

LITTLE HILL FOUNDATION



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FALL 2019

Message from the Executive Director



William Robbins, LCSW
Executive Director

In Victor Frankl's stirring book, "Man's Search for Meaning", Frankl, who writes about his experience as a Holocaust and Nazi concentration camp survivor, states, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." I was reminded of this quote in mid-October when I attended our annual 5K event and the inaugural

Melinda Mattar Memorial Golf Tournament benefitting the Little Hill Foundation, where the devastating loss of two different young adults were celebrated and honored.

Our 5k event was highlighted by the abundance of white tee shirts representing, "Team Kyle", who ran, jogged, and walked in honor of a young local man Kyle, who tragically died from his addiction in August. The strength of spirit by his mother and all that attended was staggering.

The golf outing was spearheaded by the Mattar Family, owners of Mattar's Bistro in Hacketstown, who tragically lost their beloved daughter to an opioid overdose last year. Despite the devastating and painful experience of losing their child, they found the strength to honor Melinda by putting together a golf outing and donating all the proceeds to our scholarship fund, in the hopes that they could help someone else seeking sobriety. The event itself was overwhelming. Held at The Panther Valley Golf and Country Club, there were roughly 215 golfers spread over the course of two days. The outpouring of love for the Mattar family was remarkable and unlike anything I have ever seen.

The Mattars and Team Kyle have embodied the Frankl quote: That despite having had the disease of addiction take their daughter and son respectfully, their attitude and subsequent response to these tragedies was to help others. In addiction/recovery parlance, they were powerless over their child's addiction, but now in their own recovery they have the power to do something. As a father of two children in junior high, I wonder how after the death of a child one even gets out of bed, yet these families, despite their profound sadness and unimaginable suffering have mobilized others to come together to celebrate life and raise money for our scholarship fund. I can't express enough gratitude for their gift.

The Little Hill Foundation's scholarship fund allows us to offer financial assistance to those that qualify for aid. Every year, Little Hill Foundation gives away over 1 million dollars in financial aid, which helps many families subsidize the cost of treatment. While Alina Lodge and Haley House continue to offer low daily rates, the reality is that the cumulative expense remains cumbersome to many families that are in desperate need of a long-term treatment option. While the money raised by Team Kyle and the donation made by the Mattar family is tremendous, we continue to need and ask others to show their own generosity towards our scholarship fund. During this upcoming holiday season, we ask you to consider helping other families by following in Team Kyle and the Mattar family's footsteps. Every dollar is meaningful. Every dollar helps another on their road to recovery.

When I and other representatives from the Little Hill Foundation were finally saying goodbye to Mattar at the end of a long day, his eyes swelled, began to water, as he simply shared, "I miss my daughter." Thank you to the Mattar Family and Team Kyle.



Dear Volunteers and Sponsors,

From the bottom of our hearts – thank you! The Up, Up & Away 5k/5Mile Run 4 Recovery and the Inaugural Malinda Mattar Memorial Golf Tournament wouldn't be possible without any of you. The 5k had the largest group ever and the Golf Tournament had to be extended to a second day due to the tremendous support of the community! We couldn't have done this without many 'helping hands' who graciously gave of their time to help make these events successful. Many pictures can be found on our website alinalodge.org – click on Photo Gallery.

The gifts we received were sometimes large and sometimes small. Each and every gift changes the world, one person at a time, one day at a time. Every day of treatment we give through the scholarship fund, is a gift from YOU and a chance at a better life. YOU have given the families of the scholarship recipients hope. Hope that their loved one will begin their journey to recovery. Thank you sponsors and contributors.

Thank you for giving, participating, and bringing your joy to our events. May you and your families have a very happy holiday season.

Gratefully,

Renée Harman
Director of
Development and
Communications



Matching Gifts!

Double your gift to Little Hill Foundation by participating in your company's Matching Gift Campaign. Currently we can accept matching gifts from

- American Express
- General Electric
- ING
- JK Group
- Johnson & Johnson
- Macy's
- Pfizer
- PSE&G
- United Way

If your company offers matching gifts and is not included on this list, please contact Renee Harman.

The process is easy and only takes a few minutes. Thank you all who take the extra time to do this. Your efforts means we are able to help more!

#1 holiday hack:

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.





North Warren Counseling Center



Ryan Lansdell,
Counselor,
MA, LAC, LCADC

Practicing delayed gratification & use of DBT in treatment

In today's culture the concept of delayed gratification appears to have an old-world feel to it. This culture encourages us to pursue band-aid solutions and instant gratification. Some of the mentality today is to do whatever it takes to alleviate current discomfort while sacrificing long term gains. This is the impact social media has on our lives. It's also prevalent in get

rich schemes, same day delivery, casinos, and commercials for psychiatric medications.

