

Seasons of Serenity

Autumn 2011



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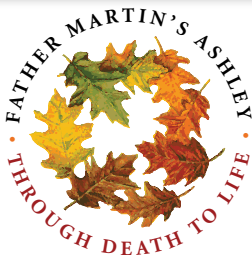
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Supporting the Recovery Journey

By Alex Denstman, Director of Alumni Services

When I first got sober at the age of 20,
I thought my life was over.

However, I also realized in my heart of hearts
that if I DIDN'T get sober, my life literally
would be over.

It was quite a paradox.

Looking back, after nearly 10 years of healing
physically, emotionally and spiritually, it's
amazing that I was able to take that first step
toward the amazing gifts of recovery that I
enjoy today. I could not have made it to this
point alone, and that's exactly the subject of
this article.

The role of the Father Martin's Ashley alumni
services department is to provide alumni and
their families access to recovery-supporting
events, activities, materials and contacts. We've
added new people, events and services in the
last few months, so I'd like to use this space to
make you aware of how we can support folks
in recovery while they are here in treatment at
Ashley and for a lifetime. We work under the
premise of "we can do together what few of us
can do alone."

Either Kevin Hourigan, alumni services
coordinator, or I meet with every single patient
prior to their discharge from Ashley. The goal
of that meeting is to ensure their awareness
of the support available through the alumni
organization, connect them with a Grad-to-
grad contact in the geographic region where



they'll be living following discharge, and
provide information about 12 Step and alumni
chapter meetings in their area.

In addition to meeting with patients while they
are here on campus, we run a robust calendar
of alumni events and activities during the year.
Here's a partial list:

- 1. Young Adult Alumni Chapter**—We moderate an advisory group of young adult alumni who help us with ideas to engage our young adult population both in treatment and beyond.
- 2. Annual Reunion**—We just held this year's reunion and welcomed over 1200 people back to the campus for fun, food and fellowship.
- 3. Alumni Chapters and Workshop Events** from New England to Florida.
- 4. Recovery Enrichment Days (RED)**—recovery education and support workshops led by addiction experts held on the Ashley campus every month.
- 5. Family Recovery Enrichment Days (FRED)**—family recovery, education and support workshops led by clinical professionals.

Continued on next page

Our sole purpose is to heal



6. Seasons of Recovery Workshops—

We bring addiction topics for professionals and alumni to areas around the country where we have a large concentration of alumni and referring professionals.

7. Recovery Support and Follow Up—

All patients receive a call from either Kevin or me in the first month following their discharge from Ashley—regardless of where they go for continuing care. No one needs to go it alone; we are here to provide support.

8. Annual Alumni Golf Outing—If you haven't experienced this before, you don't know what you're missing! A casual day of golf, fun and prizes that's open to alumni, family and friends.

9. And, last but not least, we're organizing what we hope will be the first of many **Annual FMA Alumni Ski Trips** this coming January.

We are always looking for new ways to provide recovery support and education. In fact, I belong to the Treatment Providers Alumni Professionals Association—a consortium of Alumni services professionals from many treatment centers. Our association's goal is to continually improve our support for our alumni and their families while learning best practices and new ideas from one another. If you have an idea or you'd like to get involved as a volunteer or to make a donation to help support our efforts, please send me an email at: adenstman@fmashley.com. We have over 34,000 alumni and growing! It takes a village to conquer addiction and as Father Mark says: "It's all about love and service, baby!" Get involved, show up, call, email, participate. You may help someone who is having a tough day, or the person that you help the most may be you! We're here and we need you, so get involved!

And, if you are a mental health services professional reading this, please encourage your patients to get involved in our activities—whether they are Father Martin's Ashley alumni, or not. Our programs are open to all in recovery, or struggling, and their friends and family. And, you are welcome to visit or audit any of our alumni activities.

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Recovery Reminders

By George Plesniak, MS, ACRPS, Clinical Program Director

Relapse is a Process – Not an Event



Just like recovery, relapse is a process NOT an event.

But, relapse is preventable—ACCEPT, LEARN AND CHANGE!

Accept that it is a process, **learn** your process and when others (or yourself) see evidence of your process, **change**. Relapse warning signs exist during a period of sobriety, and even prior to the first drink or drug use.

