



# THE GATEWAY

## Richard Hale *Keeping the Spirit of Ray Alive*

Each year, Fellowship Hall's annual Raymond Alexander, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament culminates with the naming of the winner of the Spirit of Ray Award. The award is given to an individual who, like its namesake, has made strides in their own recovery as well as helped improve the recovery community around them. This year, the award went to Richard Hale, longtime volunteer and therapy assistant at Fellowship Hall.

With a father in the Marine Corps, Hale was used to moving around for much of his early life. Originally from the Bronx in New York, he moved around from state to state, ending up in Phoenix, Arizona. His father eventually retired from service and Hale moved from Phoenix to Greensboro in the 1970s and began teaching at Grimsley High School. Aside from a few years in New York here and there, Hale settled down and has called Greensboro home for decades.

Hale celebrated 30 years of sobriety this past August, a journey he admits was not easy to start. "I had people telling me for a long time that I had a problem." He had two unsuccessful rehab visits in 1982 and 1986 at the Crawford Center, but he couldn't wrap his head around being labeled as an alcoholic. However, something changed around 1992 by the time Hale turned 30. As he likes to say, he had his moment of realization the day before his expiration date. He became open-minded and willing to do whatever was being suggested to him. He was so committed to his decision that he detoxed at a friend's house and slept on a spare bunkbed to make the living situation work. After detoxing, he did not go back to rehab, but instead turned his focus to the community of Alcoholics Anonymous. "I wanted to do something different from before," Hale says. He found a sponsor, Matt S., who worked at Fellowship Hall. Hale began attending the Sunday morning panel meeting, sharing his story with guests currently in treatment. From there, his involvement with the Hall grew stronger. In 1993, he became a Fellowship Hall volunteer, helping guests with their Fifth Step and driving them to local meetings



Fall 2022

*inside this issue...*

Message from Mike  
**p.2**

How Newcomers  
Become Oldtimers  
**p.3**

Another  
Outstanding  
Tournament  
**p.4**

A Sweet Success  
**p. 5**

Alumni Events  
**p. 6**

Eagle Scout Makes  
Gift  
**p. 6**



# MESSAGE from Mike

Fall is here! Our campus is lovely this time of year, with turning leaves serving as a gentle reminder that time is moving forward. Celebrating our 50th anniversary this summer at our annual conference is evidence of that as we usher in our 51st year in operation. We had a great conference and a super performance from the HercuLeons! Thanks to all of you for coming out to show your alumni support – and setting a great example for our friends from Cumberland Heights, Alina Lodge, Dilworth Center, and NAATP who came to celebrate with us.

We are in full swing here at the Hall. Our doors are open as we continue to fulfill our mission. Amid the noise on the nightly news – from COVID variants and political strife to the war in Europe and the economy – we have opted to focus on who we are, what we do, and how we do it. Live and let live, the old timers would say!

We have been taking stock of our processes to improve access to care. Thanks to our generous donors, available funds for the Partner Scholarship Program are up and we are looking for new partners to help us be more inclusive of all people. It is a changing landscape in substance use treatment and we continue to strive to adjust and meet each new challenge.

We stand with other treatment centers across the country in upholding ethical, evidence-based treatment practices that lead to outcomes where people thrive – living lives where personal productivity, stability, and hope have a place at the table.

The past three (?!?) years have been, in many ways, some of the most stressful times in my career. I know I am not alone in this experience. Thankfully, I have not been facing the challenges that come with a pandemic alone. Our staff makes all the difference with a level of commitment and professionalism that is unparalleled. Tending to my own recovery has been paramount, as it is and has been for all of you. Leaning into each other has been vital.

The level of volunteer support for Fellowship Hall throughout the pandemic has been incredible. Alumni support at the Hall is crucial and I, and everyone here, am ever grateful and appreciative of you.

I hope all of you are well. I invite you to stay in touch with us on our social media pages, join us for an upcoming event, and let us know how you are doing.

In loving service,

## continued from page 1

in the van. He served as a volunteer until 2016, when he got word that his actual job at the time, a tanning bed company near Bryan Park, was planning to lay him off. He took a chance and made his volunteering passion his full-time gig after hearing about an open Therapy Assistant position through the grapevine at meetings.

