

Nick's Place
Spring 2004 Newsletter

Happy Spring to all of Nick's Place friends and supporters. Since we opened in October 2000, we have continued to build our reputation as the choice of treatment providers for their 18-25 year old clients beginning their recovery from drugs and alcohol. This Spring we have a full house and as usual each resident is different in his life experiences.

Alex has been at Nick's Place for 10 months in recovery from alcohol addiction. He was reluctant to come to Nick's Place, but his progress has been remarkable. His first employer was a fast food restaurant, but Alex's is now working at a computer repair and software company. They have sent him for training twice and are paying for his A+ certification for computer repair. He has demonstrated to be a smart, reliable and ambitious employee. Through snow, sleet and rain (literally), Alex has ridden his bike to work, every single day. He is dedicated to his AA program and has found a sponsor in the program that has guided him through his 10 months of recovery. On July 4, Alex will celebrate one year sober! As we have with our other residents, Barry and I and the rest of Nick's Place will be there to see this remarkable achievement.

Aaron actually grew up in our neighborhood. He's a big smiling teddy bear. But for about the first four weeks that he was with us, Aaron would rarely smile or engage in any conversation. It turns out that there was a bit friction going on between Aaron and another resident and it wasn't until I threatened that we sit at the table all night until it got resolved, that they were able to air their differences and are now great friends.

Aaron and another of our residents, Jason, who hails from North Carolina, work for SaniJon, who has turned out to be a great employer for Nick's Place. Our former resident George (who comes to dinner every Tuesday and will celebrate 2 years recovery this year) was employed there until he took a job as an electrician apprentice. George was able to demonstrate that people in recovery are a good investment and make loyal employees. George is also very active in his Narcotics Anonymous programs and takes meetings to hospitals and Job Corp. He is currently studying to become a children's Sunday school teacher in his church!

Giovanni (we call him Johnny) had some previous time in recovery. He started missing his meetings, didn't get a sponsor and fell right back into his Oxycontin habit. Oxycontin is a powerful, narcotic pain reliever that has a high potential for abuse. Fortunately, he was able to get himself back to re-hab (with the blessing of his employer) and called us for placement. Johnny works in sales for a local car dealership. He has a great attitude and appears to be committed to working a strong program.

Billy was homeless before seeking treatment. He plays the guitar (quite well) and his dream is music. He has set up a little recording area in the basement of Nick's Place so that if genius strikes, he's prepared. He is just beginning to renew a relationship with his mom and seems happy to have that opportunity.

Finally, there is Ryan who attended Howard Community College this past semester. He is studying to be an Addictions Counselor. Ryan is compassionate, has a great sense of humor and has begun to come out of his shell since he joined us in February. If he continues to pursue his goal, he'll make a great counselor.

Something that brings great joy and satisfaction is that Leigh, a former resident, has signed on to be a sponsor to Jason and Johnny. Leigh has fully embraced his new life and is sharing his experience, strength and hope. Leigh is a great role model and introduces newer members to the social opportunities, like dances, camping trips and weekends at the beach, available to those in recovery.

Nick's Place continues to be a fertile source for miracles. We are so lucky to have the opportunity to be witnesses to the incredible strength and determination that our residents demonstrate, as they stay clean and sober one day at a time. They face health problems, probation programs, court dates and discrimination, but they show great fortitude in overcoming obstacles that would cripple the best of us!

The success stories outweigh the disappointments and when we witness disappointments we simply pray that those who fall will have another chance at recovery. Regrettably, as was the case with my Nick, this progressive and sometimes deadly disease, did not give him the next opportunity. However, in the end, Nick's life and death have given opportunity to many who come through the doors of Nick's Place. This June 14, we will commemorate Nick's birthday and remember the slogan of AA and NA "some must die so others might live."

We believe we have been successful because Nick's Place is a home that welcomes our residents without judgment. Our mission was to create an environment that is warm, and fun, with the right mixture of structure and accountability. The guys become like family to us and to each other. Although their backgrounds may be different, their common bond is the same. Barry and I come away many an evening thankful that we have Nick's Place as part of our life. And, personally, I can tell you that hearing another mother say, "thank you" moves my heart. They know I understand their fears and their hopes.

As always, I'd like to close by thanking you for your continued support of Nick's Place. We hope that whatever the reason is that you support us that you will continue to do so. It could be because we are turning out productive citizens that might one day work for you, or that your family has someone suffering from addiction, or it's just your nature to help when it's needed. Whatever it is, we thank you and hope that you will tell your friends and families about us.

Finally, a few of our supporters choose to make a monthly donation. If you would like to do so, please contact me and I'll be happy send you additional envelopes.

Nick's Place is a private 501 (c) 3. We receive no state, local or government support.
Donations can be sent to: Nick's Place, c/o Rhea McVicker, 4604 W Caroline Avenue,
Beltsville, MD. 20705