

VOLUME XLIV

# THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## RECOVERY TOOLBOX

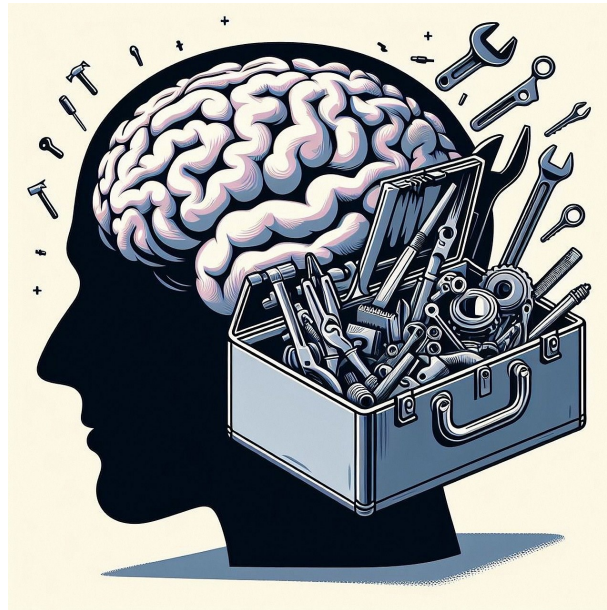
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30080



**“My recovery must come first so that  
everything I love in life doesn’t have to  
come last.”**

**– Unknown**

## 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** ([www.rvalumcc.org](http://www.rvalumcc.org)) 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 a difference.

*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: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Donate at:** [www.rvalumcc.org](http://www.rvalumcc.org)

**Make checks payable to:** Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation

**Mail to:** Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation | PO Box 2803 | Smyrna, GA 30081

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



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RIGHT TOOL FOR THE RIGHT JOB

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SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

As a semi-retired carpenter, I still have my work van and basement shop but only take on fun, easy-to-do jobs. The other day, I reached for a tool box I had not used for a while and noticed a cob-web connecting it to the shelf it was sitting on. I wondered, "How long has it been since I used anything from that box?" Once I opened it, I saw a couple of the tools were a little rusty.



That got me to thinking about the tools I use in my recovery and how many of them have I forgotten about or not used in a long time. Each tool has a purpose. Like a friend used to say, "If I have a broken leg, for God's sake don't take me to an AA meeting!" I don't use a screwdriver to drive in a nail. I don't use an AA meeting to complain about my wife, or my brothers and sisters, or someone not acting the way I think they should. I use my Sponsor for that.

I use the phone to reach out to others especially when I don't want to. I go to meetings even in the rain or snow. I visit people not able to get to meetings. I pray often and meditate when I remember to do so (my wife says that when I meditate, I snore).

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GRATITUDE

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SUBMITTED BY: CHELSEA G.

Each day, no matter what I am doing or what time of the day it is, there is always a thought that crosses my mind to express gratitude to my higher power. The tools I've had the opportunity to learn and use while in recovery have made a significant difference in my life.

ALL GOOD THINGS COME  
*from gratitude*

The line "We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us" from The Promises follows my expression of gratitude. Prior to recovery, I was not aware there were things we could do as people to help us navigate life! Now I can write about a situation, reach out to my sponsor, text or call a friend, do service work, pray, meditate, read my big book, go to a meeting, etc.

Recovery/AA, and most important my higher power, God, has allowed me to use these tools to better my life and to help others. I am forever grateful.

## TOOLBOX: THE LEVEL

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF W.

When we think of tools in a toolbox, a hammer, screwdrivers, pliers, nails, nuts/bolts, and a ruler all come to mind. Don't, however, forget the level.

Most people don't think of a level as a tool but it is indeed a necessary instrument in building and construction. A level is needed to ensure that shelves are strong and secure - that frames are square and provide maximum support - and that walls and floors are straight and not sagging. A level shows balance, control, and adherence to the plan.

This tool in your toolbox is symbolic of the many ways to both maintain level headedness in your recovery and to adjust your outlook when you are out of balance.

Being "level-headed" means that you are in balance. You have support from family, friends, groups, professionals, and the knowledge and the experiences that we have all gained in life.

Personally, I remain in balance by having weekly sessions with my therapist, and quarterly meetings with my psychiatrist, and I stay in contact with friends that I have met through Ridgeview. I am also involved with the Ridgeview Alumni Group which has many projects to become involved in and many great people that I have met and befriended.

When I am "not level," I feel down, I feel sad, depressed, and angry. I need to be held up and supported and oftentimes I cannot level myself. I need support and to use the tools that I have learned to get back in balance.