When thinking about the most rewarding part of his job, Hale says he does not think about the rewards while he's working. For him, the real benefit comes outside of work. "When I'm out at AA in the evenings and I see men and women who spent 28 days here, continuing their recovery out there and making an effort that all stems from our suggestions — that's the reward for me."

For someone new to recovery, Hale advises that they make sure they actually *want* to quit drinking or using. "My mindset is, if the person is willing, I'll go to any length to walk side-by-side with them on their journey, the same way it was taught to me." How about someone further along in their recovery, like Hale himself? "As a longtime AA member, I look at the Triangle - Service, Unity, Recovery. I've stuck around because I've continued to apply these principles to my

life. I have a large recovery network and I try to stay involved in service - giving back, showing up, and saying yes."

Receiving the Spirit of Ray Award came as a complete shock to Hale. "It's very humbling and I wasn't expecting it at all," he says. "The plaque refers to me as a mentor and a guide, and that may be true, but it also speaks to the mentors and guides that helped me on my own journey. I'm a teacher, but I'm still teachable."

The honor was especially meaningful given that Hale knew Ray himself. "If you didn't meet him, you missed out," Hale says. "He was a loving guy who really cared about alcoholics and wanted to help change lives. That rubbed off on me. I think about the previous recipients of this award and am honored to be included."

Going forward after his win, Hale feels reinvigorated to continue following his passion of helping others so that they can achieve a better quality of life, like he himself did. "The real benefits aren't tangible. Thanks to recovery, I have peace of mind, a lack of trepidation, solid, healthy relationships, a sense of freedom — I'm genuinely happy."



# HOW NEWCOMERS BECOME OLDTIMERS

By Ogi Overman

One of the beauties — and attractions — of the 12-step programs is the fact that everything is a suggestion, not a commandment. No one is ordered to obey anything, there are no mandates or directives. Every word in the Big Book and Basic Text is a suggestion, based on past experience of the founders, of what has worked to keep our progenitors clean and sober. One could even argue that one of the main reasons for the programs' success and prosperity is the gentleness of the language: We are asked merely to be willing, open-minded and honest; we are not told to worship God but to put our faith in a Higher Power; there are no membership requirements other than a simple desire to quit drinking or drugging.

To those of us who have maintained long-term sobriety, all this may seem elementary, obvious or redundant. But to the newcomer, filled with doubts, fears, suspicions and skepticism, it all may seem nonsensical, strange and confusing. And that is precisely why several suggestions stand out that are essential in guiding the newcomer in his/her journey of recovery. One, in fact, is not even mentioned in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, but is vitally important both in establishing and maintaining sobriety. And that is the concept of sponsorship.

It bears mentioning that no two situations or persons are alike, and that there are no hard and fast rules, merely guidelines. Sponsorship has evolved over time, from taking a scared drunk to his first meeting to being that one person who can be trusted with all your secrets. In those tentative days, weeks and months, a sponsor might suggest the two of you chat daily, sit down together and read the Big Book weekly, and help you begin working

the steps diligently. Over time the relationship may evolve into, say, a periodic coffee chat, phone call, meet at a meeting, or help with a problem that is vexing you. Done right, a special bond comes to exist between the two that goes beyond friendship and touches on the spiritual.

My own experience bears that out. Until my sponsor of 22 years died last year, we were the best of friends; he was my mentor, my hero, my counselor, and I get spiritual nudges from him even today that keep me from straying off the path.

But, above all, there is one element of sponsorship that rises above the rest: Accountability. If there is a single trait that makes one a good sponsor, it is holding his sponee(s) accountable. Likewise, that is the character trait that transforms a willing sponee into a reputable sponsor. Being accountable — which, boiled down, simply means doing what you say you're going to do — is perhaps the key to getting and staying sober.

Yet, getting a sponsor and being accountable is far from the only tip on maintaining sobriety. Another is the importance of going to meetings. As with sponsorship, meetings are barely mentioned in the Big Book. But what is mentioned over and over is building relationships with fellow sober people. Obviously, the best way to do that is by attending as many meetings as possible, especially in early sobriety. We've all heard the phrase "changing playgrounds and playmates," and what better way to do that than by attending



Ogi Overman, Richard Hale, Stuart Gordon

meetings? The bonds that are created within the rooms are truly a brotherhood and sisterhood, unlike any other.

