



# The Gateway

Fall 2023 Alumni Newsletter

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## The Spirit of Ray Lives On

When this year's Spirit of Ray Award winner moved to Greensboro three decades ago, he had no idea that 6 words would become his unwavering mantra: "Trust God. Clean House. Help Others." Today, these are words that Jerry E lives by and this December, he'll be celebrating 10 years of living a changed life in recovery.



Overman, Stuart Gordon, Jake West, Bill Benson, Chuck Royster, and Boyd Watkins to carry on the spirit of Ray and continue to help the suffering alcoholic and addict.

And Jerry does just that.

When I asked Jerry what motivates him to help others along the path to recovery, he simply put it that stepping into treatment saved his life. "I have never met people as honest, as loving, caring, accepting or inclusive as in the rooms of AA," Jerry shared. "I'm involved in my life now, where I just existed before. I'd like to think that I may be a bit like Ray, using golf as a way to build relationships and to share the truth with them. I have found that the program only works if you give away what you have been given."

For 22 years, the Fellowship Hall Golf Committee has worked tirelessly to produce the E. Raymond Alexander Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament. In the beginning, a few close friends of Ray Alexander, Sr. decided that a tournament would be an excellent way to celebrate the life of their friend Ray, bringing together his love for golf with his passion for helping newcomers (and soon to be newcomers) find the path to recovery – out on the golf course!

"One of the most important jobs I've ever had is being a sponsor. The best part is when folks finally get honest with themselves because I know this is the only way they'll be able to live successfully. Once they get it, they get excited – and want to tell the world! Working with new people is amazing, especially when the light bulb comes on!"

In 2012, the Committee began recognizing individuals who embodied the "Spirit of Ray," defined as an outstanding sponsor and friend who welcomed all who were seeking recovery and offered guidance to those who hadn't yet accepted they needed a little help from the 12-Steps! Ray had an uncanny way of knowing when someone was battling the voice of relapse and was known for calling just in the nick of time to help someone stay on track. He was a reliable friend and confidante.

Now that Jerry is a semi-retired investment manager, I asked him how he sees the future, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is still a mystery. I've got today and that's all I can handle – all I need to worry about." But rest assured, Jerry will be out on the golf course helping someone begin their journey to a new way of life that offers more meaning and an opportunity, around every corner, to help someone find the joy that he has found.

Over the last dozen years, the Committee has recognized the late Dr. Jerry Davis and Jerry Shelton, as well as some folks who are still moving and shaking in the recovery community. At this year's tournament on August 11<sup>th</sup>, Jerry joined the ranks of Richard Hale, Sharon DeEsch, Gordon Rayle, Ogi



## Kelly's Korner

As we approach the holiday season, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared over this past year as a community dedicated to recovery. The holidays can be a challenging time for many, and I want to express my gratitude to each of you for your unwavering commitment to supporting one another during this time.

I am thrilled to announce the launch of our Annual Fund Drive, an annual initiative that allows us to expand our treatment efforts and enhance our programs. Your generous contributions enable us to provide critical resources, scholarships, and innovative treatment modalities to those in need. Be on the lookout for more information on how to make a donation in your mailbox. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of individuals battling substance use disorders.

In the spirit of giving, I am excited to introduce our Holiday Gift Guide, featuring curated items that acknowledge and support recovery efforts. These thoughtfully selected gifts not only support our mission but also serve as meaningful tokens of care for your loved ones. By choosing items from our gift guide, you contribute to the ongoing success of our programs while spreading the message of hope and recovery.

I am immensely proud of the strides we've made as a community, and I am confident that, with your continued support, we will achieve even greater milestones in the coming year. As we celebrate the holidays, let us remember the strength and resilience that define us and look forward to a future filled with compassion, healing, and recovery.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season,

Kelly

# 2024 ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

## ALUMNI 101: A virtual offering for newcomers

Monthly sessions from 6-7pm are facilitated by our Alumni Coordinator, Natalie O, and cover a wide variety of questions ... from how to find a sponsor and why do meetings matter to whether or not service work is something to help sustain your recovery. To join, email [natalieo@fellowshiphall.com](mailto:natalieo@fellowshiphall.com) for the link. Here's a list of dates and topics for the next few months.

