

VOLUME XLV

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

BROKEN TO BEAUTIFUL: TRANSFORMATION IN RECOVERY

STORIES BY;

TOM S./KARI B..	3
JEFF W.	4
SEAN C.	5
DEBBIE W.	7
ELAINE B.	8
EVELYN N.	9
RACC WALK	10
SPRING FLING	11
ANTHONY R.	13
COREY J.	15
UPCOMING EVENTS	17

OTHER:

Ridgeview Institute— Programs & Services	2
Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation	
RVAA Serenity Garden Brick Order Form	18

RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
3995 SOUTH
COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA GA
30080

“The secret to change is
to focus all of your energy,
not on fighting the old,
but on building the new.”

—Socrates

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) 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: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Donate at: 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 to the extent allowed by law.



*Ridgeview Institute is available 24 / 7 for NO COST Assessments.
Call today 770.434.4567*

Our facilities offer these specialized, high-quality programs:

Recovering Professionals Program
Young Adult Psych. & Addiction Programs
Intensive Outpatient Treatment

Women's Connection
Adult Psychiatric Program
Youth Program

Adult Addiction Program
Senior Adult Program

Additional Services:

Admissions
Support Group

Alumni
Family Workshop

Professional Education
Recovery Residences

TRANSFORMATION IN RECOVERY

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

When I was using alcohol to hide my inadequacies, I was one of those, "Don't get him started; he never has anything to say" people. I would ramble on about stuff that I had no idea what I was talking about; I thought I was "interesting". That is just one of the many character defects I discovered once I got into recovery. Another was being judgmental of others. Always thought I knew better and didn't mind letting the other person know what their problem was.

I don't have to be like that anymore. Since I began applying the principals of the 12 steps in my everyday life, a transformation has taken place, ever so slowly, but it did happen. Today, I continue to compare but I compare MY today to MY yesterday and keep the way others talk and act out of the equation.

I'm so grateful I have the freedom to choose recovery today!

THE BEAUTY OF TRANSFORMATION

SUBMITTED BY: KARI B.

The beauty of transformation is that you are never done—never locked into one particular path. We can change course midway, or even after we've found our way, we can keep going. There is splendor in the boundless possibilities of all we can become.

Transformation is inevitable. The seasons of life demand it. Hair will silver; skin will soften and fold. Time will move us forward whether we resist or embrace it. But within that inevitability lies our power: we can shape what those seasons look like. And each one—each evolution—will still be undeniably, wholly you.

The poet Mary Oliver wrote, *"Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things."*

Her words are a compass, a reminder that we are not bound to a single identity, destination, or dream. The world calls to us again and again, inviting us to become—to imagine ourselves anew, to step into the next becoming, whenever we are ready.

And so, we become.

Not all at once, and not always boldly. Sometimes transformation is quiet—unfolding in small acts of courage: setting a boundary, telling the truth, choosing rest. Other times, it arrives like a storm, washing away everything we knew so we can build again on bare ground.

We are allowed to begin again. At any age. On any day. There is no expiration date on becoming.

Continued on Page 6

RAINBOWS

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF W.

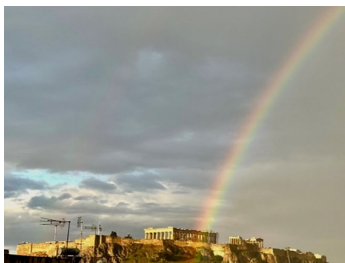
One of the most inspiring and beautiful objects in nature is a rainbow. They are symbolic and reflective of many ideas and emotions.

I find that rainbows are representative to me of my recovery, of “calm after the storm,” and of hope and optimism after enduring challenging and stressful times.

A little about rainbows ...

