

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Newsletter



From the Desk of our President

Hello Alumni, Friends, and
Supporters,

I hope you are all doing well and
enjoying the early signs of Spring.
I always enjoy this time of year
when the snow is gone, trees and
flowers are blooming, and the

weather is starting to warm up. Summer is right around
the corner and for the HMAA that means it's time for a
PICNIC! The annual Alumni Picnic is one of the premier
events each year sponsored by the Herrington McBride
Alumni Association.

This year the Alumni Picnic will be held on Saturday, June
15th. Please mark your calendars! This is the 38th picnic
that our association has sponsored. I am very proud of this
tradition and look forward to it every year. To those who
have been to the picnic, you know it is a great time. For
those who have never been, I urge you to come and check it
out. There is a flyer in this newsletter that outlines the day's
agenda. The entire event is held in and around the Multi-
Purpose Center on the Rogers Oconomowoc Campus.
Check-in starts at 9:00 am; feel free to come early and enjoy
some coffee, continental breakfast, and fellowship. We kick
off at 10:00 am with some opening remarks followed by
some terrific speakers. Then after a brief annual HMAA
meeting, there will be a fantastic picnic lunch provided by
Rogers. This will consist of burgers, brats, hot dogs, salads,
chips, desserts, and vegetarian options as well. Water, soda,
and lemonade will also be available. After lunch there will be
some additional recovery speakers followed by an afternoon
of down-time. There will be several options available during
this time: a prize raffle, ice cream, trivial pursuit, recovery
Olympics, live music, games, and more. Or you can simply
hang out in the sun and catch up with old and new friends.
Around 4:30 pm we fire up the grill again and you can either

bring your own items to grill or enjoy leftovers. The day
closes with a great tradition: our fireside open gratitude
meeting around the fire pit. While the picnic is day-
long, please feel free to come and go as you please or
stop by whenever you can. Also, the picnic is open to
all friends of Herrington including family and friends.
The picnic is a great opportunity to simply enjoy each
other and to celebrate our recovery and our connection
in this wonderful community. Hope to see you all
there! If you have any questions or you are interested
in helping with the picnic, please reach out to me using
the information below.

I'd love to hear from you on what else our board can
be doing to serve the needs of our alumni and HRC
residents. I welcome your feedback and ideas so please
reach out to me using my contact information below. I
look forward to staying connected with all of you and
promoting the blessings of recovery.

Scott Elston
262-442-0837 | cscottelston@gmail.com



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38th Annual Herrington McBride Alumni Summer Picnic

Saturday June 15th, 2024

Rogers Oconomowoc Campus, Multi-Purpose Center

Approximate Timeline for the Day (times may shift):

- 9:00am Check-In and Continental Breakfast
- 10:00am Welcome from Scott E. / Opening Prayer from John A. / Honorarium from Bob O.
- 10:25am Ten Minute Speakers
- 10:45am Keynote Speaker: Michelle V.
- 11:30am Annual Alumni Meeting chaired by HMAA President Scott E.
- 12:00pm Picnic Lunch (Provided by Rogers Behavioral Health)
- 1:30pm NA Speaker: Rob McC.
- 2:15pm Al Anon Speaker: Joe C.
- 3:00pm Raffle Prizes / Open Afternoon including the following activities:
- Recovery Olympics for HRC residents and other participants – led by Jenny E.
 - Other Activities: Trivial Pursuit (Johnny the German vs. Johnny the Greek), Giant Jenga, Bocce Ball, Frisbee, Corn Hole, Music, Ice Cream, Fellowship
- 4:30pm Bring your own grilling items (grill, grilling and leftovers from lunch will be provided)
- 6:00pm Results and Prizes for Recovery Olympics. (Prizes provided by T-Lon Products)
- 6:30pm Fireside Open Gratitude Open Meeting hosted by Rob McC.

All Recovering Alumni and Family/Friends of Herrington McBride are Welcome!

The Picnic is on Rain or Shine!



Higher Power's Will

Rogers Hospital, the Herrington House, and Ladish Center are an integral part of how I am sober today. Prior to walking into the doors of the Ladish Center, I had no idea what Rogers did and even less of an idea that recovery is possible through the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.