- 12/11/23: How can service work help me?
- 1/8/24: Strategies to cope with change?
- 2/12/24: Why is a fearless moral inventory important?
- 3/11/24: Why is honesty important to sobriety?
- 4/8/24: How do I grow my emotional sobriety?

## ALUMNI SERVICE DAYS

This year, we've scheduled one service day per quarter - an opportunity for our alumni community to come together and make a difference! Natalie O will be reaching out to Alumni via email with specific details, but save these dates on your calendar now!

2/17/24 | 7/13/24 | 10/19/24

## WORKSHOPS!

Looking for a little jump start for your recovery? Consider joining us for an upcoming workshop in 2024.

- 5/4/2024: Recharge Your Recovery
- 11/2/2024: Fall workshop TBD

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- Mark your calendar now for our annual events!
- 4/13/2024: Walk & Run for Recovery at Country Park
- 8/2/2024: E. Raymond Alexander Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament at Bryan Park
- 8/2/2024: Annual Conference at Bryan Park
- 8/3/2024: Annual Conference at Bryan Park

Visit [www.FellowshipHall.com/Alumni/Alumni-events](http://www.FellowshipHall.com/Alumni/Alumni-events) for all the details!



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Drug + Alcohol Recovery Center HALL®





## The E. Raymond Alexander Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament **AN EXCEPTIONAL DAY OF GOLF!**

For 22 years running, alumni and friends of the Hall have gathered for a fun day of golf to remember E. Raymond Alexander, Sr., and his passion for helping folks in recovery while raising support for Fellowship Hall's treatment programs. This year's tournament fell on an unseasonably cool August day with a field of 200 players on both courses at Bryan Park. Our Golf Committee worked hard to raise just under \$70,000 to support the Partner Scholarship Program, which provides access to treatment for individuals who lack health insurance and financial resources. The 2024 tournament has been set for August 2, back at Bryan Park.

### 2023 WINNING TEAMS

#### PLAYERS COURSE

1st: Josh Andrews, Steve Hundgen, Matt Gibson, Matt Burkett  
2nd: Ralph Walker, Buddy Parrish, Ryan Parrish, Will Walker  
3rd: Chuck Tucker, Taylor Hagin, Mike Wilkerson, Tom Gorman

#### CHAMPIONS COURSE

1st: Will Guest, Macon Moye, Thomas Todd, Steve Winkelmann  
2nd: Fred Witcher, Roy Witcher, Korty Bernard, Paul Shaw  
3rd: Jared Dillard, Bo Crouch, Nathan Sparrow, Rick McKinney

Check out team photos online at [FellowshipHall.com/golf/](https://FellowshipHall.com/golf/)!

**SAVE THE DATE! Friday August 2, 2024 for the 2024 Tourney!**

## Thanks to All Who Joined Us for the 2023 Conference: **IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT!**

Fellowship Hall has been hosting conferences for many years. Our Conference was first created to be a homecoming for our alumni and staff. It's hard to believe that 2023 marked out 73rd Conference!

This year's event had an outstanding group of speakers with a change-up of the venue and the schedule. Despite some challenges with a smaller space and a power outage, surveys revealed that the majority of attendees enjoyed the new space, wonderful speakers, and Sunday at the Hall.

We all know that the one constant in life is change - and 2024 will bring more changes to Conference. First, we'll be back on the first weekend in August, so save the date for August 2-3! Second, we'll be changing the schedule up with opening of Conference on Friday night as usual, but we will close Conference on Saturday night after our evening speaker. The annual picnic will be at Fellowship Hall on Saturday. In addition, this year's event will be ticketed - to allow greater flexibility for attendees to select which events they'll attend in order to maximize our space at Bryan Park. Stay tuned for more details as the Council plans the 2024 event.



