift I could not have given myself. The passion and knowledge they have for treating this disease is pinnacle.

The continued support from the HRC alumni association is paramount in my recovery as well. The fellowship and wisdom shared thru this group is invaluable to my program. During the Covid 19 pandemic the HRC Alumni association has employed Zoom technology to ensure that meetings go on which are a crucial component of my recovery. Thru the alumni association and Area 75, I am able to take part in any number of meetings daily.

My personal favorites are the “Thinking Out of The Bottle” Rogers alumni meetings held every Saturday and Sunday morning via Zoom.

I am in contact with my sponsor daily, as well as other members of the alumni and have found a few live meetings. I try to read from the Big Book daily and have recently added it to my Audio Book selection. Readings from “Stepping Stones for Men Daily Meditations” and prayer are how I start each day.

My son and I both enjoy sobriety today thanks to our Higher Power, the help of Rogers Memorial and Herrington Recovery Center.

Brad Ingram - Beaver Dam, WI



A Program of Action

I went to Herrington Recovery center in summer of 2020. It was my third residential treatment in the past 5 years. I decided on Herrington, because of their work with mental health besides the substance abuse treatment. I discharged my first time from Herrington during the summer of 2018. After staying sober for 5 months, I felt great and wanted to “top off” the day, after a nice afternoon of yard work with my husband with a glass of wine. That set-in motion 2 years of continuous relapses accompanied by family fall-outs and a divorce in the spring of 2020. My saving grace at the time was a job I loved and the structure it gave me. In March 2020, I was not able to go to work anymore because of Covid. Within days, my depression and drinking spiraled completely out of control. No amount of will power could keep me from drinking. My doctors and sponsors had been telling me for months to go to residential treatment, and in April I called Rogers. I was put on a wait list, and after 3 long weeks, I got the call that a bed was available.

The moment I walked through the doors of Herrington, I felt an immense amount of relief and I felt safe. The HRC had adjusted to the new safety requirements necessitated by Covid. Everyone had to wear face masks at all times. Therapy offices had been converted to private bedrooms, so every resident could have their own room. We were allowed to have access to our cell phones a couple of times a day, to make up for the lack of family visits, which all had been scrapped due to Covid. The doctors' appointments we had were held via telehealth. Instead of going to live meetings, we tuned in via zoom. I stayed at Herrington for 6 weeks. I felt immediately welcomed by the friendly staff and fellow residents. I love the Herrington house. It's warm interior and location on the beautiful Nashotah lake. We were allowed to take therapeutic walks on Rogers' grounds. We had many different baby animals that time of year. My favorite were the baby raccoons peeking out of a hollow tree next to the Focus Center and the plethora of birds.* Essential for my treatment was the work I got to do with my behavioral specialist. Together, we uncovered many dysfunctional coping mechanisms and talked about healthy ones. I also got a new sponsor, who has been invaluable on my journey in recovery. She reiterated the importance of “Action” to stay sober. I have to take action on

a daily basis to maintain my sobriety. That includes asking my HP each morning to relieve me from my disease for the next 24 hours, to pick up the phone to call my sponsor, to go to a meeting (or zoom into one), to ask for help, to be honest, to be willing to do the work that is suggested, to ask for guidance, to practice gratitude and tolerance, and to be of service. I am 81 days sober today. I do the daily action. I have to do it just for today. I am incredibly thankful for the Herrington Recovery Center with its specialists and caring staff, for the Alumni Association that provides support and guidance. I am grateful for my sponsor, the AA fellowship, and friends who support each other on this wonderful journey. I am grateful for the many zoom meetings that have afforded fellowship at this time of quarantine. It gives me the opportunity to stay connected with my circle of friends here in Wisconsin and to stay connected to the Herrington House and Alumni particularly.

Grateful and thankful!!
Nadine A.

TO:

The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund

The reason for the delay of this letter is not because I forgot, but because I have struggled to find words that can capture my gratitude for the scholarship to attend the retreat in January 2020.

I came to Herrington in July of 2019 following a failed suicide attempt and 8 years of heavy alcoholism. When I left in August 2019, I felt like I was in charge of my life, like I had a reason that I was placed on this earth and had HOPE.

To say my first holiday sober was easy, is furthest from the truth. By January 1st, I was feeling tired, lonely resentful and discontent. I thought it was too late to apply for a scholarship, not to mention, embarrassed to be asking for financial help. I had doubts that the retreat could possibly measure up to the time I spent in rehab.

After some heavy praying, I found the courage to pick up the phone. Jim was extremely friendly, helpful and reassured me that there would be room for me. I still had my doubts about attending.

