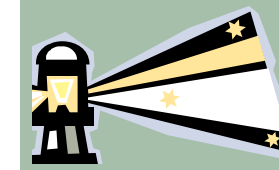


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The Beacon

A publication from Chestnut's Alumni Services



Chestnut Health Systems

May/June 2008

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A Wonderful Journey!

Each issue of The Beacon will feature a testament of hope from an alumni of Chestnut.

This issue's testament comes from Danny B. who has been sober for 6 years.

"In Chestnut, I learned a lot about coping styles and triggers, such as old people, places and things. The introduction to NA meetings where I immediately felt I could fit in was helpful. I accepted the fact that I had to change everything about the way I thought, acted and lived. I was re-opened to thoughts about God, love and forgiveness. In short, it was the first step into a new life.

"Advice I would give to those early in recovery is remember, the only thing you have to do perfect in the program is just don't use. Everything else will work itself out in time. Meeting makers make it.

"I stay sober by going to lots of meetings, working with sponsees and practicing the principles of this program in ALL my affairs. I also take what I learn in meetings and using it on the streets in everyday living. I try to be kind to someone every day and that makes me feel good."

RECAP OF ALUMNI EVENTS

Pizza & Movie Night

On Friday, March 7, 12 people enjoyed pizza at Monical's and then saw the movie *Vantage Point*. Look for our next Pizza & Movie Night, coming very soon on Saturday, May 3.

Billiards Night

About 30 alumni and people from the recovery community participated in our Billiards Night at the ISU Bowling & Billiards Center.

Potluck in Lincoln

On Friday, April 25, the Lincoln recovery community hosted a western-style potluck at their meeting hall. Everyone who attended enjoyed great food and fellowship.

Bring Some Spring to Chestnut

Thanks to the alumni, clients and their families who helped plant flowers in 2 large urns in the front entrance of our adult building and in back for the clients to enjoy.



Attendees enjoyed the western theme at the Lincoln potluck.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Upcoming events sponsored by Alumni Services

Saturday, May 3, 5:30 PM—Todino's Pizza & The Palace Cinemas

Pizza & Movie Night

- Meet at Todino's Pizza, 4109 E. Oakland Ave., Bloomington. Dinner is on your own.
- Movie will then follow. Chestnut will pay for ticket for you and 1 guest. (Must reserve in advance.)

Friday, May 9, 7 PM—Chestnut (Adolescent Building)

Speaker's Panel

- Meet at Chestnut's Conference Center (lower level of 1003 Martin Luther King Drive).
- Speakers in recovery will talk about building and maintaining a support system.
- Refreshments will be provided.

Saturday, May 17, 7 PM—Grady's Family Fun Park

Mini Golf

- Meet at Grady's Family Fun Park, 1501 Morrissey Drive, Bloomington for a round of miniature golf.

Friday, June 13, 5:30 PM—Peoria Chiefs Baseball Game

Baseball Game

- Take a road trip to O'Brien Field in Peoria to watch the Chiefs play.
- Discounted tickets will be available at \$8/person and must be reserved from Chestnut by June 12.

Sunday, June 22—Fairview Park

Picnic

- Meet at the shelter at Fairview Park on North Main Street in Normal.
- Chestnut will provide the hot dogs, hamburgers and soda. Please bring a side dish to pass.
 - *Please note that the above events are all subject to change.*
- *A flyer for each event, finalizing event details will be distributed 2 weeks prior to each event.*

Chestnut Health Systems
1003 Martin Luther King Drive
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(309) 827-6026
www.chestnut.org/alumni

Locations: Bloomington-Normal, Chicago Area, Joliet, Decatur, Granite City, Maryville, Belleville

The Beacon informs readers of news, events and people that can strengthen recovery. The mission of Alumni Services is to provide alumni with the support and guidance needed to ensure a successful recovery.

If your address needs to be updated or removed from the mailing list, please call (309) 827-6026 x3377 or email alumni@chestnut.org.

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

Your Economic Stimulus Refund: Proceed With Caution

By Morgan Gee, Certified Credit Counselor

As we await with anticipation of our Economic Stimulus Refund, I propose we consider the 5 all-important "W's" of the plan.

What? It is an economic stimulus payment that more than 130 million households will receive. The payments will be between \$300-\$600 for individuals and \$600-\$1200 for those who have filed a joint return. Individuals with children will receive an additional \$300 (pets do not count, believe me, I checked). It will not have an effect when you file your 2008 return.

Why? The Economic Stimulus Refund (ESR) is the government's answer to a stronger economy; a "superman" of sorts who will swoop down over our houses and deliver a one-time windfall of money, at which time we are all to go and spend till our hearts are content.

Who? In order to receive your ESR there are a few qualifications. **First, you must have filed a 2007 income tax return and you must have a valid social security number.** There are also income guidelines; individuals who's income exceeded \$75,000 will receive a partial payment and couples with incomes over \$150,000 will receive a partial payment.

When? If you have your income tax refund directly deposited into your account you will be one of the first ones to receive your money. The timeline of the deposits was decided by the last two digits of the main filer's social security number. Payments will be transmitted May 2nd, 9th, and 16th. If you typically receive a paper check, payments will be mailed beginning May 16th and continue through July 11th.

Since the announcement of the ESR there have been reports of "scammers" calling individuals trying to get their personal information such as social security numbers and bank account information. No one from the IRS will be calling or emailing you about the stimulus refund; should you receive such a phone call or email so not give out any personal information.

Where? This is the ten thousand dollar question. Or, in our case the six hundred to twelve hundred dollar question. We know what the government *wants* us to do with our stimulus money; buy new electronic gadgets, fill up our gas tanks and go out for dinners. However many financial experts are advising, and we at Chestnut Credit Counseling agree with them, that there may be other areas where the money will do you the most good.

