

VOLUME XXXVIX

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

RECOVERY, DETERMINATION, AND SANITY

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RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
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SMYRNA GA
30080



*“Never consider the possibility
of failure; as long as you per-
sist, you will be successful.”*

– Brian Tracy

CAN WE GIVE YOU A LIFT

Remember hitting your bottom? Do you remember that moment when you first began to feel some hope? Looking back, can you remember those angels who appeared at that precise moment when you needed help the most? I can. They helped lift me up until I could stand on my own.

I can also remember the abject fear of, "How am I going to pay for this?" No insurance, no real savings, no trust fund, no golden benefactor. Scared, having hit my bottom, finally able to ask for help. I was in a safe place. The rest would just have to take care of itself.

Treatment costs money, real money. Programs, therapies, prescriptions, food, shelter, and all the while, life continues to go on outside without us. As active members of the Ridgeview Alumni Association our fund-raising focus is the **Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation, a Nonprofit 501c3** to financially help the person currently in treatment. Whether it's more time in treatment, housing, medications, or educational support, we all know how a helping hand at that critical moment can make or break a spirit.

*The Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation is dedicated to providing that powerful connection.
Won't you make a commitment to help lift someone up?*

Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation (RACC)

Date: _____

____ **YES**, I wish to contribute to the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation. As a person in recovery, family member, friend, business owner or corporate representative / sponsor.

Here is my donation of \$_____.

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Donations can be made via Check, PayPal or Venmo.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation

PayPal: @RidgeviewAlumni

Venmo: @RidgeviewAlumni

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation | 3995 South Cobb Drive | Smyrna, GA 30080-6397

The Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation is a nonprofit (501c3) charitable corporation and donations are tax deductible.



Ridgeview Institute is available 24 / 7 for NO COST Assessments.
Call today 844.350.8800

Our facilities offer these specialized, high-quality programs:

Recovering Professionals Program
Young Adult Psych. & Addiction Programs
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Women's Connection
Adult Psychiatric Program
Youth Program

Adult Addiction Program
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Additional Services:

Admissions
Support Group

Alumni
Family Workshop

Professional Education
Recovery Residences

5 THINGS I LEARNED IN THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM AT RIDGEVIEW

SUBMITTED BY: MEGAN P.

One

It won't happen overnight. No pillow full of sweet dreams will shift your reality in an instant, in a week, in a month. It'll sit like the earth waiting for a morning's sunrise, feel like the slow drag of seconds through mud, get stuck in the grooves of your fingerprints, between your toes, hang heavy threaded in the weave of your shoulders until you acknowledge it again, and again, and once more again after that.

Two

Always bring an extra mask. The tears you swallowed at 5 in the bathroom, at 10 when you wanted to scream, at 17 when you chalked it up to luck, they'll run down your cheeks before your eyes know what happened, soaking your mask with the regrets you ignore, the sadness that keeps finding its way back to your blood, the pesky

reminder that you'll never quite be enough, and all those times you needed another body to help hold you together, but ran instead. Switch out the perfectionist for the people pleaser mask and show all your cards. Maybe you don't really need them after all.

Three

Find an emotional support snack. A pack of peanut butter cookies to snap you back into yourself when the girl with the teal hair spills your thoughts from her mouth, your chest — now a swelling tsunami, your eyes, failing levees your shaking leg, wondering how she knew our secrets. Each crunch of cookie, a siren cancelling out the noise in your head saying "I really thought it was just me."

Four

Wear your running shoes. Some days you need a soft place for your feet to sink into when your ears are

ringing from the hard questions she keeps asking that make you want to forget who you are, or maybe remember yourself for once. You could run, but mostly you hope the familiar fit and tug of the laces remind you you're never really stuck.

Five.

Take a nap. Give your heart a temporary reprieve from the hot seat, from working overtime for 33 summers just trying to get you to autumn each year, when you both just needed a pit stop in a town you didn't have to be afraid of. Remind her of the softness that keeps you going that she doesn't have to fight so much with your brain they work better in tandem, as partners in the never-ending job of keeping you alive. Show your heart she's grown a whole inch since last time, and has a lifetime to perfect her recipe in making life from blood.

CHANGING MY WORLD ONE DAY AT A TIME

SUBMITTED BY: CRYSTAL R.