To choose the right tools to help me regain my balance, I evaluate my overall condition on a scale of 0 to 10 where "0" is "perfectly calm" and "10" is "extremely agitated." From here, I can begin to come up with a helpful plan.

***Caring and concerned interaction with those that can relate to my condition is the most effective tool in my toolbox!***

For my ratings of 3-5 or "mildly agitated state," the best tools for me are:

- Focus on the positive and attempt to ignore negative thoughts
- Focus my mind on peaceful thoughts, images of peace, and beauty in nature.
- Practice calm and rhythmic breath-

ing

For my 6-8 or "agitated state," I use the above tools and write down my thoughts and feelings. I often find that when I look at previous notes, I have felt similarly and I did eventually overcome my "unevenness." I did it then, I can do it now!

If I am a 9 or a 10, the most effective tool for me is to immediately get in contact with supportive friends or groups! I find that caring and concerned interaction with those who can relate to my condition is the most effective tool in my toolbox!

When I am "in balance," I am thankful for being in that condition "just for today." I use the symbolism of the level every day. If I am "out of balance," I look for the support that I need to get back to being level and content. I try to be "level-headed" each day!

**JUST  
FOR  
TODAY**

## MY RECOVERY TOOLBOX

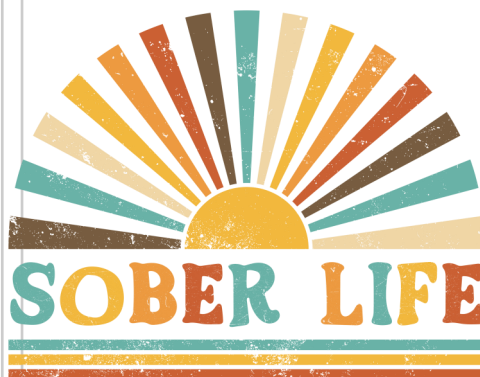
SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C,

The most valuable tool in my toolbox is "Stay away from the first drink, pill, line, joint or whatever." Alcohol was/is my drug of choice always! However, if I take something other than booze, it will lead me back to what I enjoy doing the most and that's drinking. Over the years, I have acquired a number of tools that I can use when my "crazy" wants to take over. Just because I'm sober doesn't mean that life doesn't happen. There have been thousands of men and women who have helped me to gain the knowledge and experience needed to help me continue on my recovery journey.

Back in 2004, my parents passed away 53 days apart from each other. My mother suffered from Alzheimer's and we knew her days were nearing the end. I even changed my prayers asking my Higher Power to take her so she wouldn't have to suffer anymore. Seven weeks later, my father went into the hospital for knee surgery but contracted pneumonia and never came home.

In both instances, my sponsor instructed me to fly back to Boston and be of service to my family. That was an invaluable lesson because I realized what the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous had promised - that I would walk through the archway to free-

dom and that I would never have to drink again. There are miracles as



well as lessons when I "Let Go and Let God."

Fast forward to this year. It started out like a smooth pond with no ripples and turned into a raging tidal wave. In mid-April, my wife and I received word that her 33 year old son had another seizure and his brain cancer had returned. Dustin and his wife were living in Sacramento. We decided to sell our house in Marietta and move to California.

I gave my notice at work and declared that Friday, May 3rd would be my last day. Our target date to move was the following Monday, May 6th. We rented a truck, had a yard sale and loaded the truck with a lot of help from our AA friends. Our realtor said he would sell our house after our departure.

My wife and I received a call on Monday, two hours before we were plan-

ning to leave. The doctor stated that we needed to come to the hospital as soon as possible. Where was my toolbox? Lisa started crying and I sat there stunned. Time to gather my thoughts. Call someone! My wife called her sponsor and we were told to get on our knees and pray. We did as we were told (another tool in the toolbox).

While Lisa started packing, I purchased an airline ticket and brought her immediately to the airport. She arrived in Sacramento that night and was able to spend the last 25 hours of Dustin's life at his side along with his wife.

Since my in-laws live in Tucson, AZ, we decided back in 2022 that we'll move to the Arizona mountains when I retire; close to the in-laws but far enough away so they aren't overbearing.

*Continued on Page 6*

## MY RECOVERY TOOLBOX (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C

Another tool: seek God's will and the power to carry it out. God wasn't on my Christmas list during this tragedy, but I knew I needed my Higher Power because I couldn't get through this by myself.

Lisa called on Wednesday to say that her son passed peacefully and that she wanted me to head to Prescott, AZ. My sponsor and a few close friends received many calls as I said goodbye to the state of Georgia.