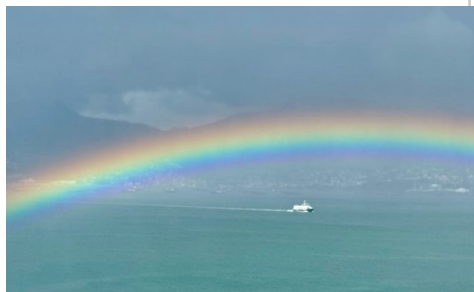
- Rainbows are formed when light hits water droplets in the air, and all of the components of light are spread into bands of color. There is a dramatically increased number of water droplets in the atmosphere immediately after a heavy rainstorm, hence the presence of rainbows.
- Rainbows often appear to us as arcs of color in the sky. Actually, rainbows are complete circles of radiating color, but we only see that portion which is visible above the horizon of our exact position on the ground. From high above, one can observe the entire circle of light that is not visible below.

Here is a photo that I took of the portion of a rainbow that I could see in Athens, Greece in 2023.



- Rainbows can also appear as just small arcs of light immediately above the surface of the water. “Reflective rainbows” is the term given to these instances where water droplets occur in large numbers just above the water’s surface and are reflected by light. The most common sight of reflective rainbows is above choppy seas, as there is a greater concentration of water droplets being churned up by the stormy waters.

Here is a reflection rainbow that I took after a storm on a cruise off the coast of Spain in 2024.



- Rainbows are optical illusions. They do not appear in actual places in the sky. The appearance of these wonders of nature varies by where you are standing in a relative position to the sun.

How do rainbows represent recovery to me?

Through therapy, counseling, support from friends and family, and from life experiences, I have found that there is hope, optimism, and new opportunities after the various storms of life that we encounter.

When the storms of depression, anger,

addiction, and hopelessness are battering our lives, it is hard to imagine that these harsh conditions will ever end. By seeking help from others, by attending support group meetings, and by the hard work needed to overcome these storms of life, you too will one day see a rainbow.

Don’t give up during the storms of life. Storms may last for several days, but they will end. (Keep in mind that in the Bible, Noah had to contend with storms for 40 days and 40 nights, but it did end, and a magnificent rainbow did appear afterward.)

Once you see a rainbow, keep in mind that that is not all of the beautiful new light that can be seen and experienced. There is even more of the rainbow yet to be seen. By continuing to participate in support groups and after-recovery sessions, you will rise higher and see even more of the rainbow.

If you seem to be drowning in your situation, keep in mind that just above the surface of the choppy waters, you may see that reflective rainbow. .

Continued on Page 6

TRANSFORMATION

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C,

A lot has changed since I came into recovery on July 26, 1999. I didn't intend on being sober that day, but my Higher Power did. My strategy was to stop in at Ridgeview, take an evaluation, and then go drink for the rest of the day. Along with my Higher Power, Ridgeview had other plans for me also. Thus started my recovery journey.

At first I was mad at being confined. However, that changed almost immediately. I went from mad to livid to blackout angry! That's when I met my counselor, the late Richard Morgan. He oversaw the "relapse tract." Before I even sat down in his group, I knew instinctively that I wasn't going to be able to fool this guy. Although I wasn't aware of it, I was already learning to be quiet and to listen. Surprisingly but very slowly, I was starting to develop a little bit of willingness.

I spent three weeks in Ridgeview and immediately upon my discharge, went straight to my home group; Easy 1-2-3 in Duluth, GA. I met a gentleman named Wes F. and his sponsor Daryl P. Wes became my sponsor, and we immediately started studying the "Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous."

I began doing the actions that were detailed in the readings even though nothing made sense.

Something kept me from asking "Why." I just followed along and did what was asked/told.

People that I interacted with, especially at work, started noticing positive changes in my demeanor. My first inkling that something was different was hope. It had been more than a month since I had a drink, and I was starting to feel that this program might work for me. The second feeling which happened at about the same time was a sense of joy.

It's either a lesson or a blessing. Sometimes I find it is both.

My self-esteem was building back up. It was never big to begin with but now it was becoming solid.

If you look at Appendix II in the back of the Big Book, titled "Spiritual Experience," you'll notice different terms to describe the transformations that take place when we apply the 12 steps of the AA program into our lives. These changes happened to me! You find words and phrases such as: "spiritual experience," "spiritual awakening," "personality changes," "spectacular upheavals," "profound alterations," and "awareness."