**SAVE THE DATE! 2024 Conference is August 2nd & 3rd!!**



# KEEPING *the Promises of* RECOVERY ALIVE

Our 12-step program of recovery is often described as a Design for Living. Many of us have been blessed with the sweet promises of recovery that close adherence to the path can produce. The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous conveyed their thoughts on this subject by stating on page 28, “A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, ‘a design for living’ that really works”. In order to keep the promises of recovery alive in our lives, it is important to remember that completing steps

4-9, does not place us in a category of sainthood. Steps 1-9 bring us into recovery and help us get sober, they do not keep us sober. We are still capable of acting on impulsive, dangerous emotions that can harm us and our relationships with others. Being willing to grow along spiritual lines means being diligent about using a daily inventory as a consistent practice in our program of recovery.

## **STEP 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

What factors are important to understand about the 10th step?

### *Step 10 must be completed in the “NOW”*

It is an essential part of receiving our daily reprieve. Without this routine practice of evaluating our outward conduct and internal processes, we are at risk of returning to our old manner of “self” living. We cannot keep sober on the past action we took in steps 1 through 9. Spiritual experiences from yesterday will not keep us sober today. Creating opportunities for new spiritual experiences daily is a must! Spiritual experiences happen when we are unblocked from inner turmoil and conflicts with others. The NA textbook pg. 44 states, “ By continuing a personal inventory, we are set free, in the here & now, from ourselves and the past.”

### *The actions taken in Step 10 place us in a “position of neutrality – safe and protected.”*

Most importantly, this statement from AA pg. 85 applies to our encounters with alcohol and/or drugs, but many fellows in recovery also apply it’s meaning to circumstances where our character defects may arise once more. When we complete a daily inventory with prompt amends, our fit spiritual condition affords us a much better chance of tolerant interactions and reactions. Afterall, “Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

### *The 10th Step is our protection from shame and guilt*

The rigorous honesty and actions required in a daily 10th step inventory help to maintain our serenity in recovery because it addresses our instinct to keep secrets. One of the questions utilized in the nightly inventory found on AA pg. 86 asks, “Have I kept anything to myself that I should discuss with someone else?” A life in recovery must be lived transparently. Our experiences have shown that carrying a secret, something that leaves us with a heavy heart or negative self-image day after day, leads back to a silent prison of isolation thinking we can manage well alone. We do not have to tell Everyone Something, but we must tell Someone Everything.

### *10 Step Inventory Tools*

AA pg. 86 “When we retire at night questions”, NA Textbook pgs. 42-43, Daily Journaling, Daily Charting (see example chart below), 10th step buddy system for accountability, the 10th Step App., the Spiritual Toolkit App. Here are some DANGEROUS DEFECTS / EMOTIONS/FEARS/SECRETS: Anger, Arrogance, Boredom, Dishonesty, Drinking, Embarrassment, Envy, Fear, Gluttony, Greed, Hate, Impatience, Infidelity, Insecurity, Jealousy, Laziness, Losing love, Losing respect, Lust, Poverty, Rejection, Resentment, Rumoring, Selfishness, Self-centeredness, Stealing, Suspicion, Unemployment, Using Vulgarity

Defect/Emotion/Fear/Secret	When? Who? What? How? Why?	Course of Action



# Holiday Gift Ideas!

Have you been searching for that perfect gift for someone who has everything? This year, give them the gift of helping others.

## *The Hands of Hope Ornament*

This beautiful stainless steel ornament with the signature Fellowship Hall "f" is a true testament to love. With each ornament purchase, we'll include a holiday gift card to let your loved one know their gift is helping someone receive treatment at Fellowship Hall. **\$10**