Not realizing that I was using a lot of tools in my toolbox, I was worried about how my wife and our daughter-in-law were doing. It's all a blur as I look back on these past summer months.

Today I have found my dream job, helping seniors get to their appointments. My wife and I have found AA, Al-Anon, and a grief group. We're both involved with our programs.

My Arizona sponsor presented me with a 25-year medallion on July 26th (my sobriety date). Our spiritual attitude has been positive. Adversity was my opportunity to rely upon my Higher Power. I'm still able to attend Ridgeview's aftercare program on Tuesday mornings (we're on MST time; still not used to watching sports in the morning).

The recovery journey that I started a long time ago could never continue without the help of my Higher Power, friends in the program, meetings, and my toolbox.

With each problem that comes my way (and there will be more), there will be lessons to learn and experiences to pass on to others.

In closing, I want to say that Lisa & I miss all y'all.....

***I knew I needed my Higher Power because I couldn't get through this by myself.***

## TRIED AND TRUE

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

There are many tools I use in my life today to manage the challenges of day-to-day living. One that I have been working on consistently during my recovery journey is "to thine own self be true." It has become apparent, as I peeled back the layers, that my "old" self would constantly adjust my behavior and personality to appease others. In a valiant effort to fit in, I could become part of any crowd going back to my high school days. Much like the characters in the 80's classic movie, "The Breakfast Club," I could be any four of them (jock, brain, rebel, outcast) at any time.

I was the only one on the football team that started on offense and defense. The offense had a little clique and so did the defensive players. I could be in both. I was always the jock when I was among jocks. I was also in the advanced math class, so I could feel comfortable discussing trigonometry and calculus with my classmates. Some could classify me a "nerd" for those associations back in the 70's.

*Continued on Page 10*

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## JOURNALING IS MINDFULNESS

SUBMITTED BY: ELAINE B.

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*We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection.*

*We write to record the journey into the labyrinth. – Anais Nin*

I'd journaled most of my life and enjoyed it, but when I went through Ridgeview and the case managers wanted us to "journal" as part of our treatment, I resisted. I'd spent many years avoiding my difficult feelings and keeping all the mental monsters at bay. Now people were telling me to embrace those big and scary things?



As it turns out, journaling did help me sit with my feelings. I had an unaltered voice in my head and could write out my thoughts in a stream of consciousness. Sometimes, I would surprise myself by what came out of my brain and through the ballpoint pen. I think that's the positive thing about journaling...often, clarity comes in the strangest of places.

Another phrase I learned in Ridgeview was to practice mindfulness. This took patience on my part because my body was separated from my feelings, and being mindful required putting both together. To mindfully eat a snack, to mindfully take a walk under the blooming spring trees, all of these things required me to pay attention to those sticky things known as *feelings*.

But as time in treatment passed and then time in recovery, what I've discovered is that journaling is a way to be mindful. To think about things and put them down on paper is to pay attention to what my brain was doing. Did I hold any resentments? Was I sad and hurt, or was I angry? Journaling helped me process all of these questions by simply tuning in to the present moment...aka mindfulness. Give journaling a try. You may surprise yourself.

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## PLAY THE TAPE ALL THE WAY THROUGH

SUBMITTED BY: TARAH MC.

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Early in my recovery, taking in all that I was learning was a lot for me, but fortunately I was able to use and easily understand one of the tools I kept hearing about, which was "playing the tape all the way through."

If you're not familiar, that is not to just think about the first 5 minutes of picking back up, but to actually think about it play-by-play to the end. That tool was extremely helpful to me. It really brought me back to reality and how it always ended horribly, and not to mention having to hide it from my family and where I would go.

As I became more stable and started going through the process of working my steps, my life and outlook on things really began to change. The steps for me are the most beneficial tool I have. I rely on them daily to keep me in line and deal with the world around me. They have allowed me to work through a lot of the root causes of my addiction. They have also relieved me of the baggage I've been weighed down by for so long. And they have given me a peace that I have never known even before drugs and alcohol.

The steps have helped me to create a life that I never thought possible for me to have. A life that I am not willing to give up for any temporary high. And for that, I am forever grateful.

## RECOVERY TOOLS

SUBMITTED BY: BYRD III

*"Giving without strings. And he well knows that his own life has been made rich, as an extra dividend of giving to another without any demand for a return."* Pg. 69. As Bill Sees it.

These words and that paragraph rung out to me when I first came into recovery 28 years ago, and they still ring out loudly today. They go to what I was always told and taught to be one of the key recovery tools: that difference in keeping me centered, grounded and in recovery, and service work.