One of the biggest alterations in my per-

sonality was self-centeredness. I thought the world revolved around me. If I couldn't get my way, I couldn't be happy! It never occurred to me that helping someone else could fulfill my soul. Elation was not something that I experienced very often until I started applying the AA program into my life. Trust me, this is a new way of living, and it isn't natural at first.

Myself, along with countless others, have been blessed with more than one spiritual awakening. The changes continue every day. My Higher Power grants me many gifts throughout the day. One of the alumni always says, "It's either a lesson or a blessing." Sometimes I find it is both.

TRANSFORM



JUST
FOR
TODAY

THE BEAUTY OF TRANSFORMATION (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: KARI B.

Some paths will take us far from where we started. Others might loop us back to places we thought we left behind. That, too, is transformation—not linear, but alive. Messy. Spiraling. Beautiful.

We may find ourselves drawn to new questions, new versions of success, new definitions of joy. And as we grow, so does our capacity to hold complexity. We learn we can be soft and strong, grieving and grateful, unfinished and deeply enough.

Because we are not meant to be finished. We are meant to be growing things. Becoming things.

So let us meet each version of ourselves with kindness. Let us honor the detours and the breakdowns, the reinventions, and the tender re-arranging. Let us marvel at how far we've come, and still leave space for who we've yet to be.

After all, the beauty of transformation is not just in what we become—but in remembering that we always can.



RAINBOWS (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF W.

Keep swimming up toward the surface for fresh air and for relief. Reach out for support and rescue. Know that you are not alone, as there are many “lifeguards” to help all of us in times of need. Support groups, home groups, therapy sessions, and friends, these are just some of the many resources available to us for help.

Remember the appearance of a rainbow varies by your unique position in respect to the sun, so do not compare yourself and your recovery to others. You are not supposed to be “doing this well or that well” or “doing better by this time” in comparison to other people with similar problems. You are unique, but as long as you see some glimmer of light, you are doing well.

Ridgeview Institute offers many of the support tools that we need to “ride out the storms” or to “rise to the water’s surface” with the various challenges that we are experiencing. Once the worst is over, look for the rainbows, and once you see them, be confident that there is even more to see as you continue to recover and to rise above your past challenges.

BROKEN TO BEAUTIFUL

SUBMITTED BY: DEBBIE W.

Finally, the day had come when I hit rock bottom. I was given ultimatums. Oh man, I was terrified! Terrified for so many reasons. Can I do anything at all without it? How do I change? Where do I go? How do I do it? I knew all along what I was doing, but why did I let it get so bad? But I was more terrified to ask for help. I felt ashamed, embarrassed and so weak. I felt like a failure. That was a completely new feeling for me. I didn't know if I had the strength to do what needed to be done. I had to get clean! I fell down on my knees, finally surrendered and made that first call for help.

I've been abusing opiates for more than 4 decades. I was going to doctors and getting prescriptions for pain pills for years. In the latter part of my abuse, I was buying pills off the street when my prescription ran out. There were so many scary moments. I was falling asleep while driving and my grandson had to take hold of the wheel. I also went head on into a telephone pole and totaled my car. If that pole wasn't there, I could've went directly into the house and killed them or myself. But that still wasn't enough for me to seek help because that next morning I was out in search of pills again.

My entire family knew I had a problem. I lied about it for years, to my family and to myself, but all I knew was I had to keep going and I thought the pills were the answer. That was the only life I knew. These pills had taken over my life completely. Then I was given the ultimatum: lose my family or get help. I felt broken and beaten.

The first call for help that I made was to my oldest daughter and son-in-law who reside in Georgia. They made it possible for me to be on a plane in 2 days and I was in my first detox center within 4 days. But after 6 days, I knew I needed more. What was 6 days clean after 40+ years abusing. I was given a taste of what recovery could be and I wanted more. That's when I found Ridgeview and checked myself in.

I was in detox again for another 6 days and attended every mandatory meeting. At first, it felt like a chore because I was still going through some heavy withdrawal. I experienced some really bad depression. I couldn't stop thinking that I did this to myself and, more importantly, what I was doing to my family. When the option of going into the Residence and joining the Program was first proposed to me, all I could think about was the financial burden I was about to embark on. How am I going to do it? How can I afford it? All these thoughts became overwhelming. But I wanted it so badly. I knew I needed it.