I woke up this morning and the sun was shining. The possibilities are endless. The birds are singing. I just know I need to make the next right choice, and I will be ok with heaven's angels flying all around me. Today is going to be great. I just have a feeling that no matter what life throws at me, I will take it in stride. The anxiety of having another episode of paranoia and mood instability is far away from me, just for today. Today is going to be a life changing day, and I am

so excited to see what is around the corner for me on this amazing journey. Today I will take control of those things that only I can control. Today I will change my world just one day at a time. I will no longer be alone to help me when the world starts crashing around me. I am capable, resilient, and determined. Everything that I have done up until now, I will show grace and compassion for myself. When night falls and I lay my head down to sleep, I know that tomorrow will become

today, and it will be full of more endless possibilities. The sun will shine, and my angels will sing just for me, and what a glorious day it will be. On those days when I struggle, I will lean in and get curious of the emotions that are bubbling inside of me. I will just sit and name the emotions, and I will see the resilience that I have deep down inside of me. All of the anger and agitation will be just a moment in the past, and I will take my power back. I will pay it forward to

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THE VIEW

CHANGING MY WORLD ONE DAY AT A TIME CONT.

SUBMITTED BY: CRYSTAL R.

those who are where I have been. I will show up for others that are struggling, and I will watch their beautiful transformation, and the light will beam through them. I will know that I am changing my world just one inspirational person at a time. As I am the legacy of those who have



passed before me, I will show up and walk the journey with those with whom I surround myself. I will put on my armor of bravery and cloak of courage, and I will be a force for others so they can see that if I can get through, then they can too. I am taking back my power, and I will show

strength. Tomorrow will come, and my world will be changed. Never to see today again, and I will make myself proud. Today, and just for today, I will be my own superhero and change my world, one day at a time.



A REAL LIFE CHALLENGE

SUBMITTED BY: KEN M.

My name is Ken, and I am an alcoholic. Through the trials and tribulations of addiction, I managed to totally wipe out any chances for, what I considered a normal life. Or so I thought. My credit was a conglomerate of unpaid balances and a trail of despair from which there was no beginning. I no longer attained the legal right to operate a motor vehicle. Nor was I aware that this would be possible again. I had allowed my warped perception to influence my motivation. So, there you have it, my road through life had been paved with automobile-sized potholes.

Overwhelming does not even describe the task at hand. The only thing that I knew was that my sponsor would be guiding me through the steps and that I had a faith that no matter what, as long as I could move in a positive direction, all things would happen as they were supposed to, not necessarily to my satisfaction. With that and the serenity



prayer, I was ready to begin.

The first place that I called was the credit bureau to order a copy of my credit report. This would list all of the institutions with which there was a discrepancy along with phone numbers. Slowly but surely, I contacted everyone and set up a payment plan. Some of the payments were only \$50.00 a month. After 3 years, I was paid in full for the amount of several thousand dollars.

At the same time, I also had targeted the Georgia State Patrol. I was going to get my driving privileges back no matter what I had to do. Once again, when I called, I found out that I owed a large sum of money, and I would also have to wait several months for the last suspension to end. It had been more than 2 years, so I also had to take the driving test again. All in all, I made several phone calls and payments every month always keeping in touch with my balances. It was very discourag-

ing, however, MEETING with my sponsor once a week helped me to stay focused.

When I started, I could not even get a fifty-dollar loan on credit, and now I own a house, a new car and, well, there is just too much to list. All I needed to do was move in a positive direction.

All I needed to do was move in a positive direction.

Meetings with my sponsor were part of my weekly routine. Somehow, I managed to tap into the compulsive and obsessive nature that allowed my addiction to flourish and use it for my benefit. I was not going to rest until I reached those goals. Today I am one of the most fortunate people that I know, and I will pray that it will happen for everyone who really wants it. Thank you, God.

MY TOOL BOX

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF W.

When I left the Ridgeview Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) in January 2017, I naively thought that after 10 intensive weeks of counseling and support that I was "cured." I was wrong. After discharge, I began to experience some of the same anxiety and depression that had put me into Ridgeview in the first place. What could I do?



When something is broken, it needs to be fixed and you need tools to do the job. With the help of my amazing therapist as well as reflecting back upon what I learned at Ridgeview, I began to adopt the "toolbox strategy."

