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# The Beacon



A quarterly publication from Chestnut Health Systems Alumni Services 1st Quarter 2009

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming events sponsored by Alumni Services

### Sunday, February 22, Chick Flick Night

Monicals Pizza, 1219 S. Main Normal IL. at 5pm  
University Theater, (down the street) at 7pm  
Please RSVP by Feb. 16 (Women Only)

### Sunday, March 29, Guy's Night Out

Fiesta Ranchero, 2103 N. Veterans Parkway, Bloomington, IL. at 5pm  
Parkway Theater, (next door) at 7pm  
Please RSVP by Feb. 16 (Men Only)

### Saturday Night Live, April 25

7pm Potluck  
8pm Speaker: Pete K.  
Martin Luther King Dr. Conference Center (Downstairs)  
**DESSERT CONTEST** (bring your best home made dessert & win a prize)  
\*open to bring a guest or spouse



## A Letter to Our Readers

Dear Readers,

Welcome to 2009 first quarter edition of *The Beacon*. For those of you who I have not had a chance to meet yet, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Amy Kennedy. I am the new Alumni & Volunteer Coordinator here at Chestnut. The position was created to serve alumni, those in recovery and volunteers in the community. As someone who is in recovery, and a Alumni of Chestnut myself, this position is very exciting for me! On a personal level, staying involved and being of service is a key to my recovery.

Alumni Services has planned a variety of events for 2009. These events are open to ANYONE over the age of 18 who is in recovery. Some of the events will be open to bringing a guest or spouse, and some of these events will include activities for kids as well. Each newsletter will include a calendar of Illinois recovery events for the next 3 months

I welcome any ideas or suggestions you have for Alumni Services. My office is located in the Martin Luther King Building, room 109. Please stop in and say hello or feel free to contact me at 820-3819 or e-mail me at [alumni@chestnut.org](mailto:alumni@chestnut.org).

Sincerely,

Amy Kennedy  
Alumni & Volunteer Coordinator

## WE'RE ON THE WEB!

Alumni Services is on the web. A page just for alumni has been added to Chestnut's website. This page includes a calendar of events, volunteer opportunities, and highlights from past alumni events. Look for the following to appear in the future newsletters and information on alumni support groups.

You can find us at [www.chestnut.org/alumni](http://www.chestnut.org/alumni).

## A Wonderful Journey!

Each issue of *The Beacon* will feature a testament of hope from the local recovery community.

For awhile, I did not believe that I was an alcoholic. I had a stereotype about alcoholics – older gentleman, usually homeless with horrible criminal records. Well, a lot of alcoholics have criminal records. But not all alcoholics are older men. I have learned since being in recovery that alcoholics come in a variety of forms. The illness of addiction does not discriminate against age, gender, or ethnicity.

Because of my misconceptions, when I first came to A.A. (and then to treatment), I was convinced that I was different than other "drunks". I was surprised, however, to meet others that were close in age.

Recovering from alcoholism with other young alcoholics and addicts helped me to accept my own illness. I no longer had to feel different. And I could actually have a social life.

One of my most dreaded fears, when deciding to stop drinking, was that I would suffer from a boring life. I did not want to trade in my crazy, unpredictable life for one filled with quiet, lonely, and uneventful nights. I had already disconnected myself from friends that I used to drink with. That was one of the most difficult challenges in my sobriety, yet one of the most necessary. To stay sober, I had to take care of myself – which meant that I could not be around constant temptations. Instead, I needed to surround myself by others that were supportive and also choosing a healthy, quality lifestyle.

I was thrilled, therefore, about meeting people in recovery that were young and full of energy. We formed a committee, ISCYPAA (Illinois State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous). We hosted local events that included dances and picnics. Not everyone on the committee stayed sober, but I developed some amazing friendships along the way. I learned to dance sober. And I learned to laugh sober.

As a newcomer, I used to hate when others would say to me, "Age does not matter in recovery." Then I would wonder, "So why are you pointing out my age if it is not relevant anyway?"

I used to also get frustrated when someone older in a meeting would say, "Oh, I wish that I had gotten sober at your age. You are so lucky." I always wanted to sarcastically respond, "Yeah, I am so glad that my life spiraled downward so quickly. Seems like a real blessing, huh?"

Now I understand what those "older" people meant. When we recover young, we have the opportunity to live more years sober. We do not have to waste so much time drinking in the dark.