I walked into the Ladish Center fearful, self-conscious, and angry. Fearful of yesterday and tomorrow. Self-conscious about how others thought and felt about me. Angry at my family for intervening with my alcohol and drug use another time. But I was shown love from the very start. A family friend who suggested the Ladish Center sat next to me. I had a First Step meeting with patients and alumni from the Herrington House. The honesty of others around that table and cases of both addiction and recovery started to show me that AA works.

When I walked into the Ladish Center, it really was time to give myself a break. I had developed a strong physical and spiritual dependence on alcohol and drugs. Under the influence of alcohol and drugs were the only times I felt free to live and be myself. I put alcohol and drugs before God, family, friends, education, employment, and myself. My family had intervened with me three years previously and I didn't heed any of their cautious instructions that alcohol and drugs will cause real harm on my future. I tried to slow down my use by swapping drinks for drugs and vice versa. I tried to sober up by going cold turkey. My ways weren't working.

I learned by walking in the doors of AA and the Ladish Center that relief and recovery is possible by working the 12 Steps. A Herrington Alumni began to sponsor me and we started to work the 12 Steps. One day at a time, the Promises started to come true. Sobriety and Faith started to become top priorities in my life. In my time as a member of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, I've graduated college, attended meetings in different cities, and began full time employment. Moreso, I'm sober today. That is evidence my Higher Power is doing what I can and cannot do for myself.

On my recovery journey, I've been blessed to take part in the Herrington Center annual events including the Winter Retreat, Summer Picnic, and Fall Ball. The fellowship, meetings, and speakers from each of those events reminds me recovery is FUN and EXCITING. I am thankful to the Brian Kenevan Scholarship

Fund for funding my participation in my first year attending the Winter Retreat.

Each meeting at the Ladish Center ends, "Keep coming back; it works if we work it and it sucks if we don't, so work it!" This program works and when we work it, it works even more. So let's work it!

Noah R.



Awakening

It has been a little over a year since coming to Rogers emotionally and physically bankrupt. Upon entering the facility, I began to use my middle name, Alan, instead of Nate. I make no excuses for this, but after giving a 2nd step lead, I realized my insanity runs deep. I was giving my 5th step to my sponsor, who was unaware of my actual name, and we discussed coming clean about my name.

My journey to AA began much earlier while being carted to AA meetings with my parents. But ultimately the drug and alcohol program at Rogers set the stage for my journey in AA and recovery. There were many stories shared and tears shed during the in-house, patient-only meetings.

In the beginning, it seemed that I may be switched from the addiction side to the mental health side of Rogers treatment, as I had not drunk alcohol in more than two years. However, I was on the "marijuana maintenance plan," so I was not clean by any stretch of the imagination. Still being in denial months after the program, I wished I would have gotten switched. However, many 1st step meetings later, I have accepted and admitted my alcoholism, among many other vices I have, whether I have partaken or not.

This journey is long and has only begun. I have Rogers to thank for my change in mindset. I didn't realize it initially, but the further I get, I'm seeing the positive impact on my recovery. There are so many things that I am grateful for because of Rogers.

God Bless, Nate S.



How I was, What Happened, and Where I am Now

There we were. Four high school age boys driving in a car down College Avenue in Appleton, Wisconsin. Three older friends and me, at 15 years old, having fun and enjoying the freedom of freshly received driver's licenses and a car to ride in. The four of us heard news of an underage

drinking party at an Appleton East high school student's house. I was eager to impress the older guys I was with and went along for the ride - literally and figuratively. That is where I had my first drink(s) of alcohol and became completely obliterated. In retrospect, I certainly recognize that my first 'drunk' was a real sign of the alcoholic I was going to later become.

Through high school and college years, I had too many hobbies to count, lots of different friends, and many interests. Cooking, golfing, fishing, and hunting all played a role in how I enjoyed spending time away from my studies. I was also very fortunate to grow up in a loving family, who I remain very close to today. My father Pat, mother Jean, brother Chris, and sister Clare all had a huge role in my life. But during the time from 18 to about 23 years old, alcohol was a part of everything. "Packer game is on; let's have some beers! Quick 9-holes of golf? Don't forget the koozies! Beautiful weather to fish this Saturday; bring a cooler full of beer to go fishing!" The list could go on, as you can imagine.

With my increased drinking came a double life. I was a good student, part of many clubs, and involved in school functions. I had friends in those environments. But I had different friends on the weekends, at parties, and back home. I also did not want my parents to be mad at me for drinking too much at school, so I minimized the amount of time I spent going to parties or bars. Subconsciously, this also increased the number of problems in my life that I kept quiet and didn't want others to worry about.