As a mother, you don't think about asking your children for help because you're taught that you're the one that has to take care of everybody. That was the moment I decided that I AM important and need to put myself first; the first time I've done that since becoming a mother. So I put my pride aside again and asked my family for help. They all came through for me. I was told that whatever I needed they were going to do for me. I cried and cried. When the therapist and nurses asked why I was crying so hard, I explained what my family was willing to do for me. They told me my family knew I was worth it and that I had to believe that as well. That's when I made up my mind that I needed to get clean as much as my family needed it. This became my mission.

During my time at RV, I stayed in the residence. I was amongst people that shared the same disease that I had; an addiction. I attended the PHP and IOP programs. I learned about myself and my disease. I was taught life changing skills with the help of this program. My therapist, Ms. Bionca was my rock and savior. The staff at RV, specifically Eddie C., encouraged and supported me throughout my entire stay and I get continued care from each and every Alumni that I am blessed to call lifelong friends.

I know I wouldn't be here without the help that I received from my family, but more importantly, from Ridgeview. I'm celebrating more than 2 1/2 years clean and sober. I send a text to my family every 30 days as I continue on my road to recovery. Their love and support has surpassed my wildest dreams. I've learned to love myself again. My outlook on life has changed from Broken to Beautiful, just like me. And I'm just getting started!

Everything feels
impossible before a giant
change takes place.

-UNKNOWN



BROKENNESS HEALED ME

SUBMITTED BY: ELAINE B.

Transformation has always been one of my favorite themes, particularly since my journey at Ridgeview. We start out enveloped in our sadness, our shame, our brokenness—but then, as we come together and find a supportive community, something magical happens. We begin to heal. Not unlike a phoenix bird rising from the ashes.

Japanese culture has embraced the transformation process in an art form known as Kintsugi, which is repairing broken pottery with gold or silver and creating a new work of art from the broken pieces. Kintsugi isn't just a method of repairing something that is broken. It's a way of seeing that things can be valuable after being damaged and then healed. Just like all of us in recovery.



However, the transformation process is not easy. People love the idea of a caterpillar morphing into a beautiful butterfly; this metamorphosis equals change and growth. But the caterpillar does not just take a nap in its cocoon and then emerge a new creature. It literally has to dissolve itself into a pile of goo in order to be reborn as a but-

terfly.

Most of us don't like it when "life gets lifey" and I know I hate it when my life turns into a pile of goo! Can't we skip the painful parts and just come out the other side, reborn and happy? Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way.

This wasn't just a lesson I learned during my time at Ridgeview. Life gets lifey quite often, and particularly in the last year. In late 2024, I felt like one of those broken pottery pieces. I had finally convinced my elderly mom to move closer to me from three states away, which began multiple months of chaos. My sponsor died after multiple health issues. Oh, and I got diagnosed with breast cancer.

It was the "C" word that threw my world into chaos, which made me wonder if Kintsugi and the beauty of healing as something new would even be a possibility for me. My body basically broke. Could it be fixed and come out okay on the other side, just like Kintsugi pieces?

To top it off, I had some infections post-surgery that were challenging. But, long story short, my initial reactions of confusion and fear eventually gave way to information and gratitude. My doctor and medical team caught things early, so treatment was faster and less invasive than what many brave souls go through every day. I am grateful that I am now cancer-free and just need to continue my medical protocols and more frequent check-ins.

Still, since depression and anxiety were

the reasons I entered Ridgeview in the first place, I needed to make sure that I tended to those emotions when they arose. Repressing the negative feelings was what led me to needing Ridgeview treatment all those years ago, and I didn't want to fall completely apart. Thankfully, my Higher Power put some amazing supportive people in my life who helped me walk that tightrope of uncertainty.

I was broken into multiple pieces, but in the midst of gluing the pieces back together to create



something new, I can carry this new perspective into each new day. I can remember that panicking over something that may happen in the future will not serve me in the present moment. All I can do is put forth the best effort possible, check in with my medical teams and my support network, and take one day at a time.

