



Winter 2010

Hi from Rhea

February 10th will mark thirteen years since Nick died as result of the devastating disease of addiction. We hold on to our memories of Nick... both good and not so good. But we are truly grateful to have the opportunity to continue to help change and save the lives of the young men we serve in Nick's name.

The mission of Nick's Place remains the same as it's been since we opened ten years ago: to provide a clean, safe, supervised, drug and alcohol free home to help young men new to recovery transition back to their families and communities. Nick's Place is honored to be "almost home" to the guys who choose to begin their recovery with us. Each chance we have to encourage them and help paint a picture of a bright future is exciting and rewarding. Our guys are inspirations to many other young people and even to the "old timers" in the rooms of recovery meetings.

Resident Update

Our residents are a diverse group of guys who seem to be able to focus on their common interests instead of the differences in their families, backgrounds, employment, education and talents. Wouldn't it be great if more of the world were like that! I'm always happy to share about our great group of residents.

Justin W. – Justin joined us in May of 2009. He works at Overhead Door Company as a Warehouse Control Clerk. As a senior member of Nick's Place he shares responsibility with Trey G in helping our newer residents become familiar with our routine, rules and expectations. Justin plans to return to

community college to pursue his interest of radio communications.

Trey G. – Trey joined us in April of 2009 and is employed as a mechanic at a local Toyota dealership. While with us, Trey studied for and passed two ASE auto mechanic courses which helped earn him a raise and additional benefits. His goal is to purchase and restore his own Harley Davidson.

Dennis (Bubba) S. – Bubba joined us in August 2009 and works as a warehouse inventory manager for a local Antenna manufacturer. Bubba was uniquely qualified for this job in that he held a similar position with his family's company.

Glenn N. – Glenn joined us in September 2009 and is also employed by Overhead Door Company. He recently received a promotion and is now responsible for servicing customers on his own. Glenn would like to eventually pursue a career in law enforcement.

Rob S. – joined us in January 2010. Rob is a graduate from Temple University with his major in business and communications. He has secured a job at Overhead Door in their accounts receivable department.

Kerry M. – Kerry and Rob joined us on the same day. Both Kerry and Rob did an outstanding job in their employment search and both landed their positions in just 2 weeks after joining us. Kerry will be working with two other Nick's Place "guys" at a local union sheet metal plant.

We are really proud of the accomplishments of our guys and their commitment to practicing a good 12-step recovery program. Remember, each of them came to Nick's Place fresh out of treatment for the

potentially fatal disease of addiction and have managed to slowly put their lives back on track. It takes enormous courage and fortitude to come to Nick's Place and adapt to a brand new way of life.

Alumni News

I'm thrilled that two of our recent graduates and a grateful mom are kind enough to share their stories with you. Their words provide a well-rounded perspective of how the Nick's Place program impacts lives.

Baz F. – When Baz first came to Nick's Place, he was defensive, angry, moody, close-minded and stubborn. But little by little, we could see the light come on. He really started working with his sponsor and reaching out for help to others in the program. He got a service position and volunteered to help in 12-step sponsored activities. We are very proud of Baz and what he has accomplished. Baz shared this writing with us on his last BE THE TEACHER which focused on Moving On.

For me it is bittersweet to be leaving Nick's Place. I've learned so much about life in such little time. I was so unsure of myself and had no clue what was in store for me. I didn't know I would meet so many great people that were going to steer me on the right track.

Since coming to Nick's Place it is my first time not getting high since I was a kid. Nick's Place, I believe, was key in showing me how to have fun in recovery. I'm more happy now than I've been for a long time. Again, a key factor in this I believe is



Baz and Mom Madeline

Nick's Place. Without Rhea and Barry on my a.—I would never have come as far as I have and for that I will be forever grateful. Two of the greatest people I believe I've ever had the pleasure to have known. And now I've come to the end of the road here at Nick's Place. It's been a great journey; so many great memories.

But now moving out has come and I must take the tools I've learned here and apply them. I'm so blessed to have obtained the knowledge I have in the past year. This is definitely not a bad thing. I have done what I set out to do and that was learn how to live life. Now that I've somewhat done that (lol J); now I'm ready to grow more; take on life. I'll always keep my recovery first because without it, I lose everything I've worked for. I must continue to take suggestions and know that I don't have all the answers. It is up to me. Baz F.

Jon F. – Jon was part of the Nick's Place family for a little over a year. During that time he grew so much both in his recovery and as a person. It is absolutely amazing. We are happy that he is sharing his journey at Nick's Place in his own words.

My Name is Jon F. and I lived at Nick's Place from November of 2008 to December of 2009. In October of 2008 I hit what I feel was a spiritual bottom. I completely despised the person I was and had no willingness or desire to change. I was pretty much forced to go to a treatment center because of the trouble I got myself into looking for another high. After I completed treatment I decided to attend Nick's Place. In my mind I was planning to stay 6 months at the most, but as the months started passing something clicked in my mind that Nick's Place was exactly where I was supposed to be. I ended up staying there for about 13 months. The Nick's Place program has turned my life around 180 degrees. They taught me how to take care of myself physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Nick's Place helped me build a strong foundation in order for me to do the next right thing on a consistent basis. I celebrated a year clean in October of 2009, which is a miracle that I never thought would be possible. By taking this process one day at a time I've been able to stay clean, make some amazing friends, and learn to love the person I am today. One thing that I never imagined I could do was go to college. Nick's Place helped me through the process of trying to get into school, and in January I will be attending the University of Maryland for Agriculture and Natural Resources. Today I am currently resid-



Jon and Mom Cheri

ing at an Oxford House down the street from Nick's Place, and work as a foreman for Behnke's Landscape and Design. I am forever grateful for Nick's Place and everyone involved with the house. I truly believe I would not be where I am today without their love and guidance. Jon F.