I graduated from Edgewood College in Madison, WI, with a degree in Political Science. Although I enjoyed my time at college, I realized I was not passionate enough about my career choice, and after a few years in the work force, I decided to return to college for Culinary Arts. My true passion in life is food and food culture. It was a tough decision at the time to leave a steady income to chase a dream of being a Chef someday, but I am glad I took the plunge.

Cooking professionally has taken me to many amazing places I could not have imagined otherwise. I was fortunate to land a job as the Sous Chef of a fine dining Italian restaurant in Denver, CO. Early in my career, I loved the lifestyle. I got to sleep in until 10:00 am and wake up and quickly get ready for 12 hours of work. All my coworkers were around my same age, had interesting stories and backgrounds, and were working hard and playing even harder. After

the work shift, everyone would go to a bar or two, spend some of the money we made that day, go home, and do it all over again. As a young person who idolized chefs and working in fine dining in a major city, it was like I was living in my own dream.

However, in reality, my drinking habit was catching up to me in many ways. My energy level was depleted. My bank account was scant at best. My mental health was deteriorating fast and I was on the edge of disaster. I would wake up coughing and puking from my hangovers in the morning. So much so, I landed myself in the hospital with a bleeding esophagus due to heavy drinking. That was a wake-up call. I knew I needed to slow down but was not ready to admit I couldn't stop on my own. I was able to quit drinking as I was scared for my own health. That lasted about two and a half weeks, and then I was right back to where I had left off. I did not tell anyone the exact nature of what got me into the hospital as I did not want anyone to worry about me. As with most things in my life I wanted to do it on my own.

The next ten months of my life were increasingly desperate and depressing, almost entirely of my own doing, as I became physically reliant on alcohol. I knew I had a serious problem, and I was scared to death to tell anyone about it. No longer was I enjoying my hobbies unless I had some tequila to go along with them. In fact, my hobbies went completely to the wayside if they interfered with my time drinking. I went for weeks on end eating just a few bites of food and consuming most of my calories in liquid. I was living in a hell where I was feeling more and more alone. What made me feel the most alone was that I didn't even have myself to rely on anymore.

I quit the dream job I worked so hard to get to. I pushed a girl I was in love with away due to my own insanity. I became paranoid of everyone in my life, friends, and family alike. I fled. I drove from Colorado back to Wisconsin to reset my life. I isolated alone in my parents' cottage in northern Wisconsin for weeks, drinking all morning, noon and night, becoming a slave to the bottle. I dug a hole so deep, and I knew there was no way out.

I was watching a Packer game alone and drinking my 10th or 12th beer of the day. I was so tired of doing this. I was so sick. All I wanted was my life back. I picked up the phone and called my parents, admitting that I needed help. The very next day I was taken by my Dad to the hospital in Appleton to help with my overwhelming withdrawals. During that time in the hospital, my Dad and Mom worked hard attempting to get me into Rogers residential in Oconomowoc. I arrived there 10 days after my detox. Although I was saddened about where I was going, I felt an enormous weight lifted off my shoulders. After many years, I finally spoke up and shared what was going on in my private life.

Like most people who have gone through residential treatment, I was scared and uncertain. But after only three days, I heard people talking about their journey and the problems they've had with alcohol and substance use. I felt a light bulb go on in my head that I had never felt before: "I am allowed to talk about all these problems here; I can be honest with people here about

what is going on in my life.” The more I talked, the better I felt. The more vulnerable I was, the more improvements I made. In the first three weeks of my stay at the Herrington House, I felt like a person I had never been before. I came to realize that I was part of a community of people who had so much in common with my compulsion to drink alcohol. I met so many amazing residents, many of which I keep in touch with today. I was enlightened and inspired to get my life back on track! This was the major cornerstone to my recovery process. And after 28 days at the house, I was released early with the okay of the psychiatrists and faculty.

Upon arrival back in Appleton, I entered an AA group meeting at the Genesis Club. I found a wonderful group of people who invited me in after hearing I was recently out of treatment. I decided to go to 90 meetings in 90 days, and this became not only an important piece of my recovery journey, but the most enjoyable part too. I still make it to Genesis club five days per week at 6:30am. It is a place where I continue to be vulnerable and honest. I am working the 12 Steps in the Big Book and following my Sponsor’s guidance. I no longer feel like it is something I must do to get better, and instead look forward to going and getting my day started right. A.A. and recovery has taught me to not think less of myself but instead think less about myself. When I am a part of the community, I want to help other people, and in turn get the help I need.