So yes, we may be broken...but we heal and become beautiful. We emerge from the cocoon and are now a butterfly set free. That is recovery and life in a nutshell. So the next time you feel broken or that the world is shattering all around you, remember the Japanese art of Kintsugi. Broken pieces can be healed to form something new...and beautiful.

SMALL JOYS

SUBMITTED BY: EVELYN N.

Before recovery, my life wasn't just chaotic—it felt unlivable. I wasn't living, only surviving. Caught in cycles of pain I never chose, patterns I couldn't seem to break. Most days, I couldn't even name what was happening to me—just that something always felt wrong. And that maybe the problem was me.

I kept moving through unsafe relationships, through substances and silence, through anything that could help me forget. I wasn't chasing happiness. I was running. From myself, my memories, and the reality of how lonely and overwhelming life had become.

The scariest part was how good I got at pretending I was fine. I wore 'normal' like a costume while quietly falling apart.

For a long time, I thought healing meant fixing myself. I believed if I could just undo everything—every assault, every abusive relationship, every mistake—I could be clean again. Be lovable. Be enough. But healing hasn't been about erasing the past. It's been about learning to live alongside it. Letting the pain be real, without letting it take over. Letting myself feel, even when it's terrifying.

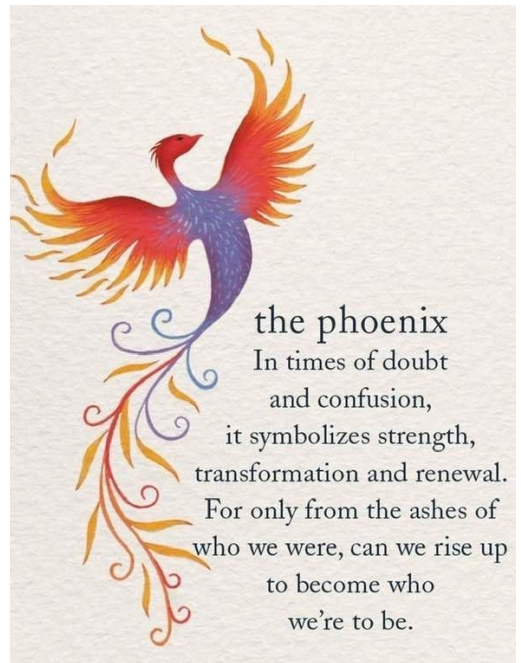
And it's slow. Exhaustingly slow.

Some days, the uneasiness still lives deep in my soul. I still catch myself waiting for a better version of me to show up and take over my life. My brain still twists reality until I believe I'll never get it right. The world keeps moving, and I still feel like I'm standing still. But something is different now. Even if it's quiet. Even if it's slow. It's not that I feel better all the time. It's not that I always feel better. It's that I'm learning how to sit with myself—messy, hurting, scared—and stay. I'm learning how to stay. To give this version of me a chance.

I'm still figuring things out. I still mess up. But I don't disappear the way I used to. I don't abandon myself.

And I'm starting to feel small joys again—joys I let myself feel. I'm beginning to trust that it's okay to rest. That effort counts. That not being 'fixed' doesn't mean I'm beyond repair.

I am still in process. Still tired, still trying. But this—this version of me—is worth the effort. And that's not something I used to believe.



the phoenix

In times of doubt
and confusion,
it symbolizes strength,
transformation and renewal.
For only from the ashes of
who we were, can we rise up
to become who
we're to be.

RACC RECOVERY WALK

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

The 5th annual RACC Recovery Walk sponsored by the Ridgeview Alumni Association on March 22nd went well. A good turnout and beautiful weather helped make it a very memorable day. Over \$10k was raised for the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation, the 501c3 that the Ridgeview Alumni Association helps support. All proceeds provide extended outpatient treatment, temporary housing, and medications for those in need of substance use and/or mental health services.

Two large donations helped double our goal. Angela R will organize next year's walk at a new location to encourage even more participation.



SPRING FLING 2025

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

The Ridgeview Alumni Association held its 33rd annual Spring Fling Picnic on Sunday, May 4th, and a good time was had by all! The weather cooperated by providing a gorgeous breezy day in the low 70's with blue skies and intermittent clouds.