Warning signs to look for include:

- change in attitude—are you more impatient, irritable, belligerent?
- elevated stress—is work, home life, school or the world more stressful than usual?
- return of denial—are you rationalizing thoughts or behaviors that you know in your heart aren't healthy?
- behavior change—are you going to fewer 12 Step meetings or missing counselor appointments? Are you spending time with people, places or things that aren't supportive of your recovery?
- social breakdown—have you lost touch with your recovery support network? Are you isolating yourself?
- loss of structure and loss of judgment, control or options—are you sleeping irregular hours, eating poorly, neglecting exercise? Are you making impulsive decisions?

Remember, one is either **progressing** or **regressing**—there is no such thing as 'gressing'! Recovery is like a muscle—it takes work to keep it strong. If you are struggling, reach out to your sponsor, go to a 12 Step meeting, call your therapist or call our Alumni or Continuing Care departments here at Ashley. **ASK FOR HELP**

Children Drive for Impaired Parents

Police in Florida caught a father allowing his nine-year-old child to drive - the second such incident this month.

Florida Highway Patrol said after a crash in Orlando, a 31-year-old father told troopers that he and his wife had been drinking, so their nine-year-old son drove their van.

The family was visiting from Wyoming. The father was charged with child endangerment.

On October 8, police say a man from the Detroit, Michigan area had his nine-year-old daughter drive him to a store because he had been drinking.

Surveillance video from a petrol station shows him saying his daughter was his “designated driver”.

The father was charged with child abuse.

Seldom does a month go by without news of an incident where the actions of someone under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or both—endangers the lives of others. Such is the case in these recent stories about nine-year old children doing the driving for their inebriated parents.

There is understandable public outrage at this apparent disregard for child safety. Phrases like “what in the world was he thinking” are uttered. However, the key part of this phrase is “thinking”. It is not uncommon for people who abuse alcohol or other drugs to exhibit aberrant behavior while under the influence. Even the phrase, “under the influence” implies that we are not fully in control of our thoughts or actions... that something else is influencing our behavior and decision-making.

To understand the physiology of what is at work here we need only look to Ashley counselor John Wanner’s lecture on the *Neurobiology of Addiction*. During active use, the brain is hijacked by the cognitive impairment caused by the “mind-altering” substances that have been used, taken or consumed. Then, once the brain becomes dependant on this substance, symptoms of withdrawal coupled with cravings and a lack of homeostasis again drive irrational actions and decisions as the brain works to obtain the substances to which it has become dependent.

This explanation is not an attempt to excuse the alcoholic’s or drug addict’s actions while using, but simply to illustrate the processes that occur that drive the behavior that society finds so difficult to comprehend.

There’s another process at work in this news story. What’s happening to the children that are involved? Their brains are being influenced, too. They’ve been taught at a very young age that it is their job to take care of their parents. In fact, when the police pulled over the car that the little girl was driving she asked “why did you stop me! I was doing a good job!” This child likely experienced a great deal of anxiety associated with this situation, anxiety that produces stress and with it, stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline which produce effects on the brain and the body. Repeated exposure to stress and these stress hormones have been proven to influence a child’s future physical and mental health. The learned behavior of being a caretaker can easily follow her into adulthood and affect her adult relationships. People exposed to repeated stresses or traumas early in their lives can become physiologically programmed to unconsciously become involved in behaviors that reproduce stressful experiences. Ongoing anxiety can lead to self-medication with substances that can lead to dependence. And now the cycle of addiction repeats itself in a new generation.

The stories of parents involving their children in their addictive behaviors are not new. However, today more than ever before we understand this behavior as a symptom of a disease that requires treatment. And, there are programs like our *Rainbow of Hope* children’s program to help children understand what’s been happening and minimize the impact. The possibility exists for both parents and children to lead happy, healthy, productive lives if they get the professional help they need. And, the silver lining of this story is that private citizens called the authorities when they witnessed the young girl driving. They didn’t avoid getting involved. Ultimately, it is likely these good Samaritans were responsible for saving lives that night. Let’s hope we’d all make the same decision they did.

Did you know...

