



There is a place where Hope can become fact

ALINA LODGE

LITTLE HILL FOUNDATION - operating Alina Lodge & Haley House
Box G, Blirstown, NJ 07825 • Tel: 1-800-575-6343 • www.alinalodge.org



JULY 2011



2011 Gratitude Picnic

On a rainy Saturday in June over 350 people came back to Blirstown to visit the Lodge. It was the 2nd Gratitude Picnic. We were met at the gates by Elaine and Doris, no better people to welcome us all back and make sure we knew all the rules!

As I walked up the driveway I didn't quite know what to expect. I knew every detail of the day's events, placement of tents, chairs, tables... I was the chair of the event. But I had never brought friends and family back to the Lodge. In fact, I had only ever come up this driveway alone, even when I first arrived as a student.

I was simply amazed. As I got to the parking lot, I could see the tents and the Lodge just glistened. It was as if a new coat of red paint had just been applied to Gratitude and Family. The Chapel looked so serene, all the grounds so lush. I felt so proud to be back as an alum and to show this special place to my husband and close friends.

The day was filled with activities. The children had a bouncy tent, pony rides and lots of art projects to do. After Michael Hornstein welcomed us, we filed into Gratitude to hear Michael A. captivate a packed room with his story of alcoholism and his journey back that started at a place much like the Lodge.

Lunch was a feast. I really don't recall the food ever tasting that good. The afternoon was spent laughing at the comedienne Sue Costello. Flat out hilarious. I never heard the noise level that high in Gratitude before. She proved to all that sobriety can be fun and we will all laugh again.

When I agreed to chair the picnic, I had no idea what it would mean to me and to all the attendees. I had not been to the 1st one and so I didn't know what to expect. I said yes because, if I can, I always say "yes" to the Lodge. This place gave me my life and I will spend my life giving back.

I assumed that while attendance at the picnic is free my time would be spent raising the much needed funds to enable the Lodge to do its great work. This is correct and we are grateful to have raised over \$160,000 with this event. But the event was so much more. As I met alums, their families and the families of the staff I saw what an important day this is for everyone involved with the Lodge.

The picnic brings to life the work that we all do. It proves that hope really does become fact.

Just like me, alumni were so happy to be back. To see what had and had not changed. To show the counselors they had "made it". To be able to show loved ones all those places we were talking about. "See, I really did walk 10 miles a day in a parking lot." There were so many smiles.

For the staff seeing those of us who made it, is of huge importance. It gives purpose and meaning to so many long days. For their families it's also important to see the difference their loved ones make every day, they are truly saving lives.

I believe the day was most important for the students. Honestly, the Lodge was so strict when I was there, I assumed they would be locked up, unable to see us and participate. Not the case. The students were at the picnic from beginning to end. **They were able to see Hope.**

Everywhere they looked, people who had been students just like them were now happy, joyous and free. Living full lives, having families, working and visiting the Lodge with gratitude for their time there.

Alatia Bradley
Event Chairperson



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Message from the Executive Director

My compliments to the staff for a job well done on the 2011 Gratitude Picnic. The Picnic Committee and its chair, Alatia Bradley, deserve many accolades for a fantastic event. Over 350 people attended and had a great time. Our kitchen staff outdid themselves. Tommy Senkier, our kitchen manager had all of the food donated by our purveyors.

Our treatment program has proven to be one of the most successful programs for the alcoholic and addict. At Alina Lodge we know undiagnosed and untreated disorders are a leading cause of relapse. We address this through spirituality weekends, psycho drama, trauma work, grief group, anger management, sex addiction, gambling addiction, and other process addiction treatment.

During the month of May, I attended the United Kingdom Symposium in London. It was a professional conference and I addressed the attendees on the Limbic System. The Limbic system incorporates the behaviors of the central nervous system, for example: emotions. This system plays a very large part in addiction. Our philosophy at Alina Lodge (the tincture of time) retrains this system away from addiction. The presentation was very well received and I am honored to have been invited to present once again next year.

Our Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees are diligently working to strengthen the Little Hill Foundation through very important committees such as Governance, Strategic Planning, Student Safety, By-laws and various finance committees along with Marketing and Development. Kudos to Rita Cohen, the Board President, for taking the helm and leading us into the future.