A Message from a Grateful Mom

I raised Basile (Baz) alone. The song Just the Two of Us was our song! We were very close. He was a great kid and he was always comfortable with talking to me and telling me "everything". Even in his young teenage years when he began dabbling with alcohol he still felt comfortable talking to me. His friends would comment that he "tells me everything". I dealt with each situation as I didn't want him to shut down and stop talking to me because I knew I was really all he had. I'm sure I over-compensated!!

Baz's alcohol and drug use escalated and he soon found himself in serious legal trouble. At one point, he was facing 30 years in prison. I nearly died. My baby had barely become an adult, and now he would spend most of his adult years incarcerated. I couldn't even look at his pictures without hyperventilating from sadness! Due to drug and alcohol addiction, he had hit the worst bottom one could imagine, so I thought. He was so sincere that if I let him come home on house arrest, that he would be the best son and brother and help me around the house while I worked, etc. I had taken out a second mortgage to pay the lawyer to get him home on house arrest. To make a long story short, that was probably the biggest enabling mistake I ever made

with him. There were fights, police, drugs, alcohol, high blood pressure, sleepless nights, tears, anger, resentment, fear, self-pity ... you name it.

So there was "my" bottom. I felt like the worst parent in the world and like such a failure! I couldn't save him. I knew I had to end the house arrest and let him take responsibility for his actions. He went to jail, came out and violated probation. I couldn't imagine anyone would let that happen again after having the experience! That's when I knew he needed help that I could never give him, and he had to have the desire himself.

Basile heard about a 28 day alcohol rehabilitation research program at National Institutes of Health (NIH) that paid participants \$500. I believe his main reason for going was to please the courts and get paid. I was relieved that Baz was in rehab because I knew he was safe. I sometimes felt like that when he was incarcerated, which caused me much guilt at times, but it was my only relief.

While at NIH and through the AA program he found a sponsor, someone he knew since he was a kid playing baseball. His sponsor told him about Nick's Place. Baz said he was taking the \$500 from NIH to put on his first month rent. He told me to check out the website and to my amazement, it was just what I had hoped and prayed for; and he found it himself!

I went with him to Nick's Place and met Rhea and Barry, and I watched him take that first step of his adult life. He erased all those old, useless numbers from his phone, kissed his little sister and me goodbye, and took the first step to changing his life. And the miracle began to unfold! By the grace of God, he got a job and health insurance. He still tried to manipulate but Rhea and Barry would quickly set him straight on that! We parents need to stop enabling and let Nick's Place do its job. I really never thought I'd see the day that Basile would be out on his own, with a legal car and driver's license, working, paying his own bills, and making good decisions.

Now I feel like the world has been lifted off my shoulders because I have my son back!! When he celebrated his one year anniversary clean-and-sober, I had no anxiety because in my heart, I really knew he would be ok!! We would be ok!! I can't even put into words the gratitude I feel for Nick's Place – I feel like I knew Nick in some way!! My life

was spiraling downward as I experienced the pain my son went through and I can finally exhale!

I know too that Baz will have to work his 12-step program the rest of his life, one day at a time, by the grace of God!! I'm grateful to Nick's Place and I know Baz feels the same. I have never seen him so happy in his adult life! He's a new man and I'm proud to be his mom!! With much gratitude, Madeline (Basile's Mom).

Other News

We continue to explore new topics for our Relapse Prevention Education Program. This program is staffed by a combination of paid professionals and dedicated volunteers. Our goal is to provide our guys access to information and strategies to combat the disease of addiction which attacks a person physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.

If you'd like to share a topic or your experience during our Thursday Relapse Prevention Program, we would love to hear from you. I promise you'll find an attentive and respectful group of attendees who are genuinely eager to learn from others' life experiences. The program is conducted on Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:00 PM. Please contact

Rhea at 301-937-0455 or rheamcvicker@verizon.net or Dave Love at 240-370-2539, david.kyle.love@gmail.com, if you'd like to discuss your idea.

We have also formed a Strategic Planning and Fundraising Committee to help Nick's Place move into this next decade with a strong strategy for long-term sustainability. As you know we rely completely on donations from our friends, donors and family members as well as foundations. The purpose of forming this committee is to help us identify other resources that can assist in our financial stability. We will keep you posted of our plans and progress and I know we will be reaching out to you in areas in which we hope you can help. And if you have ideas that you would like to share, please give us a call.

Final Thoughts

I can't thank you enough for all you do for Nick's Place. Your compassion, commitment, donations, prayers and love help to make our job easier. Without you, we cannot accomplish our mission.

Also, please feel free to pass this newsletter on to family and friends who may be interested in learning more about our program and how they can support us.

You can make a donation electronically through our website www.nicksplace.org

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

Please e-mail if you are replacing furniture and wish to explore donating it to Nick's Place.

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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