- The American Academy of Pediatricians is now recommending that all adolescents be tested for drug and alcohol abuse during routine pediatric visits.
- That mindfulness meditation has been shown to calm cravings, redirect addictive thoughts and soothe anxiety and depression.
- Ashley has added mindfulness meditation training and practice as part of each patient’s treatment program.
- Among unemployed adults aged 18 or older in 2010, 17.5 percent were current illicit drug users, which was higher than the 8.4 percent of those employed full time and 11.2 percent of those employed part time. However, most illicit drug users were employed. Of the 20.2 million current illicit drug users aged 18 or older in 2010, 13.3 million (65.9 percent) were employed either full or part time.
- In 2010, 10.6 million persons aged 12 or older reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs during the past year. This corresponds to 4.2 percent of the population aged 12 or older. In 2010, the rate was highest among young adults aged 18 to 25 (12.7 percent).
- Among young adults aged 18 to 25 in 2010, the rate of binge drinking was 40.6 percent, and the rate of heavy drinking was 13.6 percent. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the 30 days.

Visit our website,
FatherMartinsAshley.org,
 for weekly recovery podcasts—
 recorded by Ashley counselors
 and staff.

Sara M.'s Story

When I sought out help for my alcohol addiction one year ago, I was ready to do anything to achieve immediate relief from the desperate, helpless and demoralizing state my life had spiraled into. It felt like a matter of life or death and at 30 years old, I chose life. And for the past year, I have lived – one day at a time. Recovery has not only given me the chance to live, it has provided me with the inspiration to live a fulfilling, meaningful, growth-oriented life. It has provided me with a 12 Step program that fundamentally has changed the way I know myself and my relation to the world. Achieving and maintaining

sobriety has meant far more than abstaining from drugs and alcohol, it has meant learning how to live to the best of my ability with the blessings I have been and continue to be given. Among these blessings was my stay at Father Martin's Ashley in the Summer 2010. There is no greater blessing than to see and experience the world through the grateful eyes of recovery. I will celebrate and honor this by continuing to gratefully live one day at a time.



“Recovery to me means...waking up and snuggling with my daughter every morning... it means having a job and actually showing up and working hard. It means that I can just be a goofball for no reason other than I want to. It means that I am a member of the PTA and other childrens' parents want me to help with their children. It means that I can have friends in my house and not worry about things disappearing. It means I have clean clothes, food and a roof over my head and most importantly... it means that I have not been in court or jail recently... thank you Father Martin's for giving me my life back...”

Karen W.

Ashley Happenings

Plan to Attend the Renew Recovery Enrichment Workshop April 19 - 22, 2012

Do you ever wish you could come back to talk through some things with the Ashley clinical staff without having to go back to active alcohol or other drug use again?

Are there folks in your 12 Step home group, friends or family in recovery that would like to experience the Ashley that you've talked about?

Would your recovery benefit from some concentrated time away from all of the regular distractions so you can refocus your energies on your recovery and recharge your batteries?

Is there someone you care about who is in recovery to whom you'd like to give the gift of a refresher program?

Visit the Renew section of our website: FatherMartinsAshley/Renew to learn all the details about our Spring Renew Retreat, April 19-22. Enjoy a long weekend devoted to helping you work through stuck points in fellowship with others in recovery, with the benefit of concentrated counselor time and recovery-enriching activities like therapeutic drumming and arts and crafts. The Renew session is limited to 10 or fewer participants to ensure personalized attention. Accommodations at the lovely, local Hilton Garden Inn allow for a complete retreat. You may choose to stay overnight or commute. The Renew program also makes an ideal holiday gift for anyone in recovery. Call 800.799.4673 ext. 303 or email alumni@fmashley.com with questions or to reserve a space.



Women in Recovery Luncheon

Thank you to everyone who supported our 4th Annual Women in Recovery Luncheon on May 18, 2011. The event was a great success, with a sold out crowd and record donations to the Mae Abraham Legacy Fund, which supports Ashley's women's track. Because of your continued support, we can do even more to expand and enhance Ashley's women's program.



This year's honoree, actress and singer, Lynda Carter spoke from the heart. Lynda has been a great source of hope and inspiration for women in recovery. Our keynote speaker was author and interventionist, Joani Gammill, RN.

Please consider making a donation to the Mae Abraham Legacy Fund, and give women a life of freedom in recovery. FatherMartinsAshley.org/Give.

We are creating our Women in Recovery 2012 Committee. If you would like to be involved please email Lisa Zuba at lzuba@fmashley.com.

