

Volume 1, Issue 13

Summer, 2010



ARMS ACRES

Alumni Newsletter



First Annual Putnam County Sobriety Walk

Recovery Happens! Recovery Works!

Please join us in proudly celebrating
sobriety & recovery & increasing awareness.
An extraordinary event you won't want to miss!!

September 19, 2010

Tentative Start Time 10:30 AM

Arms Acres, Carmel NY

RAIN OR SHINE

(Check our website for final details www.armsacres.com)

Healthy Choices...Healthy Communities

Family friendly day for all!

Come walk the walk and talk the talk!



Please Register by 9/5 (Needed for Planning)

Susan Attebery 845-704-6198

SAVE THE DATE

Arms Acres

Alumni Gratitude Gathering

*Come Celebrate Your Sobriety Where
Your Recovery Journey Began At Our*

"THANKSGIVING SOBER FEST"

November 21, 2010

11:00—4:30

(Check www.armsacres.com for further details)

Please RSVP by 11/7

Susan Attebery 845-704-6198

sattebery@libertymgmt.com



ALUMNI STORIES OF SUCCESS

I left Arms Acres about 3 years ago on 4/10/07. I was certain, in my own mind, anyway that I'd lose my job of 18 years and never recover my career. I had probation and the loss of my license to contend with as well. I committed to my sobriety and threw myself into my work anyway. I did everything I was required to do by my sentence. Last summer I got my license back. This past fall I received a glowing appraisal from a manager who told me I was "back" to being the person he knew 5 years ago. Today we held our annual "kickoff" meeting at work, where we review what we have done in the past year and what we need to do in the coming year. At the end of this meeting it is traditional that someone gets an award for who contributed the most and made the most changes to our organization. My heart nearly stopped beating when I learned that I had won it this year. I can't guarantee exactly this kind of success for anyone, but I can tell you that none of this would have happened if I kept drinking. Paul A...Always an A-Wing Brother

I was blessed with the opportunity to begin my quest for recovery at Arms Acres. My stay there was from 2/3/09 until 3/5/09. I then went to St. Christopher's for another 2 months. I have since managed to maintain my clean time by attending NA/AA meetings in Queens where I now live and have become employable, responsible and have slowly regained the love and trust of my family. I have also been blessed with the opportunity to rebuild the relationship with my daughter who today turned 17. It hasn't been easy, but with the help of my support network and the message I was able to get at Arms Acres, I have been blessed. On 2/3/10 I celebrated my first year of living a clean and sober life. When I thought that there was no hope and when I didn't think I could stop. From my stay at your facility and the H&I presentations, I was able to get this life saving message of recovery. I plan on returning to Arms Acres as soon as possible to give back what was so freely given to me. My extended gratitude to the staff and especially my case manager, Patrick, and the night staff, Chris, for their love and dedication. I would like to be a part of the alumni and would like to have this letter published in the next newsletter so that the next person that doesn't think that there is hope on staying clean could read this and see that we do recover from a hopeless state of mind. With all my appreciation and thanks. Kenneth C.

I have been fortunate to have "held on to my date" for sobriety. I am sober since 7/12/09. I learned a lot while I was in-patient at Arms Acres. But I must say with all honesty, the outpatient program was what really solidified it for me. My counselor was Barbara Mazur. I was going to the 5 day a week outpatient program (9-12 daily). Besides educating me on addiction and relapse prevention, Barbara made me open up and really work my program. I have never been so honest in my life. I credit her for really encouraging me to hang in there, work a good honest program and persevere. I have a group and a sponsor in AA. I am working the steps. I have had the opportunity to speak a few times at outgoings with my group. I take commitments as well. ARMS ACRES is where my journey towards living a sober life began. I am so grateful and now have so much hope for my future. Susan R.S.