Of all of the many and varied coping skills that people use, I had identified the following during my IOP experience:

- Talk
- Distraction
- Self-Soothing
- Exercise for Mind and Body

I began to look at "tools" that would help in these areas. At first, all of my tools were just the basics and ones that, if they were actually tools, could be purchased at the dollar store!

To reinforce that these coping strategies needed to be a part of my life, my therapist suggested creating a physical box filled with reminders that could help me to remember to use these



tools. I had a small 5" x 7" box that was 2 inches tall where I stored some of these toolbox representations. Being a Braves fan and a former usher for the team, I included some baseball cards and a small Braves decal. I had 2 small shiny "worry rocks" that could be rubbed when I was under stress. A wooden cross reminded me of my Higher Power. A CD of James Bond theme songs was included for a musical distraction if needed. I have several coffee-flavored hard candies that I can enjoy when needed. Bottom line, this was a physical representation of the mental and emo-

tional tools that I needed to work on and to employ.

"Talk" was the first skill that I put into use as a tool to help in my recovery. I do well in small groups and after being introduced to the Ridgeview Monday Night Aftercare Group in 2017, I knew that I had found a home. Through the years I have developed many

wonderful friendships in this group and having the ability to both share as well as to help others is extremely comforting and fulfilling to me.

When COVID began in 2020, I joined the Ridgeview Alumni Group in May as well as attended the Thursday Night Continuing Care Group. Again, I began interacting with more extraordinary people who had grappled with some of the same issues that I had encountered in my life. An interesting aside, it was almost exactly 1 year before I was able to physically meet my Alumni and the Continuing Care friends in person! I had been on Zoom with everyone during that time and had grown close to them on a virtual basis which was remarkable.

While the "Talk" tool has been greatly improved upon and could be classified as "craftsman's quality," my

"Distraction" tool is still at the "apprentice level." I am still working on trying to disengage in situations where I feel angry or upset. Identifying the problem is half of the battle, so at least I know that this is an area in which I need to continue to work.

"Self-Soothing" is another tool that I am working on to be of better quality. I have advanced from the "basic" tool to one that is stronger and more dependable and that has been comforting. I enjoy the outdoors and sometimes going for a walk takes me away from the cell phone, emails, text messages, to-do lists, and

people in general. Sounds and music are also comforting. I love the sound of waves coming ashore at the beach and a recording of this phenomenon is very soothing.

"Exercising for Mind and Body" is also 'in process.' I faithfully attended yoga prior to COVID and now two years later? Nothing yet. This is on my list to begin once again.

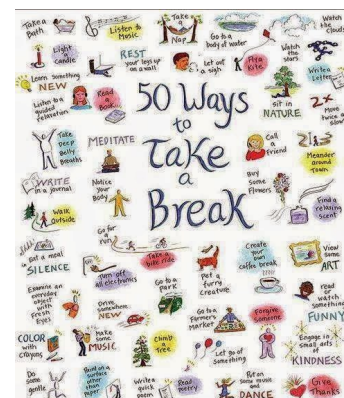
I find that weekly meetings with my therapist are an excellent way to evaluate, update, fix and/or repair the tools in my toolbox.

So that is me, what about you?



There are an endless array of coping methods and tools to use in our recovery. Some people suggest employing all of the senses in developing effective coping strategies. For example, "Smells" would employ pleasant and refreshing scents and oils. "Sounds" could be found in relaxing music or the sound of a dear friend either on the phone or in person. "Touch" could include a stuffed animal, a weighted blanket, a smooth rock, or a stress ball. "Taste" could be a favorite food, a dessert, or a hard candy. "Sight" could be photographs of loved ones or pictures of nature.

I have found that no matter what tools you choose, while they may be "basic" when beginning to use them, over time and over constant use, some will soon become "craftsman quality."



INSANITY

SUBMITTED BY: VICTOR E.