Our culture's obsession with instant gratification does make things in life easier, but with all things it has a fundamental price tag. One of the first benefits of delayed gratification is that it develops motivation. In the late 1960's and 1970's a psychologist named Walter Mischel conducted a series of experiments on children about self-control and delaying gratification. This was called the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment. The subjects were children around the age of six when the experiments began, and researchers followed the children throughout their lives. The kids were left alone in a room with a marshmallow for fifteen minutes. If they did not eat the marshmallow, they were told they could get two of them later.

Researchers found that the children who waited grew up to have higher levels of self-motivation than their peers who did not wait. In addition, they had fewer behavioral issues, were more dependable, and had much better grades. The lesson the Stanford Marshmallow experiment teaches is that being able to delay gratification leads to better success later in life. It strengthens the importance of having a lot of self-motivation.

Another benefit of delayed gratification is it teaches better impulse control for us as individuals. Poor impulse control is one of the most significant human traits that can contribute to the overall quality in one's life. Impulse control can be a struggle living in our society but learning how to control our impulses is vital in our daily lives. Putting off gratification can lead to better control over one's impulses in just about every area of your life.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) utilizes a cognitive-behavioral approach that helps address the psychosocial skills that are challenged due to lack of self-control and instant gratification. As clinicians, we see the benefits in using this therapy to teach impulse control, as well as emotional regulation skills. All of which are impacted by the individual's ability to delay gratification. Teaching these skills are essential to recovery and healing from mental health and/or substance use disorder, but also are necessary life skills to manage life's challenges.

"The theory behind the approach is that some people are prone to react in a more intense and out-of-the-ordinary manner toward certain emotional situations, primarily those found in romantic, family and friend relationships. DBT theory suggests that some people's arousal levels in such situations can increase far more quickly than the average person's, attain a higher level of emotional stimulation, and take a significant amount of time to return to baseline arousal levels." ("An Overview of Dialectical Behavior Therapy" John M. Grohol, Psy.D.)

In other words, by teaching this skill in therapy or treatment, we teach the individual to practice the ability to slow down their reaction time and be in control of their actions. This is self-control with intention. By helping the individual slow down their "arousal levels" or reaction time, the individual becomes more in control with their decision making and emotional response. They in-turn can handle life problems head-on and be in control of their reaction despite the discomfort they may face. Strengthening this skill impacts and individual's self-motivation to stay on track and not revert back to old ways due to instant gratification.



Laurie Andrysiak
Alumni Coordinator

All that Matters this Holiday is that You Stay Sober

It's that simple. It's important to remember this. Everything and I mean everything will unravel if you pick up. Please be a member of the "no matter what club." No matter what you won't pick up a drink or a drug. Even if it means leaving a family gathering early and hearing the groans so you can go to a meeting. Even if it means running your holiday itinerary past your sponsor. Even if it means not over committing, not overspending, not over working, not getting enough sleep, not making enough meetings. It is so much better to momentarily disappoint someone sober than to not be around to disappoint. It says on the medallion "to thine own self be true". You are not being true to anything if you water down your program during the holidays because you are people pleasing. Please don't stop doing daily what you have always done to stay sober, grounded, centered and serene simply because you have to get to the Mall early before they get packed. Do you see how ridiculous this thought is? I am hoping by writing this that everyone has a chance to read it and reflect on it, so you are better armed and prepared for the coming holidays. All

that matters is that YOU STAY SOBER. The rest will always work out. Don't do anything without running it by your sponsor or a sober friend that you admire their program. If something happens and you have a fleeting thought call someone first... call 10 people first... raise your hand in the beginning of the meeting. For goodness sake give someone a chance to be there for you!

Your sobriety matters! You matter! Happy Holidays! In that order. Giant hug, Laurie

News from Haley House



Jackie Ré
Director of Haley House

Developing Your Inner Observer

Recovery means so much to me, and is deeply part of both my professional and personal life. For it to be life-giving and long-lasting, recovery needs to encompass all facets of oneself. As I prepared to write this article, I wanted to encapsulate the recovery experience at Haley House in a word. I found that challenge a bit too daunting, and have settled on two words

that convey the overarching theme and feel of Haley House. They are: BALANCE and PRESENCE. Using a psycho-spiritual approach to treatment, we stress the importance of an “integral way of knowing” that promotes restoration and wholeness of being. As a woman in recovery for over a decade, and a professional working in the addiction field, I find this experiential way of gathering that combines teachings with centering and movement to be a guiding and healing light. It has been my desire and pleasure to incorporate these beautiful and life-giving weavings in a group curriculum for women in early recovery as they transition from in-patient treatment to daily living.