A Little History From a Former Staff Member

In the beginning the community did not want us in Carmel. Mr. Dill, a neighbor to our property and local business man (he owned Dill's Best) went out of his way to support us and the building of Arms Acres on Seminary Hill Rd. When he saw the plans for our facility he was amazed. He went to the community and helped to turn the tide against us to support us. Mrs. Arms wanted a special place for the CD patients and their families. Upon completion it was dubbed a "Pristine Country Club Setting" by the local news. We were an honored staff to be trusted by many a famous movie stars, CEO's, etc. In just a few months we were the #2 top treatment center in the World! We were very honored when a team of MD's came all the way from Russia to learn about our treatment programs and our staff training's. At that time the Russians only worked from a medical model. They left very impressed. We gave them our treatment plans and continuing care plans. Mrs. Arms had her own plans on how the building was designed. As in all the special details. We then were only a 26 bed facility. The huge Family/Music/Library with the lovely fireplace and piano was to be enjoyed by all. That piano was a gift from John Wallace. The glass tower over the staircase was designed not only to let the sunlight in, but to have our initials AA forever over the building.....and it also represented Alcoholics Anonymous. Mrs. Arms believed in the power of AA after a 28 day treatment. She never went without her pearls and her cigar even if it was not lit. She was and always will be special to me and remains in a special place in my heart. Mary Anne James Stas

"A Nice Girl Like Me"....Published in the March 2010 Grapevine By Angela M....Arms Acres Alumni, July 2000

"What's a nice girl like me doing in a place like this?" That's what I kept asking myself as I sat in detox in Carmel, NY wearing a plastic wristband, full of fear, surrounded by people that had suffered much worse consequences than me. "How did I end up here? How am I going to live without drinking?" One year before, my father had hung himself in the staircase of the home he shared with me and my mother. I felt responsible – I had suspected he might do this during the past 2 years of severe depression, but he seemed to be getting better, and I didn't think he'd dare to. The image of his body was burned in my brain as I imagined the details of his death. I was in shock, but I knew now more than ever that I wanted to live life to the fullest. The problem was, I had no idea how to do that. All I wanted to do was drink, and taking action on any dreams or goals was way too hard. Through a series of events I found a therapist, she would surely know what to do. Early in my sessions she suggested that I not drink because I was obviously depressed and alcohol is a depressant. At that time I was a seething, silent mess of misery. I didn't say much, but I made it very clear that stopping drinking was not an option. She dropped it, and then carefully occasionally brought up AA. How dare she suggest I was an alcoholic! If you were me you would drink too. Alcohol was the only thing that gave me any comfort. Besides, there was no way I had a drinking problem – I had a job, a car, good friends, my family loved me. Everything looked good (on the outside) just like it was supposed to. My drinking had only started when I went away to college nine years earlier. After growing up a "good girl" to avoid the temper of my dad, I finally felt free to do and be whatever I wanted. I was introduced to alcohol and it quickly became my social lubricant. I no longer felt less than everyone else; I felt prettier, smarter, funnier. I relaxed for what felt like the first time ever. I did well in school and had a lot of fun, always rationalizing the blackouts and regretful behavior because I hung out with people who drank like me. Moving back into my parents house after school was difficult. They wanted to know where I was going and when I'd be home. But I now had a degree, got a good job, a car and a boyfriend – I had arrived. Over the six years at this job there were keg parties at the office and happy hour all week. I would regularly drunk home driving at the end of the night. But I never had any consequences; miraculously never got pulled over or hit anything. After a while, I started drinking at home because it was safer and cheaper. Deep down I knew my drunk driving would eventually get me in trouble. Meanwhile, Dad had been struck with his depression, and, after determining nothing I did would help him, I would hide in my room and drink myself to sleep. When he committed suicide, life as I knew it was over. Alcohol was my only relief as I moved my numb body to and from work and to the liquor store. For some reason during this year, I kept showing up at therapy. My therapist eventually convinced me to check out AA. She introduced me to a woman who showed me around for a couple of weeks. People were really nice, and surprisingly clean. But I compared my story with theirs, decided I wasn't alcoholic, and stopped going to meetings. After a white-knuckle dry spell (to prove I wasn't alcoholic) I drank again, baffled and angry that I couldn't control it. The therapist eventually suggested I go to rehab since I hated my job, my life, myself and had nothing to lose. I told her we'd talk about it later. After one last attempt at controlled drinking I became convinced that I needed help. She had prepared a plan to get me into rehab in hopes that I would one day have my moment of clarity. She took care of the details; all I did was show up. I believe now that she saved my life. Every day I cried, grieving my best friend alcohol, terrified of living without it. After a few days in detox, I got a different colored wristband and was moved to the rehab section, sharing the space with 25 other women. I sat in group hearing stories from the other patients about being shot at, going to jail, losing their jobs, families, homes, everything. I hadn't done any of that. (Now I know those are "yets".) But I started hearing these people talk about the feelings and thoughts that I had been experiencing: wanting to stop drinking but not being able to once I started, a constant sense of impending doom, a deep loneliness that could never be satisfied, a desperation to change but never succeeding. For the first time in my life I felt understood, like I belonged.