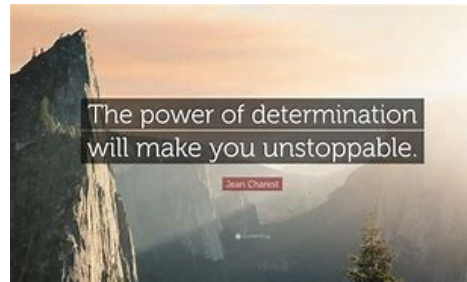
I was insane. No doubt about it. If you think I'm exaggerating, allow me to provide some examples. I was financially insane when I thought spending my monthly paychecks in three days and pawning the only meaningful material things for me (guitars) was okay. I was romantically insane for believing that being with someone else could "fix me," and for hitching all my stability to someone else's wagon. I was emotionally insane when I thought a normal way to grieve a friend's overdose was to devour the same thing that put him in the hospital. I was socially insane by thinking that staying in bed, isolating, and trying to "figure things out" inside my wasp's nest of a brain was a suitable solution.

There's more. I was psychologically insane for rejecting a psychiatrist's diagnoses of depression and addiction for my own opinion of "okay"—after all, *I am a doctor* (of music). I was philosophically insane because I rejected reality and lived in the world of illusion my mind created. I was physically insane for thinking that drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes were substitutes for food, exercise, and sleep. I was spiritually insane for saying to myself: "I'm not enough. I'm nothing. I don't deserve to live."

See? I told you. Insane.

When I was early in recovery, a lot of those foolish thoughts and actions cleared up, particularly many of those in the first paragraph. However, I still had an emptiness in me and fears that

would not subside. Sure, I wasn't using and was coping with my depression somewhat, but I was still the same-old,



flawed, inadequate, me.

I had done my second step with my sponsor with best intentions. Step Two is: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." I understood the knowledge behind the step and believed it. But the turning point didn't come until I became determined to succeed. It didn't come until I actually *PRACTICED*—to the best of my ability—the spiritual connection implied by that step.

There's not enough time or space to delve into the Higher Power discussion, and step two doesn't require that either. I just had to believe, like I can "believe in magic" or "believe in life after love" that something, someone, somewhere, somehow, *could* help me out. I don't have to understand or explain it, I just have to have some faith that a force bigger than myself just might be able to assist and support me. So, I did.

I went about my life trusting that things would work out okay. And OMG... they did! The more I continued to "do the next right thing" in recovery, the more I got help from outside myself. I got help from friends who lent me a hand, from meetings that shed light on dark areas of my life, from my therapist who listened, from meds that helped manage my de-

pression, from nature and my guitar revealing beautiful things, from my sponsor for dealing with me (Thanks, John!), and from the universe in general.

Today, I'm still flawed. I'm still an addict with depression. The difference between then and now is my awareness of my diseases and my willingness to do something about it. I actually save money, I'm in the healthiest relationship of my life (and soon to be a father!), I am mindful of my emotions and have tools that help me navigate my feelings rather than acting impulsively.

There's more. I connect with others, the universe, and reality through a multifaceted recovery program. I treat myself and my body with the respect and love they deserve by eating well, exercising, meditating, and sleeping. This is still strange, but I can honestly say that: "I am enough. I am happy with life. I love myself."

My addiction and depression are a part of me, but they do not define me. Am I still insane? YUP! It just doesn't manifest itself like it did before

because I have faith that if I ask for help and accept support, I will continue to get better. Even if it's just for one day, I can be restored to sanity by power(s) greater than myself.

I try to take just one day at a time...



but lately several days have attacked me at once.

THURSDAYS WITH SAM: THE JACK STORY

SUBMITTED BY: CHUCK B.



This is a story Sam Anders would tell when someone would start "predicting" in their mind how others would respond in certain situations. Sometimes we talk ourselves out of things. We allow ourselves to feel defeated before we even try...

There's an old, funny story, The Jack Story, which shows us how we do just that.

A salesman is in the middle of farmland in Iowa, driving home on a country road from his last sales call. It's late at night and snowing like crazy. He's tired and hungry. He gets a flat tire. Grumbling, he gets out of the car to get the spare tire and the jack from the trunk. There is no jack. What's he supposed to do now? He can't fix the flat without the jack.

He decides to look for a house

so he can borrow their jack. He sees the lights of a farmhouse in the distance and thinks, "Farmers are always friendly and helpful...I'll go knock on their door." Grumbling again, he realizes he will have to cross several fields to get to the house. As he starts out, he puts his foot right into a deep puddle. Yuck! Now his foot is cold and wet. He thinks to himself, "As long as the people in the house are friendly and helpful, it'll be worth the effort."