I am celebrating 8 months of recovery this month, something I never thought I would say. After the treacherous journey that got me here today, I am proud and grateful to be an alcoholic in recovery. I have a new job as a Chef in Appleton, I just bought my dream truck, I have a family who I care deeply for, and I have a life worth living. Many thanks to all of you who I may have crossed paths with on this journey; I hope to see you soon. Thank you to Herrington House friends and faculty. Keep coming back, it REALLY works if you work it!

Colin Buckley



MEET OUR BOARD MEMBER

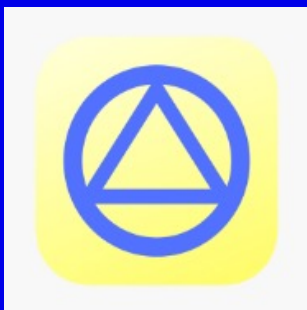
Greetings Sober Friends,

My name is Brad Ingram and it’s my honor and pleasure to introduce myself as the newly elected Vice President of the Herrington McBride Alumni Association. My journey in sobriety began on 4/20/2020. I was given a second chance at life that day. I checked into the detox unit at Rogers Memorial Hospital on 4/19/20. I had no desire or intention of getting clean and sober the day before, however my Higher Power had other plans for me. As the saying goes, “If you want to make God laugh, just tell Him your plan.” My life in recovery has become something I could never have imagined, a life with hope, love, faith, and gratitude. My friends in the program are family; they loved me until I could love myself. The only way I can pay that forward is to be of service to others.

I was asked to serve on the board over two years ago. In that time, I’ve served on several committees with my peers and mentors. Most recently I was part of the team that put together the first annual HMAA Fall Ball. The grounds at Rogers Memorial are sacred to me; so much so that I sold my house and moved to Oconomowoc to be closer to the sacred ground that has given me so much. I attend both weekend meetings at the Ladish Center and if we have not met, please introduce yourself. The more of you I meet, the fuller my heart gets!

Thanks to all of you and many more 24’s!

Featured Sober App Everything AA



Includes meeting finder, sobriety tracker, Big Book text and audio, 12 Steps, 12&12, Living Sober, Daily Reflection, and Joe & Charlie tapes

EDITOR'S ENTRY...

Hello! My name is Michelle, and I am an alcoholic! I am also the new newsletter editor. Much thanks to Adrienne K. for her faithful work before passing me the torch. I am an HRC alumni and by the grace of God, Rogers treatment, the fellowship of AA, and support of my family and friends, I have been sober since May 12, 2020. I am honored to be considered for the alumni board and excited to contribute to the newsletter. Stay tuned for brief recovery thoughts from me in future editions!



We Are Stronger Together

"A new life of endless possibilities can be lived if we are willing to continue our awakening through the practice of [the] Twelve Steps." - Bill W.

ROGERS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AA MEETINGS

Ladish Center - 34700 Valley Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066
Monday - 7 pm, Wednesday - 7 pm, Thursday - 6 pm, Saturday - 7:04 am, Sunday - 8:30 am & 6:00 pm

Lincoln Center - 2424 South 102nd Street, West Allis, WI 53227, Thursday - 7 pm

To find local **AA meetings** download Meeting Guide app: 

To find local **NA meetings** visit: <https://usa-na.org/find-na/>

To find local **Al-Anon meetings** visit: <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting/>
Visit the international **Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous (OIAA)** for virtual AA meetings at:
<https://aa-intergroup.org/meetings/>

Alumni interested in participating in **RAP speaking** or **PIZZA nights** with current HRC residents please contact Kenny Blaine: kennyblaine0@gmail.com or 414-559-5529

For more information about the **Herrington McBride Alumni Association** visit: <https://rogersbh.org/hmaa>

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Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

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Your story is valuable! Alumni interested in sharing your HRC recovery journey or loved ones of alumni interested in sharing their experience, please contact the Editor. Also, please send name, telephone, address, and email changes to:

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414-315-2003

NOTE: We will need to remove any names from our mailing list should the newsletter be returned.

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