



Hi all. First, let me thank every individual, foundation and company that has made the choice to support the young men of Nick's Place and be a part of our success. Our ability to offer our residents a clean, safe, sober and importantly an affordable place to live is attributed to your decision to support our program.

This past February was the 10th year since we lost Nick to the disease of addiction. As you can imagine, I'll never stop missing him and wishing that things could have been different, but having the chance to see the number of "Nick's" come through our doors to begin and maintain their recovery has been a wonderful gift to Barry and me in many, many ways. It is a legacy that I know Nick would never had imagined. It makes me remember the last evening we were together. We had finished our Chinese food and were opening our fortune cookies. Nick's read, "you are admired and loved by many". Nick said that he knew that he wasn't and of course I said, "I love you, Nick." Now these many years later, Nick is loved and admired by the young men and their families whose lives have been changed and saved.

In this newsletter you'll hear from Phil W. who has been at Nick's Place since July 2006. When I asked Phil if he would share a part of his experience with you, he gladly agreed. Phil turned 20 years old with us and celebrated his one-year clean

and sober just this past March. Phil's home group 12-step meeting was jam-packed. It was a wonderful event, and Phil had a huge support group, including his mom and dad and all of us to help him make the date special.

In the last six months we have celebrated four 12-month clean and sober anniversaries. That is unprecedented! This June 18th George S., a former resident and a weekend manager for Nick's Place, will be celebrating five years clean and sober, followed by Leigh P. in July with five years.

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On April 28th, Jason B., three years clean and sober who is a very active alum was married in a beautiful ceremony with over 200 people in attendance including seven Nick's Place former and current residents. The event was especially wonderful for Barry and me because we were invited to join Jason's parents at their table as "family" members. We've had Jason S., 18 months clean and sober pass the first two rounds of testing for Montgomery County Firefighters. He and Oscar P. another former resident started a softball team this Spring comprised of a lot of new friends they have made in recovery. All these lives saved and changed, in part, because of Nick's Place. Just look at what you have helped Nick's Place and our guys achieve!!!!



Left-right: George S., Rhea, Melvin (house manager), Leigh at Jason B.'s wedding

Nick's Place residents have been building a track record of success through working with their sponsors in their 12-step program, taking on responsibility and service positions and by offering their experience, strength and hope with others who are looking to rebuild their lives. I admire the hard work and commitment of our residents and I credit the dedication of our entire team in making sure we are anticipating and also responding to the needs of our guys.

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Our guys Jeff, Phil, Pat, Will and John attended the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) convention that is held annually in Ocean City, Maryland on the weekend of April 14-15th. We believe that this event is so important that Nick's Place partially sponsors their attendance every year. Over 4,000 participants from up and down the East Coast attended. Our guys stayed with Matt M., a 2006 resident whose family owns an apartment in Ocean City. The guys had access to round-the-clock meetings, dances and other workshops. Three of the Nick's Place residents were part of the Hug Patrol that greets people as they enter the convention center. Events like this just reinforce that clean and sober fun is possi-

ble. In fact, they have said that it's kind of nice to be able to remember the good time instead of having it be a fog in their memory. This event never fails to energize the guys to continue to pursue a healthy lifestyle.

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The additions to the Relapse Prevention Education Program have been hugely successful. Working with Dr. Wendy Buskey we developed a series in the 4th quarter of last year that encompassed healthy relationships and anger/impulse management. In the first quarter of this year we added Family Dynamics in the Addicted Family and in May we will be starting a series on Self-esteem and Self-confidence. The goal is to give our guys the opportunity to learn as much about life as possible in the safety of Nick's Place. We make sure that the environment is one in which they can feel safe and comfortable exploring their feelings and asking questions.

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Now, it's my pleasure to let Phil W. tell you in his own words, what Nick's Place and his sobriety means to him. Based on the feedback that I received from newsletter recipients, hearing from the residents

makes Nick's Place much more real to everyone.

"How do you convince yourself you need help, when your own brain tells you every day that you don't. For one moment of utter desperation and a sudden clarity saved my life. Fortunately I was told about treatment centers by my family, but for millions of addicted persons an answer never comes or it comes far too late. Without treatment centers and transitional sober living environments, millions more would grow up, live and die, without any relief from the hellish captivity of an addicted mind.



Addiction is a disease from which there is no known cure. It can however be arrested at some point and recovery is then possible. Recovery never seemed possible to me, but after committing myself into a treatment center, I realized I wasn't alone. For the first time in a long time, I began to open up to the idea of love and hope. I didn't know much about staying clean, but I was told early on all I had to do was take suggestions.

*After four months of treatment I took the suggestion to go to a sober living house. I left for **Nick's Place** on July 12, 2006 once again alone and afraid of the unknown. At Nick's I met Rhea and Barry McVicker and they told me to relax, keep taking suggestions and to stay in the moment. Trying my best to do all three, I got a job and began to go to 12-step meetings. Very slowly I gained confidence in my new way of life. At Nick's Place, I am surrounded by people who love me and care for my well being. Through building trust and friendships I began to take on simple tasks like doing laundry, doing the dishes and asking for help without being struck with overwhelming anxiety. Nick's Place taught me how to humble myself and crawl before I tried to walk.*

Now I am taking baby steps and I am proud of it. I am proud to be from Nick's Place and to have a year clean without a drink or drug. I am proud of where I am and where I want to go. I am proud to be a productive member of society today, instead of the self-proclaimed no good outcast that I once believed I was.

So how do you realize you need help? Through family, friends and people like the folks at Nick's Place telling you everyday that they will love you until you can love yourself. Today, it is a miracle that I can love myself. I love my family and friends too, and I love Nick's Place."

Phil has grown so much, and now we are working with him on his next steps when

he leaves us this summer. He's expressed a real desire to return to college and begin exploring working in the field of addiction treatment. Phil has a great story to tell and I believe he could definitely be someone young people in treatment could relate to easily.

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We are planning an ***OPEN HOUSE on Sunday, October 14th*** to give everyone a chance to see Nick's Place, meet some of our residents, alumni and parents. The planning has just started but please mark the date on your calendar. We'll be sure to continue to remind you of the date and exact time. This event will give us an opportunity to show off some badly needed remodeling/renovation work at Nick's Place that allowed us to create a small meeting space on the first level of the home in which we can hold our Educational sessions and one-on-one sessions with our guys. This change also opened access for us to a back deck that we can utilize through the warm months. Please plan to join us in celebrating the start of another year at Nick's Place.

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Thank you for the opportunity to share our news. Please remember that recovery is a

reality for millions of people and the younger you start, the better chance of success. Also remember that relapse is not failure. As with any chronic and progressive disease, addiction can have long periods of "remission" only to rear its ugly head again. I hope when you hear stories like Phil's, Jason and Matt's (previous newsletter writers) that you will be inspired to help erase the stigma of this disease from our culture. We are hoping that shows like the recent series that aired on **HBO: Addiction** will help educate the public about the disease and bring hope and optimism about recovery. The information in the program really explained the nature of the disease and various treatment options.

We continue to thank God for the blessings we have received and we remain committed to doing all we can to help rebuild lives and reunite families torn apart by this disease. Please tell your family and friends about us. And, if someone you know needs help, please go to www.samhsa.gov to obtain a listing of treatment providers. As always, we are gratified by the love and support you have shown the residents of Nick's Place by helping to support our program.

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.

New layout and printing lovingly provided by our friends at Christ Lutheran Church.