This was the second year the event was held in the Pro North parking lot and the consensus is it's a perfect location for this fun day. "DJ Qool Qing" (Ridgeview's own IT specialist, **Jerry C**) graciously donated his services once again and garnered rave reviews. Burgers and hot dogs (provided by Ridgeview) were gobbled up as fast as **Stan D** and **Andrew** could cook them on the grill and **Sherry M** could place them on the food table. Ice donated by **Kelly T** kept the sodas and water refreshingly cold. The corn-hole game had folks entertained with some friendly competition. A popular new vendor, **Leah**, provided a mobile specialty coffee shop. **Chelsea G** did an amazing job all day at the face-painting table...magically transforming the appearance of young and old attendees. As always, the popular pie-eating contest had the crowd on its feet cheering loudly!

The highlight of the day came at 3:00pm when the annual raffle was held. **Carolyn B** and **Kari B** did a great job selling plenty of raffle tickets. Special thanks to **Tarah Mc**, who spearheaded this annual party, and her crew who had assembled 15 beautiful baskets and donated prizes that had the crowd buzzing with anticipation. As usual, it's a true highlight of this day to see the smiles on the faces of those holding the winning tickets as the numbers were announced. Truthfully, all those who attended this fun event were the winners. And all the money raised (\$1680.00) will go to the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation (www.rvalumcc.org), a 501c3, which provides extended outpatient treatment, temporary housing, and medications for those in need of substance use and/or mental health services.

Thanks again to all those I did not mention, who contributed in some way to this fantastic annual tradition! The set-up and clean-up were done quickly and efficiently thanks to the leadership of **Stan D** and **Bill M**. The group effort of the Ridgeview Alumni Association members, plus many of the community attendees, had the area back to normal 40 minutes after the final raffle prize was announced.

***There was an emotional "celebration of life" for long-time alumna **Mary Beth I**. at the Serenity Garden after Spring Fling. Special engraved bricks were unveiled for **Mary Beth** (As well as for **George M** and **Ellen P**). **Mary Beth's** family members and friends spoke about their love for her and how much she is missed. **Sarah M** graciously provided heartfelt music for the occasion.



Continued on Page 12

SPRING FLING 2025 (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.



BROKEN OR BENT

SUBMITTED BY: ANTHONY R.

Was I broken? My life was broken, my bank account was too. My humanity. Morally, spiritually, physically, financially bankrupt. But that is not very uncommon for alcoholics at the end of their rope. When I came to Ridgeview for the third time, between Christmas and New Years of 2013, I had not had a job in years. I was a bum. A high school dropout with no employable skills, and a long rap sheet. A hopeless case. I had two things going for me though; my 1997 Towncar was still running like a champ, and there was a woman willing to give me one last chance.

Yes, I was powerless over alcohol. I could not make it one day without getting drunk. I was not what people call a "functioning alcoholic". I was unemployable. A sloppy, falling down, passed out on the floor, drunk. But I would not have admitted my life unmanageable. I used my disability check to rent rooms from random people off Craig's list. I had enough money left to put gas in the car and malt liquor in my belly, which my prior attempts at recovery had thoroughly ruined. I no longer wanted to live that life, but I could not even pick up a job application sober, much less show up for an interview sober. I was at what is referred to in AA as the "jumping off place". I could not see a life with alcohol, or without it. I knew loneliness like few ever do. It

was just after Christmas, which I had spent in a most depraved manner, but honestly, holidays had lost all meaning years prior. Major holidays like Christmas only reminded me of how alone I truly was. I sometimes spent them at Waffle House, just to be in the presence of another human being.

I lived in a state of perpetual self-pity. I held everyone and everything else in contempt. The alcohol and drugs no longer reduced my fear and anxiety. They now induced terror. I had clear knowledge that, with every hit and slug, I was putting myself further and further away from any possible future that I would want to be a part of. I wished for the end. Just don't wake up. But everyday, I scrounged up enough change to get drunk. I was living one day at a time. The day I couldn't get drunk, I would tell myself, would be the day I would stand in front of a train. That was how I approached everyday of the last three years of my drinking.

But broken?