I remember early in my recovery all those little sayings that were posted on walls or said in meetings to reinforce recovery. Things like, "Easy Does it, One Day at a Time, Don't leave before the miracle happens, or It Works if you Work It." However, it was one saying that wasn't on a poster or on a wall that I heard repeatedly that stuck out to me and remains a key-stone tool in my recovery toolbox. **"Service Work Will Keep You Sober."**

Why did that resonate so loudly with me then and now? Maybe because I heard it so frequently and read about service work so often in my readings. It could have also been because some of my heroes and key folks in recovery like Sam Anders, Mary Jean the Queen, Smitty, Perry, Walter, and

Cris Y'all, all of whom had achieved some time in sobriety, constantly re-

## **"Service Work will keep you sober."**

peated it as a part of the plan of action that every addicted person in recovery should engage in.

Service work was simply explained as a part of carrying the message and giving back to recovery what was so freely given to me. It was, and still is, an action word and the program has always taught me to take action against my disease if I am to maintain my sobriety. The basic premises were: 1. Go to meetings; 2. Get a sponsor, call your sponsor; 3. Work the steps; 4. Pray and meditate; 5. SERVICE WORK.

I remember growing up that service work was a huge part of my mother's life. She was always doing something with somebody to help them. It was work in the church, work in various community organizations, in schools, libraries, or wherever she thought could make a difference. She raised each of her six children in that same model. So when I heard that in early recovery, it was something I knew I could do with all the time and talents that I had.

It started with chairing meetings, then setting up and breaking down the meeting rooms. Sharing my experience with others in recovery and providing leadership in the halfway house while I was an in-patient. When I was released from treatment, it was finding a home group and being involved in the meetings and group conscience settings.

However, when I joined the Alumni, my service work really took on a new meaning. I chaired a committee, Special Projects, and helped build a garden and launch both the memorial brick project and the endowment fund. We had work parties and events around special days like Halloween, Thanksgiving, and New Year's. We set up retreats and did a variety of things to give back to the recovery community.

My original sponsor used to always tell me that the thing on top of my neck was an entertainment center, and whenever it was turned on my disease would be in order. He said don't think when it is on, just go do something to help someone else. He okayed me to sponsor folks, which he said would benefit the sponsee and my own recovery. If ever I felt down on myself due to a life situation or circumstance, he said don't sit on the pity-pot, take action and go do some service work and you'll be surprised and the results.

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**RECOVERY TOOLS (CONT'D)**SUBMITTED BY: BYRD III

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The results are always an immeasurably good feeling from helping someone else. To feel and see through the smiles, body language, and communications how grateful they are for the help. The work took me away from my negative arising thoughts and feelings, while making me grateful for the opportunity to serve and help someone else.

The willingness to serve has taken me further in my recovery. Service work at my church, in the schools that I worked for, the students and student organizations that I served in my community, while also still being an active participant in the recovery community.

Throughout my years of recovery, I'll never forget or regret I have been blessed, time and time again, by a willingness to be of service. This has brought me great spiritual development, rewards, and a peace and serenity that is unmatched, while helping me grow in recovery. You never know how the service you provide might make a difference in the life and recovery of those you reach out to, but more importantly the substantial benefit you may receive by continuing to give away what was so freely given to you.

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**FINDING MY VOICE**SUBMITTED BY: KELLY T.

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When I first arrived at Ridgeview (detox), I was broken and defeated. I had lost my ability to function in the world without alcohol. Every night I would sit in an old recliner and drink myself to sleep. I'm not sure how others saw me but, in my mind, I was stupid, petty, and small. I could sit in a room full of people and feel completely alone. I had become invisible. I used to think that it would be a cool superpower if it was not so sad.

Early in sobriety, I was sitting with a bunch of happy people in recovery feeling invisible and fighting every urge not to run for the hills when I had an idea. I started talking to these happy people. I started calling them by their names, taking an interest in their lives and asking to be part of their plans. My plan worked. Before long, I was an active participant of the Ridgeview alumni and a member of an AA home group. I would not go so far as to say that I am a social butterfly, but I am so much better than before.

I took another big step. I got a sponsor. It took a little time for me to find the right person. This wonderful woman has helped me to walk through the steps and expect the miracles. My voice and her patience allowed me to work the 5<sup>th</sup> step. I was able to open up and divulge my darkest self without judgement. Later, I was able to sit quietly with my higher power and pray for him to remove these defects. I have received gifts that I didn't know I wanted or needed. I am living proof that the promises do come true if you do the work. I am willing to be heard today, willing to share myself with others. Having a sponsor and being willing to be a sponsor is a true gift of the program.