I have been leading a weekly Enneagram group at Haley House Transitional Living since the early part of 2017. This specialty group provides the residents with a model to help them understand underlying motivations and patterns of interactions. Growth occurs as each resident develops her “inner observer,” practices awareness and finds new possibilities for action. The Enneagram serves as an empowering tool to become invested in the change process and is a catalyst for 12-step spiritual growth. This work not only fosters inner growth and transformation, it has also proven to be very healing and serves as a way to achieve greater balance and serenity in daily life. The population that we serve tends to have co-occurring disorders, usually including substance addiction, eating disorder, mood and characterological disorders. Typically the women we work with have spent years, if not decades repressing their emotions and remaining very disconnected from their bodies. This is one of the reasons I have endeavored to further incorporate the wisdom Enneagram work and rhythm into our curriculum.

Some of the important principles of early recovery include surrender, acceptance, asking for help and exploring spirituality and belief in a Higher Power that can help restore one to wholeness and well-being. To that end, our residents have recently engaged in a series of activities and groups encompassing “Three-Centered Knowing.” The first session included some of the key elements and rhythm of a Wisdom School on a small scale, in the following format:

8:45 a.m. - Chant & Meditation

9:00 a.m. - Body Prayer, Didactic Teaching on Three-Centered Knowing (as part of Enneagram Group Curriculum Series)

9:45 a.m. - Take-away messages: Practice on Welcoming Prayer OR Centering Prayer as a form of Surrender on a daily basis; Practice Conscious Work (during daily chores; inner task - body scan for tension/clenching); closing with the Serenity Prayer at 10:00 a.m.

An example of an opening chant is “This Present Time” from Paulette Meier, as it has a mindfulness theme and is non-denominational, nor affiliated with any religion. Those in early recovery sometimes have difficulty identifying with a specific religion or belief in God, and it is important to honor that and promote an open and safe gateway to develop their own sense of what a Higher Power means to them, and as they are ready. The meditation period is a 12-15 minute silent one that precedes each of our weekday groups. Our

intention is to introduce Centering Prayer/Meditation later in the curriculum, as a way to demonstrate kenosis, for daily surrender, and learning to be gentle with self when our thoughts wander.

The teaching portion of the group is the longest segment, approximately 35-45 minutes depending upon questions. The first session was an introductory, high-level didactic on Three Centered Knowing, with future sessions diving deeper into each center of intelligence (Head, Heart, Body-Movement/Sensation) with corresponding Enneagram personality types and respective practices to create greater balance. The didactic portion on the The Three Centers opened with the following quote:

“As your being increases, your receptivity to higher meaning increases. As your being decreases, the old meanings return.”

— Maurice Nicoll

This will help foster discussion on levels of being and what it means to be “awake.” This supports the 12-step philosophy of having a spiritual awakening sufficient enough to recover from addiction, and the importance of greater self-awareness and conscious contact with a Higher Power. After each center is introduced, several practices are identified to assist in bringing each center ‘online’ as part of the awakening process. My goal is to then have at least one session on each center to deepen the meaning and for active participation in practicing the exercises and activities associated with that center of intelligence. As noted by Peter O’Hanrahan (2012), “Body awareness is an important part of working with our personality type. It provides a way to manage our reactivity and achieve a grounded, embodied presence. It opens the door to the intelligence and resources of the Body and Heart Centers, which are vital for making effective decisions, developing healthy relationships and living a full life,” (p. 3). It is my belief that working with the body is particularly important for the women at Haley House, and is imperative for greater healing and wholeness.

Finally, I would like to incorporate the Welcome Prayer Method developed by Mary Mrozowski, and offer it as a daily practice, an embodied practice of consent for everyday life. It is literally a consent-on-the-go prayer that is active, experiential and incarnational, and can provide a way of moving deeper into surrender, trust, and intimacy. There is a gentleness and simplicity about this practice, and yet it is profoundly powerful and mysterious at the same time. I am currently practicing the Welcome Prayer Method, and realizing that there is great breadth and depth to this practice, even though the three simple steps remain the same. I’m excited to bring this deeper and wider as part of the ongoing Enneagram curriculum at Haley House, particularly for those with Eating Disorder and significant grief and trauma issues.

I have found that when I begin to share and present these concepts and beliefs, the ‘knowledge’ becomes more internalized and deeply integrated for me. In recovery, we have a saying that states, “if you want to keep it, you have to give it away.” That has truly been my experience as I journey with the amazing women of Haley House.

