



Fall 2007

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. We continue to have the chance to serve our young men because of the support we receive from you and the foundations and companies that believe Nick's Place is truly offering our guys the opportunity to change their lives.

As always it is my pleasure to bring you news from Nick's Place, a transitional home for young men beginning their recovery from the disease of addiction. For my son Nick, Thanksgiving was his favorite holiday. It seems that this time of year reminds us to think about our many blessings of home, family and good friends. I know that's true for Barry and me. Although 2007 has been a year of challenges, the courage and commitment of our current and former residents always validates our mission.

Alumni News

Even though you may not know them personally, you may remember the names of our former residents from previous newsletters. I know their progress and accomplishments will bring a smile to your face. For us, we are filled with joy knowing that Nick's Place played a major role in their recovery.

Matt M. celebrated two years clean and sober on October 9. Matt was with us from February 2006 until December and had four months clean and sober when he joined us from treatment. Matt lives in Wheaton, Maryland where he shares a house with other young people practicing a recovery program.

George S., who is a weekend manager for Nick's Place and who was a resident in 2001, celebrated five years in June and is a deacon in his church. George will be getting married on December 7. This

will be the second Nick's Place marriage that Barry and I get to attend this year! Being able to celebrate these milestone events is gratifying to both of us.

Leigh P. celebrated five years in July and is currently attending college and doing great.

Jason B. will be celebrating four years on November 27. Jason was married in April and is a member of the Nick's Place alumni committee and works with us in interviewing potential residents.

Jason S. and Oscar P. will be coming up on their two year anniversaries in December 2007 and January 2008. These two guys also play a huge role at Nick's Place by working with our current residents and holding an in-house meeting where thoughts and feelings are easily exchanged with "just the guys." They are also part of our informal alumni committee.

Philip W., who was with us for a year, has returned to school in Pennsylvania to pursue becoming an adolescent addiction counselor. Phil celebrated his 21st birthday on October 27. He and his family invited Barry and me and Phil's friends from Nick's Place to join them for his party. Phil's parents, Sue and Bob, are sharing their thoughts about Nick's Place with you later in this letter.

Mike G. celebrated two years and is a junior at Penn State. And Buddy B. probably has the most unusual job of any of the guys we know... he's teaching swing dancing.

When we hear from our other alumni who are roaming around out there, we'll be sure to share their news as well.

Current Residents

We've got a diverse group of residents right now, all with different backgrounds and future ambitions, as we found out during our Planning and Goal Setting sessions that were done as part of the Relapse Prevention Education Program.

Everyone is working and each have received positive feedback from their employers about their work style and commitment.

Joe A. works for a local company that is a leader in the garage door installation industry. Joe recently received his 90-day review and a raise for his hard work and willing attitude. The company Joe works for also employs three of our former residents. They have turned into a great employment partner for Nick's Place. It's nice that our guys can go there and not have to hide where they live or why they need to keep special hours. It's wonderful that they have a chance to work in an environment that supports recovery.

Tony W. is also employed by a Nick's Place friendly employer where two of our former residents also work. The feedback we get is that Tony is a consistent performer with a great attitude. Tony will be returning to George Mason University in January to pursue his degree in Economics.

Andrew M. was promoted to manage the warehouse in his job for a local tee-shirt factory. Andrew's ambition is to eventually open his own animal refuge business.

Sean K. is working with Starbucks and has recently been promoted to shift manager after only working for the company for five weeks.

Each of our guys are growing in their recovery. There is no easy fix for this disease. It takes real commitment and dedication to do what our guys do on a daily basis. That's why Nick's Place feels it is so important to offer them resources like our Relapse Prevention Education Program.

Dr. Wendy Buskey continues to provide psycho-educational programs to our residents and covers topics such as Impulse Control and Anger Management, Self-esteem, Self-confidence and new to the series Self-discipline, Healthy Relationships and Dynamics of the Addicted Family. The feedback on Dr. Buskey's programs has been 100% positive, and the guys have told us that they are actually able to apply what they learn to everyday situations.

This October we launched a Planning and Goal setting program that Eric McVicker facilitated for us. The program is designed to help residents define goals and establish benchmarks to measure their progress. It was fun to hear all the wishes, dreams, and goals that the guys shared. We also believe that it is completely within reason that as they move through life and their recovery, they will have the opportunities to achieve them. We also know that without recovery, many dreams and even lives can be lost.

As 2007 comes to a close, it has reminded us how darn devastating this disease can be and how chal-



Melvin Watson's farewell dinner

lenging it can be to remain optimistic. We had one resident who was with us for eleven months relapse for three weeks. But because he had built such a strong program and support system, he was able to resume his program immediately and has a renewed commitment to his sobriety. He demonstrated a lot of courage and did not let his pride stand in the way of asking for help. He is now sharing a house in the neighborhood with three other Nick's Place alumni.