## *A Light of Hope*

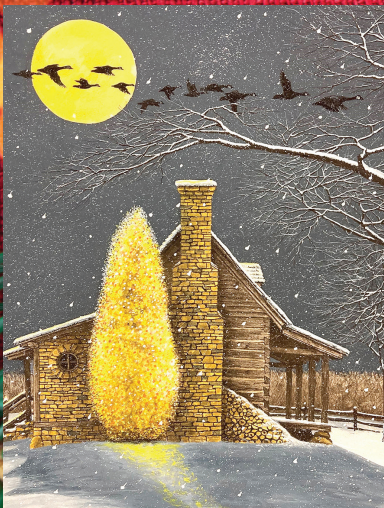
Purchase one or more lights to be displayed in our Gratitude Garden this holiday season in memory or honor of a loved one. We'll send you (or your loved one) a holiday card, with notification of your gift that will help someone less fortunate have access to treatment. **\$12**



## *Clear Night* by Bob Timberlake

Everyone loves this beautiful limited edition print by Bob Timberlake, complete with a Certificate of Authenticity. We'll even ship this gift to you or your loved one! **\$300\***

*\*price includes shipping with tracking number for your records*



IN APPRECIATION OF  
CHRISTINA TUCKER  
THERAPIST

## *A Ever-Lasting Impression*

Our memorial bricks are a great way to remember or honor someone special with a personal message, etched on one of our garden bricks, and placed in the Gratitude Garden in perpetuity. With each brick purchased, we'll send you or your loved one a special holiday card as notification of your lasting gift. **\$100**

# Order online now!

[FellowshipHall.com/holiday](http://FellowshipHall.com/holiday)





# Why Service? Why Me?

## Can I make a Difference?

These are questions that many of us ask when we come to fully accept the gift of recovery. After a bit of time and working towards a spiritual awakening, we sober up, clean up, and begin to wake up to the bigger world around us. The simple answer to these questions is, “Sobriety can’t be kept unless it is given away!” In other words, we reinforce our own recovery by being present for others and sharing our experiences. Page 97 of the AA Big Book gives us concise directions by stating,

**“Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. A kindly act once in a while isn’t enough. You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be.”**

What are the benefits from service work in my recovery? It’s hard to know who benefits most; you or the people you serve. It’s truly a WIN-WIN choice!

The first place we can make a difference when seeking service work is within our local home group. This familiar, comfortable environment is the easiest place to begin the journey of helping others. AA and NA groups need regular, dependable volunteers for meeting preparations & clean up, greeting newcomers & out of town visitors, chairing or speaking, and for official positions like secretary, treasurer, etc... Sponsorship is also a service commitment that is incredibly rewarding. Actively engaging with home group members provides a consistent source of inspiration and comfort for newcomers or people struggling with relapse.

When you are ready to branch out in the realm of service work, the possibilities are immense. There are many organizational positions in structure of AA and NA at the district, state, national, and international level. Many districts and groups take meetings into detox centers, hospitals, and prisons. Some also utilize members to educate the local communities (schools, businesses, churches) about sobriety and recovery.

The most common areas to explore outside of 12-step recovery programs are: Animal shelters, Food pantries, Hospitals, Libraries, Museums, and Non-profit organizations. Many organizations have volunteer information listed on their website.

Another insightful perspective on the answer to the opening questions of “Why Service? Why Me?” “Can I make a Difference?” can be found on AA Big Book pages 128-129, “We have indulged in spiritual intoxication. Like a gaunt prospector, belt drawn in over the last ounce of food, our pick struck gold. Joy at our release from a lifetime of frustration knew no bounds. Father feels he has struck something better than gold. For a time he may try to hug the new treasure to himself. He may not see at once that he has barely scratched a limitless lode which will pay dividends only if he mines it for the rest of his life and insists on giving away the entire product.” WOW!!