He climbs over the barbed wire fence to cross the first field, and he

Quote of the day: "When we are no longer able to change a situation – We are challenged to change ourselves." - Viktor Frankl

tears his coat on the fence. "Damn, that was a nice coat!" Now becoming angry, the salesman stomps across the field toward the house and thinks, "I sure hope that farmer wants to help me."

The salesman falls down in the field and now has mud on his pants. He's cold, tired, and dirty—and just

plain mad about everything. He thinks, "I bet that farmer isn't going to want to help me. I bet he doesn't even have a jack!" But he keeps going because he doesn't have any other options. As he approaches the farmhouse, the salesman slips in a pile of cow dung. He's now cold, tired, dirty, and smells like cow dung. Absolutely furious, he thinks, "That farmer is probably sleeping – I'm going to wake him up and he'll be rude and won't help me. Well, I'll show him..."

So the salesman storms up to the house and pounds on the front door. After a few minutes, the farmer comes to the door in his pajamas. The salesman screams, "Keep your damned jack!" and stomps off.

A positive attitude is the key to most every struggle in life, and since we have little to no control over circumstances put before us, your attitude is your guidepost to see you through! The Jack Story is a great piece of wisdom to remember during those days that don't seem to be going your way!

SAM-ISMS

SUBMITTED BY: ALUMNI

-Everyone in town knew I was a drunk but me
 - How does recovery work? -- "It's simple, we just love you back to health.
 - War Damn Eagle! Football isn't just a game, it's a way of life.
 - Go out and try that, and then come back and tell us how that worked for you.
 - Please quit playing doctor for your-

self.
 - The steps don't work unless you've taken "em.
 - T.I.M.E. - "Things I Must Earn"
 - Get a sponsor, dammit!
 - If you're too busy for a meeting, then you're too busy.
 - In the meantime, it's just a mean, damn time.
 - If all you want is to stop drinking, slap a cop.

- Keep your damn jack.
 - Just keep putting one foot in front of the other...if you hit a wall, turn left.
 - The only thing that has to change is everything.
 - If you are supposed to have this job, no human power can keep you from it, and if you are not supposed to have it, there is nothing you can do to keep it.

THE SANE ALCOHOLIC

SUBMITTED BY: STEVE D.

How could there be two words or concepts that seem more dramatically opposed to each other and incompatible as “sane” and “alcoholic”? Our lives of drinking scream insanity. However, when I add just two words and read it as “alcoholic in recovery,” then harmony seems possible.

As we know, being alcoholic defines itself in terms of living with a life-long disease. This illness makes us have obsessive cravings for alcohol, for more, regardless the cost. Alone, chances of controlling it are slim. In our emotionally weakened and venerable state, this obsession can only be addressed by drinking more alcohol. It, normally, goes beyond our rational abilities to resist. Along with our mental fixation, our physical addiction to the substance adds dealing with the physiological pain of withdrawal, when alcohol is no longer in our bodies. This demands that we drink to reduce withdrawal symptoms. So, this becomes an irresistible craving for alcohol and a fight to reduce the symptoms of physical withdrawal. For us, drinking returns as the reliable “cure” for this duo. As a result of this pressure and remedy, we are left unable to competently address our life’s other demands. We live impaired. We make attempts at addressing our lives, work and relationships, but drinking makes those efforts ineffective. As a result, we may never feel quite good enough. We drink to the point where we are unable of master life’s demands. We are insane. The disease of alcoholism is never cured, but can become abated by working a successful plan of recovery.

Sanity. Who really can define that? I believe that our work in recovery is to find sanity. “Sanity” is whatever it means for the person, who is earnestly working a well-considered recovery

plan. Sanity does not come from merely stopping the use of alcohol. Real recovery has many facets. Part of this recovery means learning to thrive in relationships. These enriched connections become encouraging and nurturing. It requires avoiding isolation and seeking the support from others, while giving back of one’s self. Also, we must develop a spiritual life that is sustaining and brings hope. In addition, we learn that it is crucial to actively listen for the growth experiences that others share. We must then mold those lessons to our own approach to addressing life and its’ challenges.