Another of our alumni relapsed after two years clean. He contracted a severe MRSA (staph infection), had to have surgery and received opiate based painkillers which triggered his disease. He hit a very hard bottom. After months in relapse he has just completed treatment and has entered a halfway house nearby.

I don't share these stories to be discouraging but rather to present some of the facts about this disease. It is subject to relapse and the fact that Nick's Place has played a role in letting our guys see there is a better way to live, encourages them to continue to pursue a clean and healthy lifestyle again.

Nick's Place challenges its residents and for some, our structure and the responsibility we expect is too much for them. But for those who stay, the reward of having a strong 12-step program, a good job, pride in themselves, respect from family members and great friends is more than they could have hoped for in active addiction.

Other News

After a year long search Marc Duvall joined the Nick's Place staff as our live-in manager. Marc brings nearly seven years of recovery and a great passion for working with our young residents. We are delighted to have him as addition to our team. We were sad to say goodbye to our long-time manager Melvyn Watson who played a major role in the success of Nick's Place. The good news is he continues to be a great friend and resource.



Melvin, we wish you well



Typical dinner at Nick's Place

On Thanksgiving weekend our guys will be attending the Narcotics Anonymous convention in Baltimore, Maryland where there will be round-the-clock meetings, dances and the opportunity meet hundreds of others practicing a lifestyle in recovery. It is always a great event, and Nick's Place received a donation this year to pay the registration fee for our residents.

Finally, I think the testimony of Bob and Sue Wilson is the best way to close this letter this Thanksgiving season.

[What Nick's Place has meant to the Wilson Family](#)

In July of 2006 our family was faced with a difficult decision. Our son, Philip, had just completed four months in drug rehabilitation at one of the best facilities in the country, but "where do we go from there"? At that point, he needed limited personal freedom in his life, but was not in a position to "come home". He was still too new to his new life without drugs.

Choosing a quality environment for Philip was very important to us. We wanted a facility that would encourage him to grow on his own with things like finding full-time employment, being responsible to his housemates for daily chores, getting himself to an addictions support meeting (AA/NA) daily, etc. As is so often the case, Philip was a physically mature 19 year old, but largely unable to act his age

due to years of drug abuse. The treatment center recommended Nick's Place.

What we found at Nick's was a good-if-not-excellent blend of structure (rules), compassion, expectation (reasonably high), encouragement, and dare I say it...love. Rhea and Barry McVicker have structured an environment in which young men (ages 19 to 25) can both struggle with their addiction and then grow beyond it.

Nick's Place is not right for everyone. It is more structured than most Halfway and Oxford houses. But, if the expectations of the recovering addict are honest and willing, Nick's may be the best place for them. All residents must expect to personally do their part to both grow healthier with their addiction and be a contributing part of that small community.

Philip found weekly reviews of his actions/ activity/attitudes or lack thereof somewhat unsettling. But, it was through being challenged and encouraged by other residents, the McVickers, and the Nick's Place staff that Philip learned to grow.

For our family, Nick's Place was the right place at the right time. We are extremely thankful the McVickers chose to turn their personal tragedy in their loss of their son into a positive action statement. As with Philip, other young men have found a safe place to grow beyond the darkside of their addiction--to the point where they in fact help others so afflicted. Philip was able to make wonderful friends at Nick's Place who recently helped him celebrate his 21st birthday. Overall, this year we will give thanks for having our son back.

Bob and Sue Wilson



Phil's birthday party.
Left to right: Jeff, Will, Matt, Philip, Jason, and Oscar

Nick's Place is very grateful to all of you who have chosen and continue to choose us to receive your generous support. Please continue to pray for the recovery of our residents and their families. We hope that we can count on you again this year to help us with our mission of providing a clean, safe and sober home to those who need it most. And, please be sure to tell you friends and families about Nick's Place.

Nick's Place is a 501(c)3 organization. Your gift is tax deductible. We do not receive any federal, state or county funding and rely solely on grants and private donations to meet our operating costs.

P.S. If you know someone who needs help with mental health or addiction issues, please refer them to www.samhsa.gov for a complete listing of facilities throughout the United States.

**You can make a donation electronically through our website www.nicksplace.org
Nick's Place, Inc.**

**301-937-0455
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**Your gift to Nick's Place is tax deductible.
Nick's Place does not receive any federal or state funding.**

Also, if you plan to make a donation to Nick's Place and your organization has a matching gift program, please consider submitting our information for a match. It's a great way to double and even triple your gift. Thank you again, so very much.

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