I knew something about suicide. I had made some gestures at a young age. I made one serious attempt when I was 21. I was in Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee, FL back in 1998. I liked it there. It was so much better than jail. But I knew they would release me soon. By that time, I had lost my parents. My relatives, including my brother, had turned their backs on me, and I had nothing to be released to.

I thought that a hospital was as good a

place to die as I would ever get. But when I made the cut, I realized I still had hope. I could not complete the suicide act with even a glimmer of hope still in me.

By the end of 2013, I had no hope left, save the thought that I had not worked the 12 Step program exactly as suggested. I knew it would not work on me, miracles don't happen to people like me, but I knew I had to go through the motions. I had to be able to end my life because what really scared me was not dying. The thought terrified me the most was: "what if this goes on like this for another 15, 20, 25 years? What will happen to me when my organs start failing?". So I entered Ridgeview... broken?

Through step-work, I became a better person. People who had once been wary of me began to love me, and I began to love them. Self-seeking (and self-pity) began to slip away. I had never believed in a higher power, till one day, I realized that I had prayed several times throughout the day without even being aware that I was doing it. A relationship with a higher power had evolved without me having to force it.

Continued on Page 14

BROKEN OR BENT (CONT'D)

SUBMITTED BY: ANTHONY R.

I merely had been saying the suggested prayers. I suddenly realized that a miracle had just happened to me. Then one day, my name was added to the temporary sponsor list. I liked what I was getting, so I've kept doing what I've been doing.

Eventually, I entered Kennesaw State University, and participated in their collegiate recovery program. I earned a degree and got the exact job I dreamed of getting. I got off of Social Security and have become a productive member of society. I married that woman who gave me one last chance. Today, she lives a great life and no longer needs to work. I own a house. The Towncar is long gone, replaced by a vehicle made in this decade. The material blessings, they say, are always preceded by and are proportional to the spiritual progress. I have made some progress. I am amazed by the life I get to live today. I sure got a lot of help.

*Recovery is not giving up control- but
gaining freedom!*

Was I ever truly broken? The funny thing is I don't really care. I used to spend so much time *thinking* before I got into recovery. I would think: "if I only knew the deepest truths about myself, I would not have to drink so much". Today, I know those truths, but I was only able to learn them after I stopped drinking and getting high. These days, I'm much more interested in helping others with their truths. I can still give of my time, but I can also provide financial service to my recovering community. None of this is really mine. Anthony's life ended when I came in that last time with both hands up. It ended in self-willed destruction. This is God's life. I'm just trusted to use it for Him. Thy will be done.

20 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

SUBMITTED BY: COREY J.

Ridgeview has been a part of my recovery transformation for a very long time – twenty years, to be exact! I was first introduced to the Ridgeview Institute in February of 2005, when the treatment program I was in decided I needed to go to an inpatient mental hospital for my suicidal thoughts and eating disorder. Back then, the women's unit was completely different, as it was for women recovering from eating disorders. Overall, it was a good experience. Yes, being watched while we ate, followed to the bathroom, weigh-ins before breakfast in paper gowns, following meal plans, seemingly endless discussions about our emotions and how they impacted our relationships with food, was not super enjoyable. However, my depression did significantly lift as my medications were adjusted, and I made a lot of friends. I have so many funny and meaningful stories about that first Ridgeview experience. I remember at one point I thought, "almost all women in our society have food issues. I may have come here with worse food issues than most, but with practice, my relationship to food can become healthier than most." I thought that was pretty cool.

Fast forward to December 1st, 2023, and I return to the women's program. This time it was an outpatient women's trauma program, and it was exactly what I needed. Once again, my severe depression lifted due to medication management. I learned a lot about trauma, processed traumatic events and feelings, and made more friends. I now have even more funny and meaningful Ridgeview stories! I often say that learning about and processing trauma was the missing ingredient to my recovery recipe. I now know how to ground myself and why that is important. I am currently working with the same therapist on self-compassion.

I am involved with Ridgeview alumni, aftercare groups, and support groups. I still see the same doctor and trauma therapist from that 2023 program. I have a better relationship with my body, emotions, and food, and I have a better understanding of how trauma affects my mental health and my healing. When I first arrived, I was struggling as an undergraduate student at Georgia State University, and now I am thriving as a master's student at Candler School of Theology, a part of Emory University. I am so grateful.