BENEFITS FOR YOU	BENEFITS FOR OTHERS
<b>Mentally</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintains focus on sobriety</li> <li>• fights against mental illness</li> <li>• restores sense of usefulness</li> <li>• practices open-mindedness</li> </ul>	<b>Mentally</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helps relieve anxiety &amp; stress</li> <li>• restores Hope in others</li> <li>• builds a positive sense of community</li> <li>• shapes feelings of trust</li> </ul>
<b>Physically</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practices time management</li> <li>• reinforces responsibility</li> <li>• requires commitments</li> <li>• acquires new skills</li> </ul>	<b>Physically</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides for current needs</li> <li>• improves activity level</li> <li>• revives a sense of well-being</li> <li>• combats isolation</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritually</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthens connection with HP</li> <li>• builds new relationships</li> <li>• provides opportunity empathy</li> <li>• builds self-confidence</li> </ul>	<b>Spiritually</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connects to a greater purpose</li> <li>• helps relieve some fears</li> <li>• fights against resentments</li> <li>• lessens feelings of loneliness</li> </ul>
<b>Produces GRATITUDE!</b>	<b>Produces GRATITUDE!</b>





# Cure the Body Cure the Soul

*From Ogi & the Old-Timers*

If you've been around the rooms more than a few weeks, you've likely heard the phrase, "We're not bad people, we're just sick people."

True enough, but we weren't exactly paragons of virtue, either. I mean, it's hard to live by the Golden Rule when your top priority in life is getting enough booze and/or dope into your body to get through another miserable day, regardless of whom you might hurt in the process.

Still, as the one-day-at-a-times pile up, we come to realize that we've actually become better people. It may come in an epiphany or gradually in retrospect, but it comes. Call it a by-product of recovery, but if we work the steps and adhere to the principles, not only do we cure our sickness, but somehow we become better people.

I hadn't really given it much thought until recently, when I came across a newspaper column I'd written in January 2000. As I mentioned in a recent Gateway column, I am compiling some of my musings over the past four decades into a book. This particular deadline-beater was titled "I Still Believe" and contained 20 or so beliefs I hold dear. Culling the frivolous, snarky, irrelevant, and too topical and timely to make sense 23 years later, here are a few that I think are worthwhile. More importantly, they are the ones that made me realize how much I had internalized the principles of AA and how little I cared about them during my quarter-century drinking and drugging career. Almost all of them are pure AA. Anything sound familiar?

Now, here's another phrase from that column — again, straight from the literature and the rooms — that bears mentioning: "I know all this sounds presumptuous, so please note that I didn't say I invented them, but merely reiterated them. Nothing

is original, anyway; ideas are all simply absorbed, assimilated and then passed on using slightly different wording."

So, as I sit here, some 23 sober years later, what has changed? If I wrote this type of column again today, what would I say different?

Well, not much. Just as not much of any substance has changed since the Big Book was written in 1935, not much has changed with my worldview since the turn of the millennium. With 10 years of sobriety under my belt by then, I'd like to think that I'd "absorbed, assimilated and passed on" what had been passed on to me. Alcoholics Anonymous had — and has — shaped my life to the extent that nothing is going to radically change at this stage of life.

Nothing, of course, unless I pick up that first drink. Then, well ... you know.

## BELIEFS I HOLD MOST DEAR

*I believe that the quest for humility is our highest calling - and most difficult.*

*I believe that miracles happen to those who believe in them.*

*I believe that our greatest revelations come not from on high but from down low — when the bottom drops out.*

*I believe that good things will happen if you just show up for work.*

*I believe in taking a personal inventory periodically.*

*I believe in the power of prayer.*

*I believe that I have been more richly blessed in life than I could possibly deserve.*

*I believe that of all the gifts I've been given, the one that has best served me is my sense of humor.*

*I believe that sometimes I don't listen to my own advice.*

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE HALL

- **Sunday Panel Discussion ...** Alumni are encouraged to participate in the weekly Q&A panel with current guests
  - **Guest Speakers ...** Male and Female speakers from AA and NA are needed weekly on Sunday evenings (AA) and Tuesday evenings (NA) to share their personal testimonies with current guests
  - **Drivers ...** Needed to transport guests to local recovery meetings and necessary appointments off campus
- Contact Wayne Smith [waynes@fellowshiphall.com](mailto:waynes@fellowshiphall.com) or [natalieo@fellowshiphall.com](mailto:natalieo@fellowshiphall.com) for more information!

# The Gateway

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*Let Your Light Shine!*