For me, how am I finding sanity? First, this is a process that will never end. It becomes a life’s work. There are essentials in finding my peace. The lessons from working a 12-step program give me direction and provide the proven tools for my efforts. For me, this is a “we” process. I cannot find sanity by myself. I must listen to what others demand from me and diligently work to respond to what is required. I have to find encouragement and guidance in the stories of success from my peers and then put that to work. I must be painfully honest and earnestly work hard. Working these 12 steps with the help of others gives me a new approach to life, hopefully a sane life. I add to the work of these steps with the irreplaceable fellowship and support of my peers in my Continuing Care groups at Ridgeview Institute. This is sustained sustenance for me. It is a part of my “we”, the first word of the first step in AA. For me it is vital. If I only read the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, then, doubtfully, those readings alone will not truly be life altering. There

would be no guidance, direction, explanations and encouragement from others, particularly a sponsor. I need to learn from others. I must also have their fellowship.

As I work my recovery plan and search for sanity, I must continually ask myself hard questions. Am I genuine? Am I taking the risk of being open and vulnerable while sharing with others my thoughts, concerns and lessons learned? Am I somehow bringing harm to others? If I am, then am I making amends and learning from those harms? Am I grateful? My written gratitude list of blessings is long and well thought out. It brings comfort and peace on difficult days. Do I listen for the successful experiences of others in recovery for guidance and hope?

Are my works a service to others? Am I doing the work to maintain and expand my spiritual life and thus earn a daily moment’s reprieve from my disease? Can I be an example of success for the newcomer in recovery? Do I give back what I have been given? Am I actively living the words of the Serenity Prayer? My recovery process asks many more questions and demands considered and advised change.

Am I a sane alcoholic? That still is a life’s work in progress, in a process. In recovery, finding sanity from insanity is not a given, but rather a goal worked for every day. It is a “we” endeavor. It is a gift and a challenge to be around others, who live the example of being a sane alcoholic. There is a hope for peace, as I strive to be a sane alcoholic in recovery.

NEVER APOLOGIZE
FOR DOING WHAT
YOU NEED TO DO
TO BE PEACEFUL,
SANE & HAPPY.

A MESSAGE TO NON-ALCOHOLICS

SUBMITTED BY: ANONYMOUS

Someday, my friends, I will find the courage to tell you that I suffer from the disease known as alcoholism.

Why should this take courage? Only because you know so little about the disease that I am afraid of your reaction.

Actually, to say "I am an alcoholic," should be no more dramatic than to say "I am diabetic" or "I am allergic to sulfa drugs." But until you know more of the facts, I am afraid that your judgment might hurt my professional status as well as our friendship.

Here are some of the things I wish you knew:

I wish you knew that alcoholism is a disease which can strike anyone, regardless of social position, intelligence level, emotional maturity, moral values, or previous drinking patterns. Even you, after years of normal drinking, may someday find that your body has become unable to process alcohol properly, and even more astounding, some of you who have never had a drink might be alcoholics, medically speaking, right now without knowing it. The symptoms of the disease appear only after alcohol has been taken into the body.

I wish you knew that alcoholism is not to be equated with excessive drinking. Many people drink too much and, while this may hurt their careers or their family lives, they are not doing permanent physical harm to themselves. An alcoholic's physiological inability to handle alcohol normally means that even a single drink can lead him closer to loss of control, mental deterioration, or premature death.

I wish you knew that although emotional instability sometimes accompanies alcoholism, the primary problem is a medical one. While many alcoholics do use alcohol in an unsuccessful attempt to resolve personality problems, most of the irrational behavior associated with alcoholism is a result of the disease itself, caused by the derange-

ment which alcohol produces in a body which cannot tolerate it. As soon as the alcoholic can recognize the nature of his disease and can accept help in treating it, he has the power to deal with both sets of problems: Those which he tried to drown in alcohol and those which were created by his subsequent progression toward addiction.

I wish you knew that while the disease is both progressive and incurable, it can be completely checked by keeping alcohol out of the body and its victims can be saved for full, constructive lives. The future suffering of millions of undetected victims could be greatly reduced if understanding of the problem and knowledge of the warning signs were more widespread.

I wish you knew the peace of mind which descends upon the alcoholic who has found the inner stamina, and it often takes plenty, to look his condition squarely in the face and to accept the challenge of permanent sobriety. I wish you knew, for your sake, in case you or someone you know should ever contract the disease, how much hope and help there is available locally.