I see a therapist. She has really helped me to dig deep and look at myself. I am working to become a better communicator and to see patterns in my behavior. She has also helped me to see my value and to stop taking myself so seriously. I like the me that I am becoming.

*Continued on Page 10*

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**TOOLBOX (CONT'D)**

SUBMITTED BY: KELLY T.

I attend the continuing care group. In this group I learn how to live in recovery one day at a time. This is done with others in recovery. We are all in various stages of life, different ages, some addiction, some psych., but our shared experience has helped me to find some calmness with daily living. I feel like I will be a member of this group for a long time. I look forward to meeting weekly and consider everyone in the group to be a friend.

Today, I have a voice. My voice. By working the steps and living a program, my thinking has changed. The change has not happened overnight but my state of dysfunction did not happen overnight either. This article is supposed to be about a tool of recovery. The tool that has helped me the most has been finding my own voice. The opportunity to say no to unacceptable behavior, over-commitment and being a doormat. The gift of saying yes to sobriety, working with others, time with family and friends. Saying yes to recovery and yes to a better way of living.

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**TRIED AND TRUE (CONT'D)**

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

There was also the "rebel" in me that appeared as I started drinking. Under the legal age limit, and finding comfort in alcohol enabled me to be more relaxed and not take life so seriously. I then adjusted my anti-drugs attitude because a girl I liked smoked weed, and I wanted her to think I was in the "cool" crowd too. I let my hair grow long and grew a beard as soon as I graduated from that strict all male, tie and sports jacket Catholic High School. Another persona, my semi-hippie phase, took over as I struggled to find myself. Little did I know that drugs and alcohol were not the answer, but the very things that stunted my growth and fed my insecurity. It would be decades before I found the peace and serenity of feeling like the true me.

The one character from the Breakfast Club I truly related to was the "outcast." She felt different and uncomfortable around others and in her own skin. That was me, pure and simple. The other personas I tried on were masks. I felt incredibly relieved when I found out about "Imposter Syndrome." That explained my unease and feeling that if you really knew me, you wouldn't like me. I felt like a fraud. The substances enabled me to not give a crap about anything. But there was always the demoralizing next day filled with remorse, regret, and feelings of shame and weakness. I had to start the cycle over again as staying drunk and high was the only way I felt remotely comfortable. Until it stopped working. Thank God it stopped working. Desperation took hold and I finally had the courage to ask for help.

Getting treatment and being introduced to a program of recovery enabled me to peel back the layers and walls I built over the years. I became vulnerable, teachable, reliable, and finally comfortable just being me. Today, I do my best to practice certain principles like honesty, integrity, compassion, and service. I don't do this life thing perfectly, but as long as I stay open minded, I can look at myself in the mirror and feel good about the person I see.

One of my favorite anonymous quotes is: "Stop changing yourself so that other people will like you. Be yourself, so the right people will love you."

## TOOLBOX TO ENCOMPASS A FULL LIFE

SUBMITTED BY: DAWN L.

Today, I cannot imagine going back to where I was 22 years ago. I have experienced and gained so much in life during these years that I would not want that to ever change.

I must admit the first few years of my Recovery were fairly easy. In the beginning, I leaned heavily on those I met at Thursday's Alumni Steering Committee. I watched what they did and emulated them. After all, Sam used to say to "Stick with the Winners!" And that is what I did and continue to do.

When I think about the tools I have been shown over the years, I realize I use a couple of items from my toolbox daily. One of the most important tools I use is *Prayer*. Every morning, I sit on the side of my bed and ask God to help me to stay sober today. My sponsor, Mary Beth, suggested to me from the beginning to take each day as it comes, you know the saying "**One Day at a Time**"!

Another tool is to *Breathe*! When I find myself getting stressed out, I remind myself to just Breathe! This one helps me greatly throughout the day. Breathing helps me calm the inner stresses and enables me to push through whatever is in front of me at that moment.

Let me rewind to October 2018, when it became a struggle to

keep my recovery first. I was spending so much of my time each week working. I did not get much out of it. I expressed my concerns to my employer, and they said they thought I could do better.

Wow! That hit me hard, as I felt like I was killing myself to get everything accomplished that they assigned to me. It seemed that every night I was complaining about my job to my husband Paul. It was then he told me to quit my job. Of course, all I kept thinking about was the financial side of things. Finally, after the third time he told me to quit, he added that my job was now affecting his life too. So, I finally heard him, and the following Monday, I put in my notice. The hardest part throughout all of this was making the decision and trusting that God would carry me through.