Save it. At least save some of it. Now is as good a time as any to have some type of an emergency fund, nest egg, however you want to categorize it. Most individuals breathe a sigh of relief knowing that they have an extra mortgage payment or car payment set aside. If you do not have one already, consider starting a savings account. This way you can earn some interest on your money and, in some cases, help improve your credit. It's better than keeping your money in the coffee can in the backyard.

Put it towards your existing debt. This would be an excellent time to make an extra dent in your credit card debt or maybe payoff one of your accounts. You may consider the fact that we are getting free money from the government, why not put the free money towards expensive debt?

Save it for your "Periodic Expenses". You may want to consider holding onto your money for some expense that does not come up regularly. Think back. Was there a particular expense that you found yourself not prepared for and it set you back financially? Perhaps it was school registration and various expenses for your children, your quarterly insurance payment, real estate taxes, or your license plate sticker. Being financially prepared for these happenings in advance will help you stick to your current budget. If the idea of saving for these individual categories seems a bit overwhelming, consider opening up separate savings accounts at your local bank or credit union. Most financial institutions will offer multi-use accounts which allows people to save for vacations, taxes, etc.

Ask the Expert— Credit Counseling

David Hill
Credit Counseling Coordinator



What help can I get if I am in debt?

Chestnut Health Systems has a division called Chestnut Credit Counseling Service (CCCS). It is a non-profit education and debt management program. They are affiliated with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC), who acts as a liaison between the client and the credit granting community. CCCS's focus is to help clients regain financial control by developing a budget and reorganizing their debts.

How long does it take to get out of debt?

This length can vary greatly from situation to situation. CCCS makes every attempt to get clients out of debt within five years. This five years applies to unsecured debts such as credit cards, not such things as mortgages.

What steps should I take to prevent getting into debt?

- Develop a written spending plan/budget and actively take steps to follow your plan.
- Make sure your plan includes preparing for periodic expenses and unexpected expenses, in addition to monthly expenses.

How do I contact CCCS?

Credit counselors are available for consultation. The initial appointment is free and there is a nominal fee after that. Below are the contact numbers.

Central Illinois Area - 800-615-3022
(Bloomington/Normal, Peoria, Decatur)

Northern Illinois Area - 888-838-5202
(Joliet, Wheaton, Des Plaines, Chicago, Oak Lawn, Kankakee, Crete, Frankfort, Morris)

Southern Illinois Area - 888-839-5200
(Granite City, Maryville, Bellville)

We Want YOU!

Get involved by serving on the Alumni Activities Planning Committee

Would you like to get involved planning social events, speaker's panels and workshops for our alumni program? If so, we would love to have you serve on the Activities Planning Committee that is currently being formed. The committee will be made up of alumni from Chestnut and people in recovery. Our first meeting will be in early June. Please contact Diana Myers if you are interested in getting involved.

We Need Your E-mail

All future editions of the alumni newsletter will be distributed in an electronic format (e-mail). **If you have an email address, please send it to alumni@chestnut.org so that we can add you to the mailing list.** If you do not have e-mail but would still like to receive this newsletter in the mail, you must contact us at (309) 827-6026 x3377 to let us know.

Opportunities for Service

Chestnut has many volunteer opportunities. Service work is an important part of recovery. By volunteering for Chestnut, you are enriching yourself as well as the lives of others who are in recovery.

At the present time, we are looking for volunteers for the following positions:

Share Your Skills or Talents with Chestnut

- We are looking for volunteers to help facilitate recreational activities on our adult and adolescent units on the weekends. Do you have a skill or talent in this area that you would like to share with our clients? Whether it's playing a musical instrument, any type of art or craft, cooking or any type of physical activity or sport, the clients would be eager to learn.

Volunteer Transporter

- Transport clients to and from church, medical or legal appointments, meetings or other appointments or activities.

Annual Garden Walk

- Chestnut and the David Davis Mansion are getting ready for the 12th annual Glorious Garden Festival Walk. The event will take place June 20 and 21 and is a fundraiser for Chestnut and the David Davis Mansion Foundation. We are looking for volunteers to help both days of the event.

Check out more at: www.chestnut.org/volunteers

I'm Bored!

Are you bored, looking for something to do that is affordable and fun? Check out these fun alcohol-free activities in the Bloomington-Normal community:

Bloomington Parks & Recreation Department

FREE programs are abundant this summer! Below are just a few :

- **Family Fitness Day** - Saturday, May 17, 10 AM-3 PM at White Oak Park
- **"Movies in the Park"** - June 11 - July 24 at 9 PM on Wednesdays at Rollingbrook Park and Thursdays at Clearwater Park
- **"Music Under the Stars"** - Concerts every Tuesday from 7:30-9 PM at the Miller Park Bandstand, June 17-July 29

Normal Parks & Recreation Department

FREE concerts and movie nights at the Normal Amphitheater, located next to the Parks & Recreation Office, 611 S. Linden Street (Times vary, please contact Parks & Rec. office for more details at (309) 454-9540.)

- **May & June schedules are as follows:** May 16-movie: *ET*; May 18-concert: *Hip Pocket*, June 8-concert: *Kevin Hart and the Vibe Tribe*; June 10-movie: *Toy Story*; June 12-concert: *Adam Larson Quartet*

Farmer's Markets

Farmer's Markets do not charge people to get in, so you can look for free. Produce, arts, crafts and baked goods are available for purchase.

- **Downtown Bloomington** - Every Saturday morning 6:45-11 AM on the square downtown, starting May 17
- **Uptown Normal** - Every Tuesday evening from 4:30-6:30 PM, June-September in uptown Normal