If and when I find the courage to tell you the truth about myself, how will you react towards me?

Here are a few simple suggestions all prefaced with a heartfelt PLEASE.

Don't feel that you have to lock up your liquor when I'm around. My being alcoholic does not mean that I want to drink myself into a stupor, although before I knew the nature of my problem I may well have done so in your presence. On the contrary, now that I know alcohol affects me as a deadly poison, I am most eager to postpone my obituary.

Don't worry about serving drinks in front of me. Maybe in my early days of recovery, it might have pained me to see others drinking when I could not. Now, though, I have made the delightful

discovery that I can fully enjoy people and situations without the intake of what acts on my system as a toxic and addictive drug.

Don't try to persuade me to have "a short one" or just "a little glass of wine." The drink I must avoid, literally on pain of death, is the first one, short or long, weak or strong, wine or whiskey, because the presence of alcohol in my body can trigger a whole set of physiological reactions which are beyond my control. One of these is a peculiar, irrational, and unbelievably powerful craving for more, and then you will have to lock up your liquor as I will be out of control in a relatively short period of time.

Don't ever, in the spirit of so-called fun, spike my drink! Whether I ingest alcohol on purpose or by mistake, knowingly or unknowingly, the same set of reactions will be unleashed and the active progression of the disease set in motion again.

Don't let the DON'TS make you self-conscious about me. Just let me sip my soft drink or coffee without comment. And when you are asking guests what they want to drink, ask me also. I can answer for myself. I am remarkably happy in my enforced sobriety; in fact so much happier than I ever was in my days of periodic binges and prolonged hangovers that I feel neither envy nor self-righteousness towards my friends who drink freely and normally.

Don't hesitate to ask me anything about alcoholism. I don't care if your questions spring from curiosity or from interest in helping someone deal with the problem. As a person reprieved from one of the uglier forms of self-inflicted death, I derive both strength and joy from sharing information which may assist other victims in freeing themselves from the shadows of this disease.

"I wish you knew that alcoholism is a disease which can strike anyone, regardless of social position, intelligence level, emotional maturity, moral values, or previous drinking patterns."

SANITY AND MINDFULNESS: TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN

SUBMITTED BY: ELAINE B.

I once had a teacher who insisted that every conversation or research paper needed to define key terms in order to avoid misunderstandings. As a writer in my (day job) work and also in my hobby time, I'm more than aware that words are powerful things and can mean different things to different people. We each have our own kaleidoscope of experience, and everyone sees different colors through individual lenses.

That being said, I looked up the definitions of *sanity* and *mindfulness* to offer a baseline definition of each.

Sanity is a state of having a sound mind and good reasoning; good mental health with a state of calmness and reason.

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

When we are not in alignment with the above two terms, we are suffering. Life gets hectic and overwhelming sometimes, and many days it's a struggle to keep ourselves sane and mindful. But when we're **continually** not calm, not in a good mental state, and we go down that dark path of judging our thoughts and feelings rather than trying to learn from them, we are suffering, which quite often leads to depression—and we need to seek help.

Before entering Ridgeview, I judged my thoughts and feelings

constantly. Being raised in the South in an extremely fundamental religious group, I learned at an early age that anger was not only unacceptable, but it was a sin that would send me straight to hell. Every ounce of anger felt throughout my life got repressed. Anger at age 5 at the girl who stole my mud pies. Anger at bullies in school. Anger at verbally abusive managers in my first few job choices.

Everything got shoved down, and I learned how to put on a happy face. I was definitely not living a life of good mental health, and certainly not mindfulness. With that toxic man-

ager, vengeful thoughts would pop into my head and then I would spend hours criticizing myself, because what kind of human being imagines driving 100 mph over their boss? What I didn't know then but do know now, is that many people do! It took lots of therapy to understand that my feelings were normal, provided my actions didn't cross the line.