Several people said they had been in rehab before, some four or more times. I made a decision that I was not going to rehab more than once. The women were loud and dramatic, constantly arguing over something. I decided I was going to do this rehab thing right. My geek instinct kicked into gear: I sat in the front row, taking notes during lectures, attentively listening for the information that was going to keep me from coming back to this place. I saw God in the Steps and decided I was screwed. I hated God and He wasn't too fond of me. After all, look where I was! It was suggested I make a "help wanted" ad for my Higher Power, listing all of the characteristics I was seeking in a God. I had grown up with a punishing God, and this was the beginning of my willingness to believe that God cares about me. One of the counselors was very serene and loving. She had talked about how there were only two emotions, fear and love. Everything else comes from one of these. If I'm angry, I'm in fear; if I'm generous or kind, I'm coming from love. It made so much sense. At her suggestion I started the habit of reading a daily meditation book every morning when I woke up. Without my knowing it, my conscious contact had begun. During that last week at rehab, there was an alumni day, during which former patients came back and shared their experience, strength and hope of life after rehab. I found a mustard seed of hope that maybe I would be able to live sober, that I didn't have to drink, that there might be another way to live. Somewhere in the blur of these weeks was "Family Day" when my mother came and I believe we got honest with each other for the first time ever. I had no idea before then how much I had hurt her. During one of the lectures a man was asked if he would go to a halfway house after leaving there. The patient answered with an adamant "no", and the lecturer said he wouldn't stay sober. I had no idea what a halfway house was, but I got the message that I needed to go to any lengths to stay sober. So when the time came for me to leave it was suggested I go to outpatient. I didn't think it was necessary, I had just spent 3 weeks in rehab, I had plenty of information which would keep me sober. But I went anyway, what did I have to lose? When the time came for me to leave it was suggested I go to a meeting the day I got home, raise my hand to say I was new, get a sponsor, get a home group. I did all of it. I remember that day so clearly. I was so grateful to drive in my car, to watch the sunset, and to be free—not be told where to go or what to do. Avoiding going back to rehab was one of the reasons I didn't drink in the beginning. Another one was I had told too many people that I had stopped drinking, so my ego was useful because I didn't want to look bad by drinking again! I went back to work and they let me go. Before I'd gone to rehab, I hadn't been doing much other than showing up. Working there was also a huge trigger, so I'd been ready to quit. I was thrilled. Now all I had to do was go to meetings every day. And outpatient treatment definitely benefitted my early sobriety. It gave me structure, somewhere to be, counselors who started teaching me words to describe my feelings besides "fine" and "good" or "bad". For me, it was a gift to go to rehab, to be removed from everyday life and focus on being sober, beginning to learn about the disease of alcoholism. I am so grateful for the foundation of my recovery; I feel as though I was carried through early sobriety. I got hooked up with some amazing women who loved the Big Book. Staying sober requires me to take so many actions I don't feel like taking, but when I do the right thing I get the desired result. Just for today I don't want to find out what a lower bottom looks like for me. One of my favorite forms of service is to bring a meeting to an institution and get a dose of gratitude. I get to leave there to go home in my car, to my bed, and wake up the next morning without regret and always with some hope.

ALUMNI SPRING GATHERING 2010

We had another great Alumni Gathering in June. Thanks to all who came out to participate. Continue to spread the word. It's working! You don't want to miss the Sobriety Walk & the Thanksgiving Sober Fest. I anticipate that both events are going to be incredible days filled with lots of hope and strength. Come celebrate your sobriety with us at Arms. Email me at sattebery@libertymgt.com if you want to receive updates on the alumni events. Keep sending me your contributions for future newsletters. Thank you for always keeping in touch and staying connected with Arms Acres. I look forward to seeing all of you soon. Susan



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Return Service Requested