You see, back in my 20's, I always thought about working for myself, but I never had the self-esteem to actually follow through with it; recovery has given me more than I can even express. Fast forward to February 2019, with Paul's support and encouragement, I started my own company. I started out slow with only two clients, and I was happy. Paul would say, imagine you could make \$150,000 a year. I kept telling him, I don't want to work that much! Well, slowly, through word of mouth, my clients would say, "I have a friend that needs a bookkeeper, would you be interested"? It was not long before I had six clients, then seven, now nine. Again, always, reminding myself to keep recovery first, I realized it started

to become too much for just me, so I hired my sister-in-law to help me. I have always thought that you hire people smarter than yourself, so that is what I did.

One of the most amazing things about recovery, is that somehow God puts people in our lives that can bring things full circle. My former boss from before I got sober reached out to me and asked me if I would be interested in taking on his business. Now, the last time we spoke, he told me he would never work with me again, and now he is trusting me with his books and money. First, this gave me an opportunity to make amends to him, which was something I did not think would ever happen. Mostly because he would not take my phone calls when I tried to reach out to him. You see at the time, he did not understand the disease of addiction, he thought that willpower was the answer. I recall he said, *I don't understand why you just can't stop*. As I said, God puts people in our lives for a reason, come to find out that his daughter is a recovering addict, and he now has a better understanding of the disease of addiction. This was my final amends. While it took 22 years, I believe that God always puts people in our lives at just the right moment.

*Continued on Page 12*

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## TOOLBOX TO ENCOMPASS A FULL LIFE (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: DAWN L.

Prayer keeps me spiritually connected to God. Service work within my Home Group, and the recovering community at large, allows me to give back what was so freely given to me. And finally, to keep me healthy (emotionally, spiritually and physically), I attend meetings for my own sanity. And I remind myself to just breathe.

Sam shared once a long time ago that one needs to always remain teachable in this program. Because once I think I've got this, God will find a way to throw me a curve ball.

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## THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

SUBMITTED BY: TOM N.

When I decided to go ahead and do the things other recovering people, including my sponsor, were telling me I should do, I got a bit of relief. I was finally going to stop fighting. Maybe I would find a way to stop the nagging compulsion to drink or use, the depression that I sought to escape, and the gloom that came with the inevitable wreckage I would cause myself and others when I drank and smoked crack (or whatever else I could find).

As days went by, the newness of my decision wore off, and the uncomfortable feelings that come with doing recovery stuff - calling a sponsor every day (for what?), making meetings every day, actually talking to people at meetings before and after, etc.- start to pile up. During this time, I'm living in "the space in between." I haven't started getting the lasting benefits from working the 12-step program, and I'm also not relying on my usual remedy anymore.

This is the time where I have to take the first leap of faith. This guy who is showing me how to work the steps and become part of a group is telling me things are going to get better. I can see that he and others seem to be pretty happy. The problem is, I've seen that my whole life- other folks seem to do just fine, but not me. I have no idea what serenity is or what it's like to get up every day and feel content or at least somewhat hopeful, much less happy. Yet, I'm being told if I keep doing this stuff, I'll get there.

This is a difficult space. I have no frame of reference for what life can be like, because I've never really lived content and happy. I'm also being told to do things that, while simple and not difficult, are very uncomfortable. I also can't understand how putting up chairs or calling this guy every day is going to help me not want to drink or use, much less feel happy.

My experience here is that every time I make a meeting or talk to someone in the program, or even read something directed to me by my sponsor, I get a brief little shot of hope- a reminder that it has worked for them. They are so confident it will work for me. My sponsor GUARANTEED that if I worked the steps as outlined in the Big Book, I would have a spiritual experience. My thought at the time was, "yeah, but I just want to drop the nagging desire to use and not be depressed." I didn't make the correlation between spiritual experience and the life outlined in the promises that are read at every meeting.

*Continued on Page 13*

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THE SPACE IN BETWEEN (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: TOM N.

I could correlate those things in my head, and I'd nod my head and agree, but deep down I really doubted. THAT is the critical thing I had to ignore. I had to ignore HOW I FELT, WHAT I THOUGHT, AND WHAT I BELIEVED—and then just DO the stuff I was told to do without thought. Just do it and see what happens.

I got the results! I have a happy life today. I still fall back into my old thinking sometimes, but if I just get off my butt and DO SOMETHING prescribed by the book or my sponsor, it works every time.

What does "it works" mean? I'm content with my life. I'm happy. I love my wife and she loves me. We are teammates, not enemies coexisting. I (kind of) like my job. I am not working on fixing the problem I caused, or trying to figure out how to scramble and pay the bills because I blew all our money. I can focus on having fun and it's all because I just do the crap these guys tell me will work.

