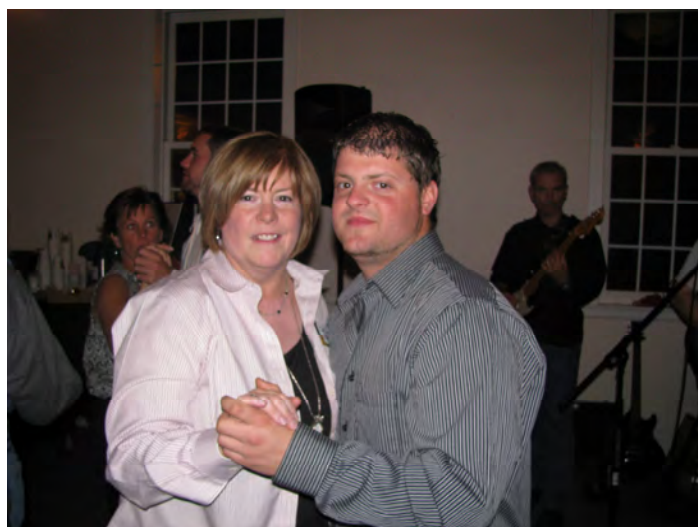
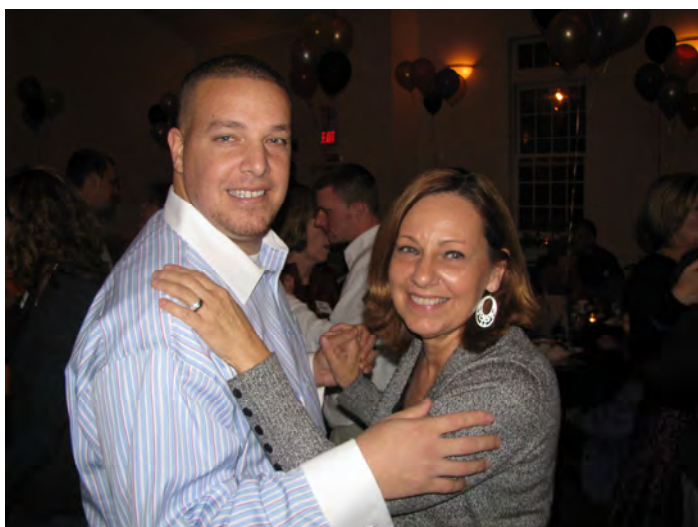


## A Message from Dave Love

Welcome to 2010—a new year and new decade for Nick's Place, Inc. Many of you either joined us or wished us well in November when we celebrated our *Fall Harvest Gratitude Reception* at St. John's Church in Beltsville, Maryland, marking the beginning of our 10<sup>th</sup> year in providing a clean, safe, supervised, drug and alcohol free home to young men new to recovery. Over 130 of Nick's Place's family, friends, alumni and residents helped us celebrate Nick and the over 135 young men who have come through our doors over the last decade. The evening was filled with testimonies, pictures, dances and laughter. My favorite experience was watching the residents and alumni share a dance with their mothers—what a powerful picture of recovery.

I came away thinking about the next 135 young men who are on their way to us and what makes Nick's Place so different from other halfway houses, transitional homes and sober living residences and why so many of our parents, alumni and friends are willing to give so much time, energy and resources to anything that Nick's Place does. Since June when I became Residential Director, I have lived full-time with our young men, met many of our alumni, spent time with past and present parents, and sat day after day with Rhea, Barry and our current guys. And I have concluded that the true distinction of Nick's Place is summed up in our slogan: almost home!

This past holiday I had a unique experience with my siblings that really spoke to me about the experience of Nick's Place. Four out of five of us were together in my oldest brother's new home and decided to spend the night. It was the first time in over three decades that we were all together sleeping under the same roof at the holidays. The different roads we had taken in our lives, the careers that we had chosen, the economical or social status that any of us had achieved didn't matter. What mattered was that we were together and that we were family. We ate, sang, danced, played and cleaned up. Our memories are the same of growing up; sharing joys, pains, losses, gains, fighting laughing, graduating and moving on. This experience created something between us that can never be taken away. And that's what our residents experience at Nick's Place. Together we share disappointment, gain and loss; and that has made us family. Nick's Place is "almost home" for our young



men. The memories associated with the disease of addiction aren't good. But we have fought it, we have cried about it, and now we have celebrated the new life and relationships we have gained through it.

The *Fall Harvest Gratitude Reception* was such a great example of the Nick's Place family. When I look back on it now, I see the similarities of the experience I had with my own family this Christmas. Our family came together to plan, decorate, finance and the result was a great evening of celebration. I can't begin to imagine what Nick would have said had he been there in person that night to speak to the family that he brought together, the lives he has touched and the "almost home" he has created.

So, as we move on into the future of Nick's Place, my challenge to each of you as a member of this family is to begin to pray for the next 135 young men and their families and ask yourself what you will do to help them. We say that once you are a part of the Nick's Place family you are ALWAYS a part of the Nick's Place family. I invite you to get involved in your Nick's Place family. Whether you are an alumni, a present or past family member or a friend of Nick's Place you have a role in this family and I would love for you to contact me or Rhea McVicker to let us know where your interest and talents lie. You can reach me directly at [david.kyle.love@gmail.com](mailto:david.kyle.love@gmail.com) or by phone at 240-370-2539. Rhea can be reached at [rheamcvicker@verizon.net](mailto:rheamcvicker@verizon.net) or at 301-937-0455. Your talent might be as simple as cooking a meal for our current residents or as complex as helping with funding, furnishing or roof repairs—Your Nick's Place Family needs you to be an active participant. We look forward to hearing from you. May this new year bring you peace, joy and most of all serenity.