During 2011-2012 we have plans for Education Days, luncheons, Board Meetings, etc. Check the dates on our website and join us. We'd love to see you.

Michael Hornstein

Michael Hornstein, Executive Director



Alina Lodge is sad to inform you of the death of two very special women.



Toni Curry, LCSW served on the Board of Trustees for over 5 years and worked tirelessly to help those struggling with their addictions. She lost her long battle with cancer this past spring. As a member of the Board of Trustees, Toni brought with her, her great personality and awesome expertise. The passing of Toni Curry is a great loss to Alina Lodge.

Cheryl Stanley, our Chief Development Consultant, passed away unexpectedly this past April. Cheryl's dedication to helping those who need it most was just one of her wonderful features. Cheryl was a magnificent mentor and teacher to Renee Harman and Michael Hornstein. We dearly miss her.



KEEPING IT GREEN

By Laurie Andrysiak, Alumni Coordinator

44 Anniversaries have been scheduled for 2011

Anniversaries are more for than the new person than for the person celebrating...when you come to the lodge and celebrate you will give the newcomer inspiration. You are letting other students see that the program works. Students listening will hear "if they can do it...I can do it."

It is important to speak around our anniversary to keep it green. By telling our story it helps us remember who we are and where we came from.

Around our anniversaries it is possible to have a 'drunk dream' or fleeting thought of relapsing because you are afraid of success. It is important not to sabotage ourselves and to sign up for a speaking commitment.

Mark a milestone...Service Work...Speak and Carry the Message...

Responsibility Statement: I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

The Lodge is a family and as the Alumni Coordinator I am stopped in the hallway by current students that ask me "who's celebrating Saturday night Laurie?" "How many years do they have?" Students look forward to anniversary night. IT GIVES THEM HOPE...and after all this is the place where hope becomes fact.

We look forward to you coming back to celebrate with us. I encourage you to call me and book your anniversary celebration.

The Stigma of Addiction and Mental Illness



When patients come to treatment or to 12-Step programs they are usually filled with fear, shame, and guilt associated with their addictions. Judgmental beliefs and feelings about addictive problems can cause great discomfort in patients and family members alike. Their negative thoughts and feelings are, at least to some degree, caused by the stigma affixed to addiction and mental illness. Stigma, according to the Oxford Online Dictionary, is defined as: "A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person." Society at large views both mental illness and addiction as moral weakness, something that people should be able to change by an act of will, but successfully recovering people know this to not be the case. Although the medical community, like the 12-Step programs before them, has characterized both disabilities as diagnosable diseases, most people maintain a need to blame the sufferer, which perpetuates the stigma. This makes it more difficult for patients and family to seek the help they need.

At Alina Lodge we try to help our students understand, accept, and treat their addictive disease. While students are in treatment we try to assess if there are other diagnosable conditions and help them to accept these as well. Among these are depression, anxiety, learning disorders, and personality disorders. All are treatable conditions. Sadly we often see resistance and stigma attached to these other diagnoses. Unfortunately, diagnosis can create misunderstandings and foster fear in our patients and families. There is no shame in having a diagnosis, only in our professional disregard or neglect of them. Untreated, these additional problems will cause unwanted and unnecessary relapse.

Historically, professionals have tried to sanitize diagnoses to reduce the stigma. What was called "drunkenness" became "alcoholism," which became "alcohol dependence." What is currently called "Opioid dependence" used to be labeled "morphine addiction." Society dubbed these patients "dope addicts" and "junkies." Usually, the stigma simply reattaches itself to the new phrase, label or diagnosis. Personally, I prefer to not be called "chemically challenged". Like their alcoholic cousins before them, narcotics addicts have battled to overcome societal stigma and have successfully developed lasting recovery in NA. As counselors we try to confront stigma, but nothing seems to help like the support groups and 12-Step programs: AA, NA, Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, Families Anonymous, and regional Parents' Support groups. The support groups relieve a sense of isolation by confronting the stigma as unhelpful. This is one reason that counselors are so adamant about getting families to seek help for themselves.

I would finally like to add that while we all suffer from stresses, problems and disabilities to varying degrees, none among us has ever met anyone who meets diagnostic criteria for "Normal Undisordered Personality."

Stephen Kerlinger MA, LPC, LCADC, is a member of the Clinical Staff at Alina Lodge. He is anything but "Normal."

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