



Teen & Family Services

2010 Winter Newsletter

Texas Tech Trip

Jamie and I accompanied thirteen juniors and seniors from TAFS on a campus visit to Texas Tech in early November. We visited *The Center for Addiction and Recovery* to discuss services that are available to recovering students on campus, and attended the Thursday Night *Celebration of Sobriety* with about eighty current students in recovery. We were surprised to find out that the speaker at the meeting that night was an alumni of TAFS !

We are proud of all of our graduates successfully attending college while maintaining their commitment to sobriety. We will also be

partnering with *Archway Academy* and *The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston* to host a college night for all recovering teens in the Houston area. We have already received commitments from ten schools that have recovery services available on campus to participate.

We want to continue to encourage the teens in our community to dream big and use their experience's as strength for the future.

George Youngblood, LCDC,
NCACI, ADCIII

Executive Director of Teen and Family Services



At TAFS we encourage our participant's to dream big!

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An Evening in Grace

On December the eighth we gathered together to celebrate the Christmas holiday season with our TAFS family. The banquet theme for this year was *An Evening in Grace*. It was a peaceful evening with elegant decorations set by fire. Our opening speaker for the night, Derek Steele,

set the mood with a reading from his newly published book *Addict at 10* followed by one of our Alumni families' story of grace in their recovery experience. The night brought hope to newcomers, memories for old timers and a sense of optimism for everyone else.

We are grateful for the continuing grace we have seen in our community in 2009, and look forward to more great stories of hope and success in 2010.

Betsie McClimans
Office Manager





This past trip has made it ever so clear that the group is responsible for their collective recovery !

This year's fall retreat went as well as could be expected. We spent a long weekend at Garner State Park in the beauty of the fall leaves and the warm sun. God provided us with cool night time temps and warmer weather in the middle of the day so it was warm enough to swim. The

Fall Retreat-A Collective Effort

group found themselves out of their element and away from the normal hustle of everyday life. Many participants had never camped before -making this a completely new experience for them. Our goal as a staff was to help the group become more interdependent through pushing the alumni group to steer the ship and employ the newer members to participate in that process. I am sure none of the staff could have imagined how much the alumni would rise to the occasion nor could we have seen the

groups desire to be led by them. In all honesty the alumni ran the trip and the staff were only there as observers. This past trip has made it ever so clear that the group is responsible for their collective recovery and that we are but observers on the sideline cheering for the home team.

Jesse

Frazier, LCDCI

TAFS Alumni Working Their Steps While on Retreat!



The retreat was a supreme example of what is available for all who come through our doors.

The alumni retreat was amazing this year. I was fortunate to have Derek Steele from our board of directors to accompany myself and nine of our graduates to Marble Falls, Texas. In attendance were students from Mississippi State, Belmont school of music and various graduates from recent to years past. We rented a van and made the drive after our weekly alumni meeting. The drive to and from a retreat is always one of my favorite times on a trip. We laughed to a comedian, learned about the steps from an A.A speaker and listened to some great driving music. The lake house we stayed at was really beautiful and I am very

grateful to the parent who not only allowed us to stay there but also contributed greatly behind the scenes. The program for this year's retreat was centered on the steps. All the meetings were lead by the alumni and everyone had an opportunity to work all twelve steps, including writing and sharing an inventory with someone. The graduates shared a wealth of knowledge with each other and everyone, myself included learned a great deal from one another. In years past we have always had the participants cook the meals for each other and keep the place tidy. This year the staff embraced the chance to be of service for the participants

and allowed the alumni a venue to not only grow emotionally and spiritually but be pampered as well. It fills me with great joy to see the strong, mature, capable and god-centered men and women our graduates have become. The retreat was a supreme example of what is available for all who come through our doors.

Rob Hammett, LCDCI

Working The Program as a Family

I can't count how frequently it is that a parent or partner associated with a teen in our program asks the question "what does it mean, to work a program?" "I thought my son/daughter was the one who needed to work the steps – what does it mean for me?" Truth be told, substance abuse affects the entire family system, not just the individual struggling with the diagnosis. One of the best metaphors I've ever read about the effects of addiction is in Al-Anon's *Paths to Recovery* (1997). The author writes:

I am a visually oriented person. As I looked at Step One and the word alcohol, I visualized a bottle of whiskey. Later, I visualized a person drinking from the bottle. I could see alcohol going into the person and changing him into the alcoholic... Later my visualization showed me the bottle, the person drinking it, the alcohol flowing from that person to me to family members and business associates, etc. I could see all of us swimming in a sea of alcohol – then coming out, shaking ourselves off, and spreading the disease to even more people. P. 12

It is not enough for the individual in your family who struggles with substance abuse issues to work a 12-step recovery program – you need to work one as well – and there are two reasons why: *enabling* and *co-dependency*.