My first retreat was beyond measure!!! I felt like EVERY speaker was talking directly to me! I felt like in every small group I was surrounded by peoples whose stories I NEEDED to hear. I made some amazing connections, learned a little more about myself, but most of all, I left with that same feeling of purpose, hope and PEACE.

I can't thank you enough for the scholarship to attend. The cost of the retreat was enough to talk me out of attending. I shudder to think where I would be had I not attended. I feel truly blessed and thankful for this opportunity and cannot wait to attend again next year!

With sincere gratitude,
Tara

Reflections

I have a confession to make. I am not an HRC alumni. I came to the Sunday meeting one winter's morning, an alcoholic orphan, and found a home and a community. But when I was asked to write a testimonial for the newsletter, I wondered what can I offer to people who have had the special experience of HRC. Then I remembered the voices of people who are about to leave HRC to go home, to leave the warm embrace of fellowship and to return to a life full of triggers and temptation. Once again, I realized it is our ability to speak to our common experience that makes us so strong. So, here it goes.



I started my sobriety trek at home. When I came home from my first meeting with my counselor, I was, as we all are, returning to the place where I did most of my drinking, where I experienced most of my triggers and where the biggest challenges lay. I realized first I had to understand my own reactions and try to break my patterns to have a fighting chance. I am analytical by nature, so I looked at my home as a tactical problem. I figured out the rooms in my house where I drank most consistently, the times and circumstances of the day I associated with drinking and the people, places and things that triggered drinking. Then I set out to trick my brain by systematically changing up all my routines. I made dinner in the morning, read in my room instead of the sunroom when I came home from work, and found another room to watch TV. After a couple of months I slowly inched my way back into those rooms, when I was sure the connections were broken.

Emotions are such a big part of drinking and I knew I had to tackle that question. Every time I felt the desire, however, fleeting, I stopped and thought "What am I feeling?" "What is it I really want right now?" Often it had nothing to do with alcohol, I wanted to celebrate or treat myself or comfort myself. If I needed to express feelings or was lonely, I needed to reach out and ask for help. For the first several weeks, my husband came home early to be with me during the "witching hour," when I was most vulnerable. In time, I realized that I could do all those things without alcohol. I felt freer and more myself for the first time in years.

I had a crazy quilt set of aids; books, blogs, videos, and podcasts that I used to stay focused. When I felt the most lost, I would ask God to walk with me, because I could not do this alone. I did not always feel it right away, but I can see now that God's love was present, especially in the people I met along the way. I found people in recovery who helped to guide me and

encourage me. Every single one was encouraging and happy to share what they learned and whether it was in AA, Women for Sobriety or ACOA, I felt supported.

But one thing was missing; a home. I did not even realize I needed one until I found it in the Sunday morning meeting at HRC. I thank God for my friend, Sue, and my decision to take the risk and let more people into my life. It has helped me to pull all the pieces together. Every week, I learn and I share and I am humbled by the wisdom of people in recovery. I am not talking about perfection, searching for that got many of us into trouble, but honest and heartfelt searching. Because I see what life has to offer on this path, I feel more optimistic every day.

Kathy

God is Constantly Disclosing More



Hi! My name is Stacy and I am a drug addict and alcoholic. I could begin this story by writing all of the ways I have destroyed my life and the lives of those around me. I think it is sufficient to say that I burned my entire life to the ground in every way you can think of. I have found however; that it helps me to concentrate on what happened and how to move forward in my recovery journey.

I checked into Roger's Memorial Hospital in Oconomowoc on January 6th, 2017 for inpatient detoxification from intravenous opiates, benzodiazepines and alcohol. I was a nurse at the time of admission, and I learned so much from not only my own experiences but also from listening to and observing others. For me, it was necessary, after my 7 days of inpatient detox, to immediately begin a dual program (both mental health and addiction services) at the outpatient level. I learned a lot about myself and my lifelong issues with both depression and addiction. During this period, I was shown meditation and de-escalation techniques that I use to this day.

At the suggestion of my counselor during outpatient treatment, I went to my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I remember how afraid I was to walk through those doors. I didn't know what to expect. It was one of the most terrifying moments in my life. I had someone come with me so that I wouldn't back out. A funny thing happened that night... I walked into the room and wouldn't you know... the person I used to meet at the tavern almost daily was running the meeting! It was a "crazy coincidence," right?! No, it was one of many unseen gifts that I was being presented by God.