Still doesn't make much sense sometimes, but that's okay. It works and I finally am a living example of it. I got past "the space in between" and am receiving lasting improvements in my outlook on life, my state of mind, and my standing with those around me. This happened because I just kept putting one foot in front of the other and stuck very close to those around me who have the life I want.

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PROUD TO BE AN ALCOHOLIC:  
A REPRINT IN MEMORIAM

SUBMITTED BY: MARY BETH I.



*This article from the 2004 Spring Newsletter is being reprinted in this issue in memory of one of our alumni members, Mary Beth I.*

In the beginning, service work was done at the meetings. Joining the Ridgeview Alumni has given me ample ways to work with others. How do I work with others? By continuing to lead a sober lifestyle!

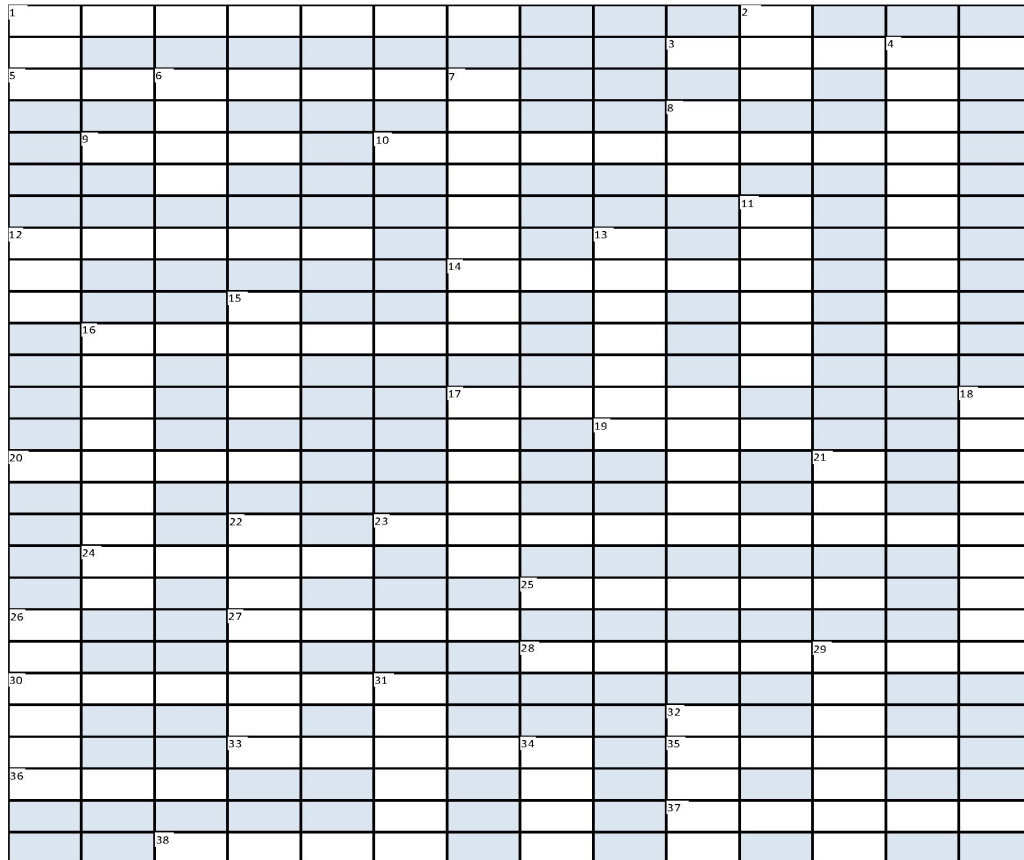
It took me a long time to get it, so I use myself as an example to let others know it is OK to keep trying as long as you keep coming back. One way I like and choose to work with others is by chairing a cottage "C" meeting when I can. It takes me back to when I was in the cottage and others tried to get the message to me. It may be a word or a phrase; anything will work!!

Another way is being the Happy, Wonderful Lady that greets you at our dances. I have worked the front table for several years and it gets better every year. You get to present a happy face (and mean it) to all whom come to our events. Service to others maintains my sobriety and I try to give back what was so freely given to me. I am proud to be an alcoholic who can ask for help and give help when needed.

## RECOVERY WORD SEARCH

Puzzle Created by Debbie W.