Getting sober young does not mean that our drinking bottom is any higher. It just means that we did not dwell at our bottom for quite as long.

Being four years sober, I actually now agree with those "older" people that I once resented. We are truly lucky to be young alcoholics in recovery.

-Morgan F. Bloomington, IL

Would you like to share thoughts about your recovery with us?  
If so, please send an e-mail to [alumni@chestnut.org](mailto:alumni@chestnut.org).  
Anonymity is guaranteed.

## Contributed Article

By: Neal Hubbard BA, CRADC, ATE  
Youth Residential Program Coordinator

### The Sober Sabotage

In residential treatment, sobriety is sabotaged in many ways. As discharge dates approach, we find that our clients tend to have more behavioral issues as they become more and more fearful about returning to their home environments and more intensely focused on "how many days they have left" instead of focusing on one day at a time.

This is a normal occurrence in the process of completing treatment and returning home, however it can be very destructive to early sobriety. We encourage our clients to talk to their sponsors, counselors and peers about their true feelings of fear and concern about returning home. Daily inventory is required for the three to seven days preceding a discharge from treatment and this helps our clients develop the skills necessary to monitor their feelings between meetings and outpatient continuing care meetings.

Often our clients only learn how many obstacles they will encounter after they leave our building. Hopefully, they have been prepared to recognize their signs of slipping, ways of getting back on track and that they are plugged in to a recovering community with a sponsor and group of supportive people.

Personally, I remember being in residential treatment at CHS and going home for a day pass (only 6 hours!) on the weekend to attend an important family event. I was in a safe environment the entire time, but felt like I had the Scarlet A for "Addict" branded on my forehead everywhere I went. I did not come in contact with anyone using or even talking about it. I was still on edge the entire time and came back to treatment early.

When I did return and told my primary therapist how uncomfortable I was "out there" and how safe and relieved I was when I got back to the building, he said, "Well, looks like its time for you to go... you're too comfortable here!" I transferred to day treatment the next day. I learned quickly that being uncomfortable often results in growth and advancement of your recovery no matter how scary it can feel.

## MEDITATION CORNER

*"What a man thinks of himself, that is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate."*

Henry David Thoreau

Let us think of ourselves as made of dust, and allow us to be as proud of it as if it were true. For dust is everywhere. We see it in solemn rooms streaked by sun, dancing like fine angels in a cathedral light. It is the stuff of life. And it drifts down on fancy tables where the richest people eat. It cannot be denied a place. And it returns time and time again like the seasons. It is one of the wonders of the world. And when no one sees or cares, it finds a secret corner in which to keep a solitary peace. It intends no harm. We find it at home on old leather books, the ones that preserve our noblest thoughts. And from where we stand, it seems that even the stars are made of it.

When we feel low, unworthy, or useless, let's remember that these feelings are only a small but important part of us, that even great things are made of small parts and that we, as whole beings, are always greater than the sum of these parts.  
*Today's Gift. Copyright 1985, 1991, reprinted with Permission from the Hazelden Foundation.*



**The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)  
7th Annual Problem Gambling Awareness Week  
March 1-7, 2009.**

The goal of this campaign is to educate the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and raise awareness about the help that is available both locally and nationally. The NCPG is the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families. NCPG research finds that 2%-3% of the US population will have a gambling problem in any given year. That's 6 million to 9 million Americans yet only a small fraction seeks out services, such as treatment and self-help recovery programs.

#### Help is Available:

Toll-free, 24 hour, confidential help lines:  
1-800-GAMBLER or 1-800-522-4700

[www.GamblersAnonymous.org](http://www.GamblersAnonymous.org)

Chestnut's Counseling & Family Services:  
(309) 820-3500 (Bloomington-Normal area) or (618) 877-4420 (Granite City area)

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A CHESTNUT VOLUNTEER?

Chestnut has many volunteer opportunities available. Being of Service is an important part of recovery and what better way to give back than by volunteering for Chestnut? We have opportunities available in the following areas:

- Adolescent Chemical Dependency Treatment Program
- Adult Chemical Dependency Treatment Program
- Management Information Services Department
- Marketing & Communications Department
- Special Events
- Health & Community Fairs
- Facilities & Maintenance Department
- Clerical & Support Services

More information, and a volunteer application can be found on our website: [www.chestnut.org/volunteers](http://www.chestnut.org/volunteers). You can also contact Amy Kennedy at (309) 827-6026.