Still another phrase that has become standard over the years that is not found in the Big Book is "90 in 90," meaning going to 90 meetings in your first 90 days. Personally, I think that is arguably the most crucial out of all the pointers on how to stay sober. In addition to building relationships, you are becoming acquainted with the steps and the program itself, identifying with the stories of other alcoholics and addicts, and incrementally taking this new way of life into your heart.

It has been said (again, not in the Book), that the first 30 days allows you to break the habit, the second to create a new habit, and the third to lock in what you're trying to achieve. Eventually, going to meetings becomes more about what you can give rather than what you can get, which leads directly to "carrying the message in all your affairs."

Having said all that, none of this really matters in our long-term goal — which is staying sober one day at a time for all time. The only guarantee is working the steps. A sponsor and meetings will get you on the path, but without those 12 Steps, that path often becomes a circular one. That spiritual awakening that leads to the abundant and joyous life we all seek can only happen through step work, service work, and all its manifestations. But it all begins by going to meetings and getting a sponsor.

And taking suggestions.





# *another* OUTSTANDING TOURNAMENT

It was another gorgeous day on the Players and Champions courses at Bryan Park for the 2022 E. Raymond Alexander Jr Memorial golf tournament! Two-hundred golfers lined up to hit the links, bright and early – and ready to go – at 8am! For 21 years, this tournament has brought alumni and friends together to celebrate recovery and support Fellowship Hall.

This year's Golf Committee, led by the energetic Angela Harper, raised more than \$75,500 from sponsorships and golfer registrations to help fund Fellowship Hall's Partner Scholarship Program. At the end of the day, after all expenses were covered, the tournament provided three scholarships for individuals without health insurance or financial means to receive treatment at Fellowship Hall. It was a win-win-win day ... a fantastic day of golf, helping folks get into treatment, AND a hole in one winner for the first time ever during our tournament!

Taking first place on the Champions Course this year was the Walker team comprised of Ralph Walker, Buddy Parrish, Ryan Parrish, Will Walker with a

winning score of 49! The No3Putt Team, comprised of Mike Nance, Ron Butler, Preston Lilly, and Jeff Hargraves took first place on the Players Course with a winning score of 57. Josh Andrews claimed our first ever Hole-in-One, winning a new automobile courtesy of Black Cadillac Chevrolet.

We're already looking forward to the 2023 tournament. Due to scheduling for the Wyndham Championship, we'll be moving our tournament to the second weekend in August which will allow our golfers and sponsors to participate in both tournaments. The 2023 tournament date is slated for Friday, August 11, 2023. Information on sponsorships will be available in early Spring with registration opening in early June. Save the date and make plans to join us for a fun-filled day on the links! 



Will and Ralph Walker



Mike Nance, Ron Butler & Jeff Hargraves



Josh Andrews

**SAVE THE DATE! Friday, August 11, 2023**  
**E Raymond Alexander Jr. Memorial Golf Tourney**

## THANKS TO YOU

# CONFERENCE & 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION *was a sweet success!*

Our 2022 conference theme, "We'll be amazed before we're half-way through," certainly held true this year! A big shout out to our Fellowship Hall Council, a group of dedicated volunteers who work each year to plan and deliver our conference each August. Their diligent planning and efforts yielded a conference weekend like no other – in a new to us venue and with the addition, thanks to the Fellowship Hall Board of Directors, of a concert featuring the HercuLeons on Saturday night to celebrate Fellowship Hall's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a sweet success with incredible speakers to share their passion for recovery and wisdom on how to jump over the obstacles that life will often throw in front of us.

Planning for the 2023 Conference is already underway and no doubt Council will once again deliver an exceptional weekend to inspire, motivate, and encourage us. The BIG NEWS in 2023 is that conference will be moving to the second weekend in



August and to what we hope is a new home: Bryan Park Conference Center.

For many years, the Downtown Greensboro Marriott had been our home for conference. In the fall of 2021, we learned that our "conference weekend" had been booked by another organization at the Marriott and we worked to secure a new spot for 2022. The Carolina Theatre was the perfect venue for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference, with ample room for

our special celebration concert – but too large for our normal conference. After reviewing the schedule, looking at the challenges of holding a big event on the same weekend as the Wyndham Championship in Greensboro, and taking a hard look at attendance and expenses – the Council and Board of Directors voted to move conference to the second weekend in August to avoid the Wyndham, to find a venue that would suit our needs and size, and better manage the cost. Bryan Park Conference Center was the hands down winner. In addition, the schedule will be switching up – moving the annual picnic at Fellowship Hall to Sunday.