References

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Alina Lodge Alumni Story

When I came to Alina Lodge my life was in shambles. I had been living in a flea infested house, unemployed, got kicked out for not paying rent, and all I wanted to do was use drugs until I never woke up again. I had no hope for the future, no self-respect, and no desire to live. I had hurt people I never meant to hurt, done things I never wanted to do, and had become a person I never wanted to be. The Lodge was my fifth time going into an inpatient treatment center and I didn't believe it would be any more helpful than the previous four times. I had heard all the lingo, could recite the 12 Steps, and I was afraid I was just one of those "constitutionally incapable" of achieving long term recovery. Every previous time I could cobble together a month or three, but every time I would return to using and the never-ending abyss of self-hatred. Why would The Lodge be any different?

Every other treatment center readily gave me every possible amenity and granted my every request. They felt like resorts where employees indulged my manipulative behaviors and encouraged my codependent tendencies. Every other treatment center allowed me a month to feel physically better but not really address deep emotional scars. If things ever got too uncomfortable, if counselors asked me tough questions I didn't want to look at, well they simply backed off and I was allowed to continue living an un-examined life.

Time. Ego-deflation. Being told "No." These are just three of the many reasons The Lodge was different for me. Going into The Lodge I had identified with a non-mainstream spirituality. While at The Lodge I had asked my counselor for a particular book and for particular items that I thought would help me develop this spirituality. My counselor wisely denied my requests. He had come to know me and my personal defense mechanisms and recognized certain character defects were involved in the situation. I over intellectualize and over-complicate in order to avoid looking at the truth. When he denied my requests, I was furious. I demanded answers from him, and we shared many a counseling session deconstructing why I "needed" these things. We talked about spirituality and how more than mere physical objects it is a feeling and a connection to something greater than ourselves. My counselor forced me to reexamine myself and my spirituality without all the bells and whistles, to find out what it really means to me and who I really am. He never discouraged me from pursuing it, he just challenged me to strip away all the extra fluff and seek to find the heart of it all. This was the first time a counselor had really understood my personal obstacles towards growth, challenged me, and had guided me through a process of finding out who I truly am. Every other treatment center I had been to would have just said "yes," talk about it for a single one-on-one session, and I would have gone on my merry way.

At the Lodge, counselors take the time to get to really know a student and then they tailor their treatment plan to their

specific obstacles towards personal growth. They challenge the student to study who they were and who they want to be, and then help them lay out concrete steps to move towards a new way of life.

I could have never known what effect The Lodge would have on my life. I could have never dreamed that it was possible for me to wake up and not want to die. I didn't think it was possible for me to live without drugs or anything else to replace the endless emptiness I felt in my chest. Today, I have over 7 years clean, I have a job, I got married, I got a house, and I love the person I am.

When I was getting ready to leave The Lodge, I was understandably scared. I was worried that once I had total freedom again, I might just self-destruct all over again. I was afraid without all the wonderful people of The Lodge helping and guiding me, it might be a matter of time before I messed it all up. One evening, about a week before I left, I was talking with one of the Facilitators about these fears. He shared his perspective with me, and he said, "You're going to be flying out to Minnesota as part of your aftercare, right? You know, one of the beautiful things about flying is that it's one of the few times you have no choice but to turn your will over to a higher power. You have no control over the pilot or the plane or your flight. All you can do is sit back and let go." When it came time for me to get on the plane, I remembered this conversation. And then, sitting on the tarmac, I remembered something else. Quiet Time. Every lecture we had at The Lodge there was 15 minutes of Quiet Time. Pens and Pencils down. No Talking. Just sit. Sitting in a plane, waiting for it to take off, people shuffling in to their seats...it hit me. This is Quiet Time.

The Lodge afforded me numerous experiences that taught me life lessons. It's not all about me. Sometimes the only thing we can do is wait. Sometimes we're not in control and that's ok. If I'm scared, that feeling will pass and I will come out the other side. If I do things one step at a time, I can achieve things I never thought I could accomplish.

I was afraid to leave because I thought once I left The Lodge I would be all alone in the world and I would make a mess of my life all over again. I came to realize that the time I spent there, and the personal challenges I faced, I had taken The Lodge with me. Nobody could have told me these things. I couldn't have learned them from a book about recovery. I wouldn't have picked up these tools in a rushed 30-day facility. The Lodge and its lessons became part of who I am because of my extended time there and because of the care and attention of the staff. The Lodge built me back up and gave me the tools I needed to live a fulfilling life of long-term recovery. The Lodge and my counselor saved my life. I'm forever grateful.

- Phil C.



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*Alumni, Families & Friends are invited
to our*

Annual Holiday Luncheon!

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Please join us at 11:30am for our Speaker

Sue U.
Alumna



Please RSVP to
laurica@alinalodge.org

908-362-6114

Let's all celebrate the spirit of the Season!

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