



## **Place Fall/Winter 2005 Newsletter**

Hello, from Nick's Place and a happy Thanksgiving season to you. We have so much to be thankful for this year. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, Nick's Place began its sixth year of offering a clean, safe, sober and supervised environment to young men beginning recovery from addiction and alcoholism. We are probably more excited today than we were then. It gives me great personal pleasure to honor my son Nick in this way. Nick's life and death has given our residents the chance to make a fresh start. We actually get to see the results of our work in our returning alumni. What could be better than that??

I was telling a friend the other day I worry that I just can't adequately convey the excitement and enthusiasm that surrounds Nick's Place. She thought it would be a great idea to give you, our donors, a snapshot of life at Nick's Place. While every hour of every day is filled with much of the same activities as your day, our young men at Nick's Place have an added burden of fighting their addiction every single minute of each day. Our most active time during our week is the dinner hour. Our dinner time is like the old fashioned table where we all actually sit down together. We have theme nights, including, Melancholy Monday, Grateful Tuesday and Working it Out Wednesday. These theme nights allow us to share our worries, fears, our excitements and share all the people and things we are grateful we have in our lives. Everyone takes a turn. It is amazing what is revealed by just asking a simple question. This time allows us to help solve problems around recovery, work, home, and/or family issues. Grateful Tuesday's forces reflection on what is good in our lives and allows our guys to focus on the positive aspects of their life in early life recovery.

I feel like I also need to tell you about the fun and joking that goes on at Nick's Place. Although we take what we do seriously; we don't take ourselves too seriously. As our guys live together for months and we see them regularly, the atmosphere is much like one, big strange collection of family members! Sometimes we're up and sometimes we're down, but the fact that we share disappointments as well as successes makes Nick's Place work. For our guys to have the courage and stamina at such a young age to undertake recovery is a remarkable achievement in itself. The more research I do regarding recovery methods, the more I find that Nick's Place is right on target by placing these young men in a home environment where they can begin recovery with their peer group. The camaraderie, encouragement and positive peer pressure is extremely valuable in keeping the guys focused. I have to believe that my Nick would have had a better chance at long-term recovery if he had access to the environment that we've created at Nick's Place.

We currently have a full house with six residents (and now treatment providers and parents have asked us to create a waiting list.) One of our current residents, John S., celebrated his twelve-month clean and sober anniversary on September 15. In addition to thanking his family and his sponsor, he took a moment to thank Nick's Place for giving him a chance. He said he would not have been able to do it without the structure and supportive environment of Nick's Place. John has been in and out of jail and has a habit of sabotaging his recovery and losing interest in his 12-step program. But, because he is at Nick's Place, we are able to recognize the symptoms of relapse and have helped keep him on the recovery track.

Another of our residents will celebrate a twelve-month anniversary on November 22. Max S. has grown tremendously since his arrival in April. Max has maintained his employment since his second day at Nick's Place and has received two pay increases for his contributions to his employer. Max has elected to stay at Nick's Place even though he has been cleared to leave. This is a terrific testament to the relationship and trust we've been able to build in the last six months, since when Max first arrived, he only wanted to stay three months.

Geoffrey G. has managed to achieve all three of the goals he set for himself when he arrived at Nick's Place. He obtained his driver's license, opened a bank account and find a better paying job, that will allow him to save more money so that he can move out on his own. Geoffrey is

sponsored in his twelve-step program by one of our former residents Alex P. who celebrated two year's sobriety this past summer. We were there (along with his mother and his aunt) to witness that accomplishment and our house manager Melvin Watson was the speaker at the meeting for Alex.

And, speaking of anniversaries, another of our former residents Leigh P. celebrated three years this summer as well and you guessed it; we were there for that too! Leigh is back in school and has the lead role in the New Year's Eve play that is being presented by his Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) home group. Buddy, another former resident, sponsored by Leigh will celebrate one year on November 17<sup>th</sup> and called to invite us to attend. Since Buddy was only with us a short time, we were surprised to hear that he was grateful to Nick's Place for helping him in reaching his one year anniversary. This proves Nick's Place has had a far reaching impact even on residents who haven't "graduated". More and more we here stories about how Nick's Place was important in turning their lives around. So for every "graduate" we have, there are more lives out there in which Nick's Place "made the difference."

It is exciting to tell you about these achievements. But it is also important to talk about the insidious nature of this disease that our guys deal *with every single day*. Addiction isn't just about the physical. It invades the emotional, mental and spiritual health of each person as well. It provides a healthy dose of self-doubt, self-criticism and low self-worth. We don't win every battle at Nick's Place. But every battle we do win is worth every step we take. Every battle we win gives a mother and father their son back, every sister and brother their brother back. Believe me, there could be no greater gift—a gift I wish I could have received.

Relapse is all too common with the disease of addiction. It is not unlike any other disease where "remission" may be achieved, but the disease may resurface. Although this can be disappointing, there are studies that support the belief that every attempt and exposure to clean and sober living is a building block to long-term recovery.

Each parent I talk to is very grateful that their son has a place to live that is clean, friendly supervised and focused on guiding them through the early recovery process. I have been blessed to meet these parents and be trusted with their young men. Our mother's group that was started at the first of the year has been a tremendous success allowing a free flowing exchange of information, fears, worries and ultimately some solutions to problems that routinely face families with a loved one in early recovery. At our next meeting, Jason B, another Nick's Place alumni will be sharing his story with our group and answer questions regarding his early recovery.

Your help and contributions have made Nick's Place possible and I hope that we have lived up to your expectations. I get calls all the time from parents who tell me that Nick's Place is exactly the kind of place they want for their son and they cannot believe we are not charging thousands of dollars a month. Our goal has always been to prepare our residents to live on their own, so we require them to pay their own way and it is with your help that we have been able to subsidize their living expenses.

With all of us being asked to give and give this year, I hope Nick's Place has earned a place in your heart for favorite places to support. Please remember us if your company has a matching gift program or if your family would like to designate Nick's Place for donations in lieu of gifts for the holidays. We appreciate your generosity and your continued faith in Nick's Place.

**Nick's Place relies solely on support from individuals, foundations and corporations. We do not receive any federal or state funding. We can accept stock donations as well as cash contributions. Your gifts are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.**

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