I will honestly admit that I was in and out of the rooms for the next year or so. I stayed sober, but I didn't do any of the work. I did not have a sponsor, was not working the steps and most importantly, I was not having a relationship with my higher power. For the most part, I just didn't want to be the least sober person in the room. The one thing I did have was the fellowship of AA. When I stopped going to meetings and was "too busy" or too lazy,

it didn't take long for me to start drinking again. I hadn't gone back to drugs and had no problem admitting that I was a drug addict. It was now the alcohol that had my attention. It was just so... AVAILABLE! Being in and out of the rooms during this time did not help my sobriety in any way, and I was actively lying to the people that were the closest to me about my drinking. However, these were the exact same people that God placed in my life so I could be saved.

Fast forward to March, 2019. Since losing my house, I had been "couch surfing" for over a year and a half. I was unemployed and was having a really hard time finding employment. An opportunity was placed into my path to live with and take care of a person that wanted to be in hospice care at home. During this time, a person I had met during outpatient treatment reached out to me. We started talking daily and I started going to some meetings with him. I figured I should probably get a sponsor, since everyone thought (because that's what I told them) that I had more sober time than I actually did. I was being asked to be a sponsor and I definitely did not know how to do that. My friend had a sponsor, so I asked if they could find a woman willing to be my sponsor. The next week, I had the number of a complete stranger who would become one of the most important people in my life. I called that stranger and I knew before hanging up that she was a compassionate and trustworthy person. That being said, I did not hold up my end of the deal. I was occasionally drinking and never told anyone, I was not working the steps and I wasn't praying at all.

The summer of 2019 was a real life changer. I was regularly attending events and making connections with people in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was living a sober-ISH lifestyle and things were turning around. (By sober-ISH, I mean that I drank a few times that summer but didn't tell anyone other than my friend from treatment.) I was reacquainted with some really special people that I had lost touch with, going to more meetings and attending church service regularly. I had a safe place to live, was surrounded by sober people and even found a job! That's everything I needed in order to stay sober, right?! Nope, not yet! But God had my back and I KNOW that he had been strategically placing people into my life without me even realizing it, waiting patiently for this oblivious addict and alcoholic to pay attention.

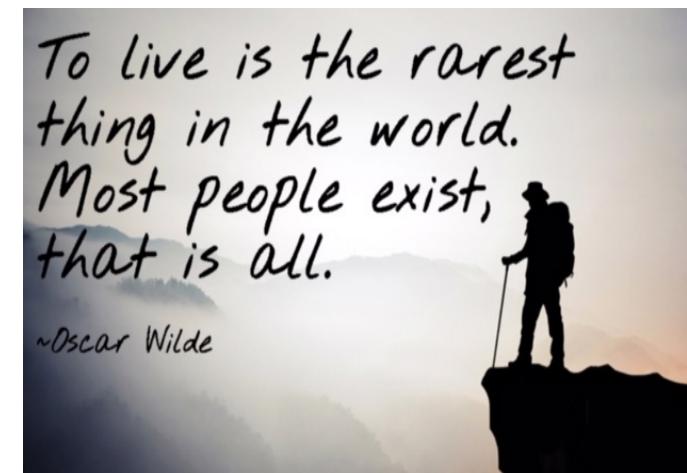
On September 21st, 2019 I received a last minute invitation to a Brewer game from a family member. I don't know the reason, but when my family member asked if I wanted my prior drink of choice, my response was a resolute YES. I remember the little voice in my head screaming, "WAIT, I DON'T DRINK ANYMORE!" But, for the last time, I ignored that little voice and ended up annihilated. The next morning I admitted to God, to myself and a few select others that I was an ALCOHOLIC and a drug addict. Unsurprisingly, they already knew.

That was the first day of my new life. I could immediately see how God had been working in my life while I wasn't paying attention. All of the pieces to recovery were already within my grasp, all I had to do was reach out and grab them! I did exactly that. I dug my heels in and started doing the work for the first time. I began surrounding myself with God and the wonderful people in the rooms of AA, NA and CA. I found my home, family, friendships and an unconditional love that I have never experienced

before. God is working in my life each and every moment. I've been taken through the 12 steps and had the most life altering spiritual awakening. I no longer obsess about drinking or using. All of these things are absolute MIRACLES.

Are things perfect? Of course not. But this awakening God has blessed me with has changed my perspective in every way. I am a living, breathing testament to God's work in motion. I know that in God's time his plan for me will be revealed. Until then, I'll be helping God's kids find their way to Him through this phenomenal program of recovery.

Stacy



Summer Picnic

Due to Covid 19... We regrettably had to cancel our summer picnic.

The good news:

**June 19, 2021
is the date for next
year's picnic!
SAVE THE DATE!**

We look forward to celebrating with you next summer!

