



# Teen & Family Services

2011 Summer Newsletter

## TAFS TEEN & FAMILY SERVICES

### 2011 Successful Sporting Clays Event!

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Annual sporting clays shoot. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we were able to raise enough funding to provide seven scholarships for families to participate in TAFS services this year. I would like to say a special thanks to our corporate sponsors: **Bank of Houston, Bank of Texas, Spark Energy, The Strickland Family Foundation, Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Teen & Family Services Parent Alumni's, and Memorial-Hermann.**

area is denied services based on inability to pay. During these tough economic times the demand for scholarship dollars is higher than ever, so every gift makes a difference. If you would like more information on how to support our mission please contact me at [George@teenandfamilyservices.org](mailto:George@teenandfamilyservices.org).

George Youngblood  
Executive Director  
TAFS

Through our partnership with the community we can continue to reach our goal of making sure no family in the Houston



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#### TAFS Mission Statement

Our mission at TAFS is to provide a community of support for families that protects and nurtures individual empowerment, integrity and self worth through quality mental health services, after-school programming, spiritual development and college preparation.

#### Core Values

- Service
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Respect

#### Spring Break'n to a New Beat

Every year Teen and Family Services offers a spring break retreat to provide a constructive alternative to the otherwise notorious week of "free time". In March of 2011, TAFS teens had the option of attending either a skill-building leadership retreat or an outdoor adventure.

Pedernales Falls, located 30 miles outside of Austin, TX, was the ideal spot for three days of camping, hiking, and

climbing rocks. TAFS staff and teens traveled by caravan from Houston to the park for their trip. The group hiked into a primitive camping area, and set up home base.

The teens enjoyed exploring during the day, cooking their meals, and most of all the heartfelt meeting each night. A TAFS alumni said, "I got closer to the new kids, and they taught me how to relax."

While the camping trip fo-

cused on fun and fellowship, the Leadership retreat was more to the tone of charity and skill building. TAFS spent one week in Tennessee working with Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project).

The Kids' time was spent priming and painting a house, putting up drywall, and building a deck. One of the clients talked about his overall experience of the

## Spring Break'n to a New Beat...Continued

"The trip built my self-esteem up."

Another client expressed a different, but profound experience. He said, "Leadership is difficult, because everyone doesn't always have a positive attitude." To learn that leadership can be challenging, especially in situations in which people are not always positive, is a valuable life lesson for a young person to gain.

Throughout the year Teen and Family provides retreats, trips, workshops, and events for the clients. All are important to each client's personal recovery. Both spring break trips this year aided the

teens with valuable life skills from leadership training, self-esteem building, to just having fun in recovery! We look forward to repeating similar amazing experiences in 2012.

Amanda Stecker  
TAFS APG Staff

### Mission Work



### Camping

### Leadership

## Teen & Family Celebration of Recovery

The 9<sup>th</sup> annual banquet was a memorable experience on May 20, 2011 for all who attended. It was a real treat to see the kids dressed up and celebrating all the hard work that they accomplished along with their families. This year we shook things up a bit and had some entertainment during dinner. Some of our talented students performed on stage while dinner was served by our dedicated Alumni. Whether it was singing, playing guitar, reading a story or speaking about their personal growth, it was magical to see the confidence that they all possessed. It was a privilege to see these amazing kids step onto the stage with such confidence, proof of monumental growth since their first days at TAFS. We all know how intimidating it can be to speak at any type of social gathering, much less perform, entertain and inspire.

The Alumni Family that spoke this year was amazing. It was extremely enjoyable to hear the impact on the entire family as a result of their honest, open minded, willing and self-searching efforts. It was just another testament to the recovery available for the whole family, when

the process is embraced.

The Angel Award this year was presented to Ivan Rhone, Director of Food Service Ministries for Chapelwood church. No, he wasn't given the award for recognition of the delicious food he cooks for each annual banquet. Ivan is a big part in the lives of some of the kids who come through the program. Often we find a student in front of us who is in need of service work or some positive use of their time in the mornings. This is where Ivan is invaluable, as the kids are able to work in the kitchen and not only give back to the community but experience Ivan's wisdom and warm heart as well. The Angel Award is just a small part of the recognition that Ivan deserves for taking these kids under his wing each morning and providing a safe place in which they can learn and give back.

In keeping with the tradition of recognizing our high school graduates, we asked Teen and Family Service's first graduate to present the awards. The high school graduates recognized this year are enrolled to attend the University of Texas, Texas Tech University, University of Houston and beyond. It

is personally enriching to see students who entered the program with very little hope of graduating high school, not only graduate but move on to major universities and colleges all over the U.S.

AT this year's banquet we introduced the Ted Westmoreland Scholarship Fund which will help provide services to families in need. Ted passed away unexpectedly this past April, and was a huge supporter of our mission. He is greatly missed by all who knew him and we are indebted to his family for their continued support.