**Save the date for our 5th Annual Women in Recovery Luncheon,
May 22, 2012**



What is Your Legacy?

We all desire significance—to lead happy and fulfilled lives surrounded by family and friends. For many, there is also a compelling need to make a difference and leave a lasting impact on the world in which we live.

By joining the Father Joseph C. Martin Society you can make that lasting impact by providing for Father Martin's Ashley in your estate plans. A bequest is a way for anyone to be a philanthropist; it can be your legacy.

A bequest is one of the easiest and most tangible ways to have a lasting impact on the people and charities that mean the most to you. It is an effective way to make a gift and lessen the burden of taxes on your family and on your estate. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift be made to charity as part of your legacy planning.

For more information on how to be a member of the Father Joseph C. Martin Society, please contact Catherine Hryncewich at 410.273.2261 or chryncewich@fmashley.com.

Event Highlights

11th Annual Lou Bantle Golf Classic

The 11th Annual Lou Bantle Golf Classic was held on October 6, 2011 at Bulle Rock Golf Course. This event sold out, with over 115 golfers coming out to raise scholarship funds for active duty military who otherwise cannot afford treatment. Proceeds also benefit active duty military families to attend Ashley's Family Wellness and Rainbow of Hope Children and Youth Programs. Thank you to all our golfers and sponsors, we are grateful for your continued support. Next year's outing will be October 4, 2012.



Fr. Mark, Ashley President and CEO thanks Paul Conaway, Chairmen of the 2011 Lou Bantle Golf Classic Committee for his hard work and support of our mission.



Bob Bantle, the late Lou Bantle's son, speaks from the heart about his father and his gratitude to all who are supporting the work at Father Martin's Ashley.

Please email us your up-to-date email address and phone number to: stucker@fmashley.com

“Your work made a difference to us all – Thanks & Blessings.”

Carol R.

Treating Addiction as a Disease



Dr. Kristine Hitchens, Ph.D.,
Director of Family Services

What is addiction?

Has your loved one's addictive behavior sometimes felt like a personal insult to your relationship? That feeling is common, especially when recognition of and understanding about addiction are in their infancy.

Recently, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), a non-profit, professional organization of physicians dedicated to understanding and treating addictive disorders, developed an updated definition of addiction that better describes what happens to those suffering from the disease:

Addiction is a primary, chronic **brain disease** of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry.

Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations.

This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors. (2011)

Those seeking sobriety and their family members are encouraged to utilize a full range of recovery supports so that obstacles can be avoided or managed, goals can be achieved and health can blossom.

What can families do?

Families need to stay safe and sane. Family members deserve health and cannot be effective supports for their loved ones unless they are healthy themselves:

Do offer emotional support and encourage your loved one to seek treatment.

Do not avoid seeking information and support for yourself.

Do set boundaries to protect health and reinforce appropriate behaviors.

Do not accept justifications or rationalizations for the use of addictive substances or the avoidance of treatment.

Do seek family therapy when you are ready. A member of Ashley's Family Wellness Program can provide names and numbers of family therapists in your area.

What comes next?

In order to put addiction into remission it is necessary to engage in purposeful activity that supports long-term productivity and disables lingering addictive thoughts and actions. Attending 12 Step meetings, exercising, practicing good nutrition, and participating in meditation and therapy are examples of activities that help heal neural pathways and protect against relapse. Family members, also hurt by the process of addiction, can "recover" in much the same way. Attend to physical, mental, social and spiritual needs. Seek out a supportive Al-Anon or Nar-Anon group. Assert needs, while remaining cognizant of other's situations. Live life fully.

Where can we get help?

Addiction is a treatable disease, which should be treated. Like other diseases, addiction often requires professional treatment. Learn more about addiction and treatment options at: FatherMartinsAshley.org/Resources or visit FatherMartinsAshley.org/Family. Don't give up. The brain can heal. The more attempts a person makes to get sober, the higher the probability that lasting sobriety will be achieved.

Ashley News

Late Author and Speaker Honored with the 2011 Father Martin Award for Professional Excellence

Earnie Larsen, noted author and speaker, was honored with the 2011 Father Joseph C. Martin Award for Professional Excellence. This award was presented on September 20 during the National Conference on Addiction Disorders in San Diego, California. Earnie was a pioneer in the addiction field and passed away in January of 2011; his wife Paula (shown in photo with Ashley COO Steve Kendrick) accepted the award on his behalf.