**The Alumni Department wants to hear from you.  
Call or send us an email to keep in touch and let us know how you are doing!  
[alumni@chestnut.org](mailto:alumni@chestnut.org)**



### Random Acts of Kindness Week February 9-15

Dedicated to celebrating the little things we do for others.  
[www.actsofkindness.org](http://www.actsofkindness.org)

#### What are your Random Acts of Kindness?

Listen to a friend with patience and love (regardless of your busyness).  
-Nancy D.

Saying, "I'd be honored to help" even if I'm thinking I'd rather not. I am always glad I did.  
-Anonymous

Smile, tell someone they are worth it. Listen!!!  
-Leslie S.

I clean my sister's office before she comes home for the weekend to see clients. Don't want her to know though.  
-Anonymous

Do secret acts of service that I don't tell anyone about.  
-Amy K.

Offer to help someone with their groceries at the market...even though they will probably be suspicious.  
-Jeff C.

Let the person behind me that is in a hurry go ahead of me in line.  
-Anonymous



Tuesday Nights 6-9:30pm - 1st Assembly of God  
800 E. Vernon Ave. Normal, IL.

Friday Nights 6-9:30pm - Heartland Community Church  
1811 N. Linden St. Normal, IL

Contact: (309) 454-2402 for more information.

## Illinois Recovery Calendar of Events

### February

- ISCPAA (Illinois State Conference of Young People in AA) Feb. 13, 14, & 15  
Hosted by Decatur IL. AA at Decatur Hotel & Conference Center  
Contact: Pam B. (217) 963-2557 or Rod K. (217) 521-4139
- Illinois Area CA Unity Convention Feb. 27, 28, & March 1  
Located at the Westin Chicago North Shore, 600 Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling IL.  
Contact: Charlene B. (708) 870-6154 or Robert H. (847) 757-7188  
Newcomer Scholarships available.
- Founders Day Serenity Circle Leroy IL. Feb. 19  
Pot Luck with 8pm Speaker: to follow  
United Presbyterian Church 101 E. Pine St. Leroy IL.
- Oakland Ave. Noontime Group Bloomington, IL Saturday Feb. 14  
Noon Speaker: Elizabeth C. St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- AA District 10 Annual Winter Event Feb.21 8:30am-4:30pm  
Carpenters Local Union No. 63, 2002 Fox Creek Road, Bloomington, IL  
Speakers: Don B. & James L. and Pot Luck at Noon Registration \$12.00
- NA Keep it Simple Group 2nd Annual Valentines Dance Feb. 13  
6pm-Midnight Speaker Roxanne G. at 8pm & Pot Luck.  
Community United Church of Christ, 805 S. 6th St. Champaign, IL.
- AA Vision for you Group Feb 27 (last Friday of every month)  
Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: Joe B. St. Mary's Church Bloomington,

### March

- Oakland Ave. Noontime Group Bloomington, IL Saturday March 14  
Noon Speaker: TBA St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- AA Vision for you Group March 27 (last Friday of every month)  
Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: TBA St. Mary's Church Bloomington, IL

### April

- Oakland Ave. Noontime Group Bloomington, IL Saturday April 11  
Noon Speaker: TBA St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- AA Vision for you Group April 24 (last Friday of every month)  
Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: TBA St. Mary's Church Bloomington, IL
- 2009 Southern IL Area 21 AA Spring Conference April 3, 4, & 5  
I-Hotel & Conference Center, 1900 S. First St. Champaign, IL  
Registration \$21 Registration & Banquet \$40  
Speakers, Alcahon, Banquet, Dance, Fellowship & More!  
Contact: (217) 384-7121 or (217) 377-5207; email: [sia2009sc@yahoo.com](mailto:sia2009sc@yahoo.com)
- BNAA 47th Annual Round Up April 17, 18, & 19  
Located at Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites 3202 E. Empire St.  
Contact: (309)828-7092 or [2009bnaaroundup@gmail.com](mailto:2009bnaaroundup@gmail.com)
- Saturday Night Live, April 25th  
Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: Pete K. Chestnut Health Systems  
Raffle & Dessert Contest-Bring a homemade dessert to share.

If you know of an upcoming recovery event and would like to have it posted, please send information to: [alumni@chestnut.org](mailto:alumni@chestnut.org)