The banquet closed with a slide show narrating last year's summer retreat and some of the activities students and families have participated in over the course of the last year. It's also my favorite part as it brings tears to many eyes in the room recognized the fellowship and love shared between the kids families. In closing, thank you to all the Alumni who helped serve food and seat guests, to Chapelwood for the space and delicious food, and to all of the staff and participants of TAFS for the hard work they have done over the last year.

Rob Hammett, LCDCI  
TAFS Clinician

## Exits

Is Addiction Your “Exit”?

At Teen and Family Services we work with teenagers and families impacted by addiction and other high-risk behaviors. Addiction comes in many forms – drugs, alcohol, gaming, gambling, food, etc. – and is often characterized by a lack of control, continued use despite perceived negative consequences and acquired tolerance. Addictions can also function as “exits.” What do I mean by that?

While we believe in the disease model of addiction, we also deem that addictive behaviors can be an attempt to satisfy a need in the individual that is not otherwise being met. Underlying all addiction is an ‘emptiness’ in the soul; an unconscious desire for wholeness, connection and acceptance. Unfortunately, as long as the “user” is engaged in the addictive behaviors, they are emotionally absent to their family, friends, partner and other significant people in their life. The addictive behavior serves as a barrier for the abuser to address any internal pain or ongoing anguish that would allow healing to take place. The user “medicates” such feelings away and the addictive behavior becomes an “exit”; an unconscious tool the abuser uses to remain apart and disconnected from others.

As individuals move forward in the recovery proc-

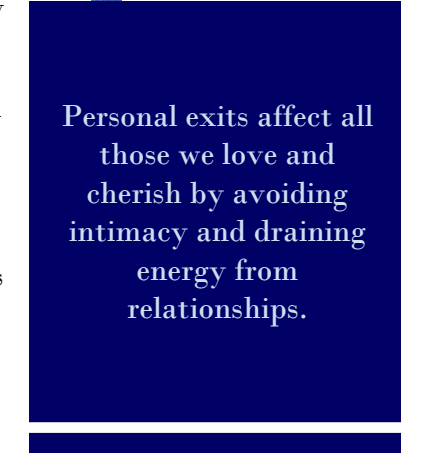
ess, relationship structures shift and beg to be addressed. While the initial focus with the individual and family seeking treatment is the addiction itself, once recovery becomes stabilized work must begin on the deeper relationship issues at hand. Dialogue centering around why the user needed their exit; what scares them about “closing” it; what the exit protects them from; and the impact their exit may have had on their friends, family, partner, etc. is useful. As the individual begins to obtain insight around their addictive behavior, and sets personal behavioral change goals, significant others can assist them by asking about specific behaviors they might do that will help the user to re-engage.

For example, a teenager who begins to understand that one of the reasons why they used drugs was because they were feeling lonely and alienated might find it extremely difficult to talk about the way they felt/feel because they learned how to disconnect from their feelings. As a result the teen may have become isolative in behavior and struggled in expressing emotions. To help the teen close their addiction exit, parents might work on creating an environment where the teen can express thoughts and feelings with the understanding that caregivers will not try to fix the prob-

lem or become upset with what their teen is expressing. Instead, by actively listening to what their teen is conveying and validating their thoughts and feelings – *whether or not they agree* – parents create a new space where their teen feels encouraged to engage and communicate. Such an environment helps to effectively address a core reason as to why some teens use.

Saying goodbye to dysfunctional beliefs and practices, or “exits”, can leave us feeling vulnerable and insecure, but is essential if we want to alleviate deeply rooted fears that affect our ability to love and be loved. The co-dependent in our life, or “enabler”, however, can become unbalanced by such closure as the old behavior no longer functions as the main focus in the relationship. For example, an individual with a food addiction who decides to get help and begins to lose weight may find their partner feeling distressed and discarded as they seek healing through self-help groups, sponsors and therapists instead of them. Personal exits affect all those we love and cherish by avoiding intimacy and draining energy from relationships.

Jamie L. Loveland, LCSW  
Clinical Director  
Teen and Family Services



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# TAFS

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**Visit Us on the web**  
**[www.teenandfamilyservices.org](http://www.teenandfamilyservices.org)**

## **How can you Help Support Teen & Family Services Mission?**

Make a “tribute donation”- great for holidays, birthdays or graduations! We will send a card out to the recipient of the tribute gift that includes your personal s message.

Thanks to your generosity, we can continue in our mission to provide services to teens and families.

Please contact Betsie with any questions you have regarding the ways you can help support Teen & Family Services mission.

Call, 713-464-3950

Email, [Besie@teenandfamilyservices.org](mailto:Besie@teenandfamilyservices.org)