### PUZZLE CREATED BY DEBBIE W.



#### ACROSS

1. Billy Joel's Lonely Word
3. Just For \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Step Work Precursor
9. Local Psychiatric Institute, abbreviation
10. Homonym for Patients
12. "Keep your side of the street \_\_\_\_\_".
14. First word on Chip
16. Peaceful
17. Loses' opposite
19. The "Almighty"
20. Debt Notification
23. Patience and \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Conclusion of Prayer
25. Rely
27. Jim Croce's' bottle contents.
28. Assists with step work.
30. "Say it like you \_\_\_\_\_" (2 words)
33. Stairs
35. It makes the world go round
36. Holiday precursor
37. More Friendly
38. No Charge

#### DOWN

1. Tonto's greeting
2. Also known as H.P.
4. Key to Problems
6. Whitney Houston's "The Greatest \_\_\_\_ of All ....
7. Partner with Attitude
8. "\_\_\_\_\_ freedom ring!"
11. Happy, \_\_\_\_\_, and Free
12. is able to
13. Trio of Ready and Able
15. Prior to "Amen"
16. Intangible, nonphysical
17. Last name of one of AA Founders.
18. Admit Defeat
21. Beach Boys' activity until the car is taken away.
22. Makers, make it?
26. Lower Pride
29. Assist, help
31. Number of Steps or Traditions
32. Opposite of Together
34. Of Sound Mind

## 2025 ALUMNI EVENTS

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

| EVENT                                             | DATE & TIME                              | LOCATION                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Friday—January                              | January 3, 2025 @7:30pm                  | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday— February                            | February 7, 2025 @7:30pm                 | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—March                                | March 7, 2025 @7:30pm                    | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—April                                | April 4, 2025 @7:30pm                    | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| Spring Fling 2025                                 | Date and Time TBD                        | Pro North Parking Lot                                                     |
| Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corpora-<br>tion Walk | March 22, 2025 @12pm                     | Red Top Mountain                                                          |
| First Friday—May                                  | May 2, 2025 @7:30pm                      | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—June                                 | June 6, 2025 @7:30pm                     | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—July                                 | Date and Time TBD                        | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—August                               | August 1, 2025 @7:30pm                   | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| Whitewater Rafting                                | Date and Time TBD                        | Ocoee River                                                               |
| First Friday—September                            | September 5, 2025 @7:30pm                | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—October                              | October 3, 2025 @7:30pm                  | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| Golf Tournament                                   | October 24, 2025<br>7:30 am Registration | City Club Marietta<br>510 Powder Springs Street, SE<br>Marietta, GA 30064 |
| First Friday—November                             | November 7, 2025 @7:30pm                 | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| Gratitude Dinner                                  | November 23, 2025 @ 5:00 pm              | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| First Friday—December                             | December 5, 2025 @ 7:30pm                | Pro North Auditorium                                                      |
| Serenity Garden Holiday Decorations               | Date and Time TBD                        | Serenity Garden                                                           |

Ridgeview Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. every Thursday. We meet in person in Pro North every week except for the night before the First Friday speaker meeting, when we meet on Zoom. Contact Eddie Chinal (470-606-2071) to learn more about how you can get involved and give back!

Visit our alumni website at [www.ridgeviewalumni.com](http://www.ridgeviewalumni.com) to learn more.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

### ACROSS

1. Honesty
3. Today
5. Willing
9. RVI
10. Patience
12. Clean
14. Unity
16. Serene

17. Wins
19. God
20. Bill
23. Tolerance
24. Amen
25. Trust
27. Time
28. Sponsor
30. Mean It

33. Steps
35. Love
36. Eve
37. Nicer
38. Free

### DOWN

1. How
2. God

4. Acceptance
6. Love
7. Gratitude
8. Let
11. Joyous
12. Can
13. Willing
15. Pray
16. Spiritual

17. Wilson
18. Surrender
21. Fun
22. Meetings
26. Humble
29. Service
31. Twelve
32. Sane
34. Alone



### Ridgeview Alumni Association Serenity Garden Brick Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Message to be engraved on brick: (3 Lines/14 characters per line, includes spaces) Cost \$50.00

(Line 1) \_\_\_\_\_

(Line 2) \_\_\_\_\_

(Line 3) \_\_\_\_\_

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.

**Make checks payable to:** Ridgeview Alumni Special Projects

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

This issue, as well as archival copies, are available in digital format on the Ridgeview Alumni website ([www.ridgeviewalumni.com](http://www.ridgeviewalumni.com)) and the Ridgeview Institute website ([www.ridgeviewinstitute.com](http://www.ridgeviewinstitute.com)). The Newsletter will be in Adobe PDF format, our website will link to download the FREE Adobe Reader, allowing you to read and print the Newsletter at your leisure. New issues come out in June in December.

**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!***

Elaine B, *Editor, Design & Layout*

Dawn L., *Newsletter Consultant*

Chelsea G and Kelly T, *Communications Committee Co-Chairs*

Paul L, *Alumni Website*