For over 40 years, Earnie worked to help folks understand and find recovery. He wrote over 60 books, produced dozens of films

and developed the concept of 'Stage Two' Recovery—which describes the stage of recovery when people develop emotional sobriety and a maturing self. He was a worldwide speaker and educator—in the past often sharing the same stage with Father Martin—and appearing on the Oprah Winfrey Show and CNN. Earnie held an MRE in theology and education, a B.A. in counseling and accreditation in chemical dependency and family counseling.



Art and Music as Therapeutic Tools



Sue Eyet, Arts and Crafts instructor

Over the last few years, Father Martin's Ashley has integrated more structured art and music sessions and workshops into our patient program schedule. Now, in addition to encouraging patients to bring musical instruments, sketchbooks and journals with them to treatment, we are also actively working to engage patients in the Arts to introduce them to new ways to self-soothe, calm anxieties and cravings and minimize addictive thinking.



Music for the Inner Self is a reflective workshop that features Duke Thompson, Ph.D playing original compositions on the baby grand piano. Duke encourages participants to "let the music take you wherever you want to go" and helps students acknowledge the healing power that a rhythm or melody can have. He encourages students to share how the music makes them feel... where it takes them. This workshop is actually "prescribed" for patients who are withdrawn, have a flat affect or are otherwise not participating and sharing in the group counseling setting. There's often a complete transformation in

personality when they are exposed to Duke and his music. Patients not in the session have been observed gathering around the outside of the room where Duke is playing just to listen in on his beautiful compositions. Listen to some of Duke's music at: DukeThompson.com.



Our therapeutic drumming workshop is led by Al Grice, ACRPS, CAC and is a part of the weekly patient schedule. Al has participated and led drumming circles for years. He has a collection of percussion instruments that he shares with the patients in the drumming circle—everything from a full drum kit to marimbas, castanets, bongos and snare drums. Patients report getting "in the zone" when they are participating with Al and following a riff. While in the zone they claim no cravings, addictive thoughts or anxiety. Part of this exercise is to demonstrate to patients that there are tools to help them redirect addictive thinking while also doing something that's healthy and enjoyable. One research study on drumming concluded, "Drumming is a complex composite intervention with the potential to modulate specific neuroendocrine and neuroimmune parameters in a direction opposite to that expected with the classic stress response." We've had patients ask loved-ones for a bongo drum as a gift so they can continue drumming following discharge from Ashley and integrate drumming into their recovery support plans.

Drumming circle information can be found at: drumcircles.net.



And, visual arts are an important part of therapy, too. Our Arts and Crafts workshop led by resident artist Sue Eyet, is offered five days a week, including on the weekends. Patients learn to focus their time and their talents to create unique, beautiful works of art with metals, beads, glass and recycled materials. They turn items that were thrown away into objects of beauty. They learn to work with others – to ask for, and receive the help of others, as they work on their artwork.

And finally, patients that bring their own musical instruments have time in the afternoons to jam with other patients or sit, play and compose on their own.

Nearly all of us in the mental health field can include the arts in our therapeutic toolbox, even if it is as simple as having certain music playing in your waiting area or as background for your sessions. Music or visual art can be part of a calming preparation exercise for therapy such as a five or ten minute meditative exercise that includes listening to music or drawing or beading. Some crafts like knitting or crocheting can easily be done in concert with the therapeutic session.

Recent studies have shown the therapeutic benefits of engaging anyone in music or art but especially the benefits of relieving or mitigating the effects of stress on human cortisol levels and immune system functions.

Music and visual art can create an atmosphere of beauty, peace, and increased harmony among participants in therapeutic settings. Its therapeutic goal is the reduction of stress, pain, anxiety and isolation.

Dated information! Please open immediately!

Key Dates & Events

Rainbow of Hope

Second Saturday of Every Month

RED Program

Third Saturday of Every Month

Family Program

Open to All!

Friday - Sunday, Every Weekend

FRED Program

December 17

Ski Trip/Winter Retreat

January 20-22, 2012

Renew

April 19-22, 2012

“*At times our own
light goes out
and is rekindled
by a spark from
another person.
Each of us has
cause to think with
deep gratitude of
those who have
lighted the flame
within us.*”

Albert Schweitzer