In Ridgeview, we learned that thoughts and feelings are like clouds; passing weather that does not indicate the truth of reality. All those years spent judging myself for my own

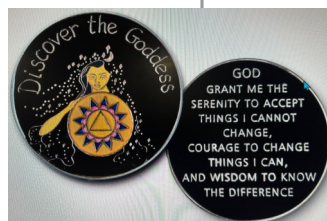
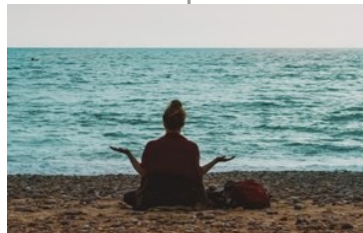
feelings only harmed me. I equated the actual *thought* with the *action*, and judged myself as if I HAD driven over my boss. It was only a thought, and a fleeting one at that.

Humans have somewhere around 70,000 thoughts every day, and many are not conscious or planned.

Mindfulness speaks of focusing

on the present moment, or, as one of my favorite Ridgeview teachers would often say, "In the land of what's happening" right then and there. What most of us do instead is live our days in "the land of what's not happening" meaning our thoughts, memories, planning ahead for the week, etc. According to *Psychology Today*, people look at their phones 260 times per day. Not to answer a call or respond to something important, but just to check to make sure that they're not missing anything. While that's become a norm in our culture, those are 260 minutes in the day that we are not fully present with where we are, how we feel, and what we are doing.

Sanity, aka having a calm and healthy mental state, goes hand-in-hand with Mindfulness, with living each moment to its fullest and not judging ourselves. Two sides of the same coin, and that coin is Recovery.



"Nothing really worth having comes quickly and easily. If it did, I doubt that we would ever grow." – Eknath Easwaan

DISCOVERY IN RECOVERY

SUBMITTED BY: DAWN L.

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ALUMNI
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CAMP
CASE MANAGER
CHAIRPERSON
COMMUNICATIONS
COTTAGE C
DISCOVERY
DONNIE BROWN
DR BOB

ELLIE
ENTERTAINMENT
FAMILY WEEK
FIRST FRIDAY
MAY
MEDITATION
ONE DAY AT A TIME
PATIENT MEETINGS AND RELATIONS
PRAYER
RECOVERY

RIDGEVIEW
SAM ANDERS
SERENITY GARDEN
SPEAKER
SPECIAL PROJECTS
SPIRIT
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING
SPRING FLING
TWELVE AND TWELVE
TWELVE STEPS

ANSWERS ON PAGE 14

12TH ANNUAL SAM ANDERS SERENITY SCRAMBLE

The Ridgeview Alumni
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THE 12TH ANNUAL

Sam Anders Serenity Scramble



Does your team have what
it takes to play with the pros?

Join former NFL players for a day of friendly competition and fun!

The Ridgeview Charitable Corporation has been assisting those in need
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All proceeds will help continue to make recovery accessible for
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CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

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Player Tickets, Hole
Sponsorship with
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*All Sp onors receive recognition in the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation newsletter that has a reach of over 4000 members .



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Hole Sponsorship with Company Logo

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Prizes will be awarded to the Top Three Teams, Two Closest to Pin, Two Longest Drive & Hole-in-One on Wade Ford sponsored hole WINS A CAR! You can also register to win over a \$1000 in raffle prizes!

For any other questions or information please contact
Stan Dixon (404-210-1740)/ stanldixon@gmail.com
or Sean Flinn (770-289-2048)/ goirishgolfer@yahoo.com for more details.



12th Annual
Sam Anders Serenity Scramble

To the Apel family,

Your act of kindness will help continue the mission of the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation (501c3) in providing treatment, housing, medications and other needs to those struggling financially while they are recovering from addiction and/or mental health disorders.

P	A	Q	F	L	T	I	O	N	E	D	A	Y	A	T	A	T	I	M	E	S	R	V	Z	W	I	O
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- Winston Churchill



Ridgeview Alumni Association Serenity Garden Brick Order Form

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Please fill out name and contact number, even if you wish to contribute anonymously, so we may contact you in case any questions arise about the inscription.

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Thank you to those who submitted articles for this edition of the Newsletter, if we have learned anything in recovery it is that *We cannot keep what we have if we do not give it away!*

If you would like to submit an article for the next Newsletter, please email it to Elaine B. at ehb216@yahoo.com or Crystal R. @ crsmart2006@yahoo.com using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

Elaine Burroughs, *Communications Chair, Proofreader, Steering Committee Minutes*

Crystal R. *Editor, Design & Layout*

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Love & Service,
Communications Committee