We hope you are marking your calendars now to join us August 11 – 13, 2023 for another great conference! The date and place have changed, but we guarantee you the quality of the experience and value of reconnecting with old friends remains the same. 

## SAVE THE DATE! **2023 CONFERENCE...AUGUST 11-13, 2023** at the **BRYAN PARK CONFERENCE CENTER**

### **FRIDAY**

Welcome  
NA Speaker

### **SATURDAY**

Two AA Speakers  
Al-Anon Speaker  
Gratitude Meeting

### **SUNDAY**

AA Speaker  
Picnic at the Hall



## Aidan Askew Completes Eagle Scout Project at the Hall

A little over a year ago, Aidan Askew, grandson of Board Member Bob Whitley, reached out to us inquiring about conducting his Eagle Scout Project for Boy Scouts of America, Troop 103. After a bit of brainstorming and a walk along the beloved Meditation Trail, Aidan landed on the idea of creating a walking path that would easily connect the Meditation Trail with the Gratitude Garden. Soon after, he and members from his troop, began making plans and then completing the work of the walking path.

Today, Aidan is in his first year of college after graduating from Northern Guilford High School in May. He told us he wanted to do something wonderful for Fellowship Hall as this place means so much to he and his family. Thank you Aidan for the gift of your Eagle Scout Project!



# ALUMNI EVENTS

We've got plenty of alumni events to keep you engaged throughout this year and next. Be sure to check your email along with our social media pages for all the latest event updates.

DEC  
**9**

### **LIGHTS OF HOPE! 6pm**

Join us in the Gratitude Garden for a festive evening celebrating lives touched by recovery.

FEB  
**13**

### **RELEASING CEREMONY 6pm**

Come to the shelter by the lake at Fellowship Hall to symbolically clear some mental space, leaving behind the stories, relationships, or dreams you've outgrown. Bonfire, smores and hot chocolate to boot!

APR  
**15**

### **WALK & RUN FOR RECOVERY!**

Get your exercise shoes ready! This year's event moves to Saturday morning (to be a little cooler!). Once again, we'll have a 5k race for the running enthusiasts and a 1.5mile walk for the rest of us! We'll come together and celebrate recovery!

APR  
**21**

### **MEN'S RENEWAL WEEKEND**

Don't miss this retreat, complete with group sessions, meetings, and activities. We'll gather at The Renewal Center Friday evening through Sunday morning. \$225 per person, limited to 18 participants

APR  
**28**

### **WOMEN'S RENEWAL WEEKEND**

Don't miss this retreat, complete with group sessions, meetings, and activities. We'll gather at The Renewal Center Friday evening through Sunday morning. \$225 per person, limited to 18 participants

**FOR UP TO DATE INFO, VISIT**  
**[fellowshiphall.com/alumni/alumni-events/](http://fellowshiphall.com/alumni/alumni-events/)**

# Be a Light of Hope



Join us on December 9th at 6pm in the Gratitude Garden on the Fellowship Hall Campus  
as we celebrate each life we have touched together on the path to recovery

You can be a light of hope by donating \$10 for one light in the Garden  
and give the gift of hope through treatment to someone in need.

Our goal is to hang 31,150 lights, one for every guest we've treated since 1971.

Donations to Light of Hope provide treatment through the Partner Scholarship Program.

## Thank you for helping someone find recovery.

Your donation makes treatment at Fellowship Hall affordable and accessible.

### How do you want to make your donation?

- I'll make a donation in the amount below and mail my check.
- I'll make a monthly donation. Call me for my payment information.
- I'll give securely online at [www.FellowshipHall.com/donate](http://www.FellowshipHall.com/donate).

### What is your donation amount?

- \$50     \$100     \$200     \$300     Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Return your donation form

Complete form and mail with your check to:  
Fellowship Hall, 5140 Dunstan Road, Greensboro NC 27405

My gift is  in honor or  in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to remain anonymous.



fellowship  
Drug + Alcohol Recovery Center HALL

Title (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.) First & Last Name

Mailing Address

City, State & Zip

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the following individual(s) of my gift:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_