Thank you, Ridgeview, for twenty years of transformation!

GOLF TOURNAMENT

SUBMITTED BY: STAN D.

The Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation

Presents

The Fifteenth Annual

“Sam Anders Serenity Scramble”

Friday, October 24, 2025

City Club Marietta – Marietta, GA

7:30 AM Registration – 9:00 AM Shotgun Start

Registration fees are \$125 per person (tax-deductible)

Includes round, cart, range balls, light breakfast, snacks, soft drinks and water

Lunch after the round

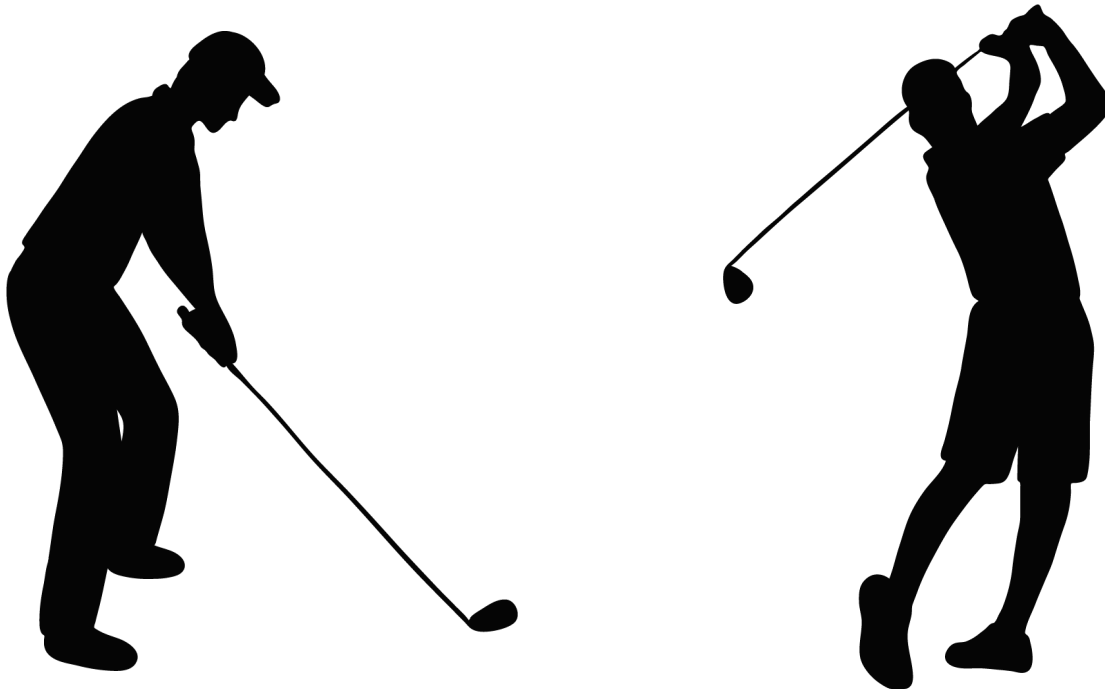
Teams of 4 are welcomed. Teams of 3 will be paired with a retired NFL player
or Professional Athlete

Corporate Packages and Hole Sponsorships are available. Call for details.

All Proceeds Benefit the Ridgeview Alumni Charitable Corporation (501c3)

rvalumcc.org

Contact Stan Dixon (phone 404-210-1740, email stamdixon@gmail.com) for more information.



2025 ALUMNI EVENTS

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
First Friday—July	July 4, 2025 @7:30pm	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 7:30 am Registration	City Club Marietta 510 Powder Springs Street, SE 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. Call 770-434-4567 ext 3719 to learn more about how you can get involved and give back!

Visit our alumni website at www.ridgeviewalumni.com to learn more.



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

Archive copies of The View are available in digital format on the Ridgeview Alumni website (www.ridgeviewalumni.com) and the Ridgeview Institute website (www.ridgeviewinstitute.com).

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