Enabling occurs when we try to do for the substance abuser what they can do for themselves. Examples of enabling behaviors by parents that I frequently witness as a clinician include parents making excuses for their teen's irresponsible behaviors (i.e., not being able to get out of bed in time for school, community service or legal appointments); cleaning up their teenager's messes (literally and figuratively); and accepting excuses or lies that parents know are unlikely but would rather not confront. In parental defense, enabling doesn't start off in order to assist their teen in continuing addictive behaviors – it starts off as loving support that slowly derails and before you know it you are scrambling to keep all the balls in the air. Unfortunately, as long as parents and family

members continue to rescue the addict from the consequences of their drug use, the drug use will continue.

Co-dependency is another term we hear and read a lot about in recovery. The term describes a pattern of dysfunctional characteristics and behaviors learned by family members so as to survive in a family that is struggling with great emotional pain and stress. Characteristics include denial patterns (minimizing personal feelings); low self esteem (i.e., difficulty asking others to meet your needs); compliance patterns (i.e., a willingness to compromise personal integrity to avoid confrontation or disapproval); and control patterns (i.e., a disproportionate reactivity to situations, issues, behaviors or resentment when people will not let you help). While these characteristics are most often seen in families dealing with substance abuse, they can also develop in families struggling with terminal illness, mental illness, or families that have a secret or problem that they don't want the outside world to witness. By joining together and playing specific roles within the family system to keep the secret, members not only perpetuate the problem but their dysfunctional behavior keeps members from getting their needs met in a healthy, positive, manner.

So...what to do? Work a program. At Teen and Family Services we offer several venues in which much needed healing can take place. Parent meeting on Tuesday nights is set up for parents to be able to talk openly about the way in which their son/daughter/stepson/stepdaughter's addiction continues to affect them and their familial role. It is a support group that is open to TAFS

Mom's and Dad's groups on Thursday evenings concentrate primarily on 12-Step issues such as the concepts of powerlessness, unmanageability, family patterns, individual needs and feelings, doubts and fears.



parents/families and other parents in the community at large. Members share their experience, strength and hope with each other and offer support through both the good and bad times.

Teen and Family Services offers couple's therapy for parent's struggling with issues that need additional attention and support, and provides referrals for individual therapy through our Clinical Care Team which is made up of psychiatrists, clinical social workers, psychologists and counselors throughout greater Houston. For additional support we also recommend that our parents test out the various recovery groups for families with members who are struggling with addiction. ACOA (Adult children of Alcoholics); CODA (Co-Dependency Anonymous); Al-Anon (Friends and Family of Alcoholics); Nar-Anon (Friends & Family of Drug Users); and Gam-Anon (Friends and Family of Gamblers) are just a few.

Finally, find a sponsor – someone who is familiar with what it is like to be a parent of a child in addiction – and work the 12 steps individually. Not only will you benefit from the experience by addressing the unmanageability in your life, it will bring you a new level of understanding, dignity and trust that is authentic as well as healing.

Jamie Loveland, LMSW

Clinical Director



**Teen & Family Services
Chapelwood
United Methodist Church
11140 Greenbay
Houston, TX 77024
Phone 713-464-3950
Fax 832-201-8316**

2nd Annual “College Day and Fair”
Archway Academy at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
6221 Main Street Houston, TX 77030
Friday, January 22nd
College Day: 8am-3pm
College Fair: 7pm-9pm

Visit us On The Web at www.teenandfamilyservices.org

Addict at 10 Book Launch

I want to take an opportunity to introduce people in the TAFS community to a book that was recently published. It was written by a Board Member of our program, who tells a story of transformation in recovery.

Derek’s story is a wonderful example of how resources available in the community can work together to support recovery. Derek received support from a detox center, residential treatment center, halfway house, individual therapy and the twelve-step community. The availability of these

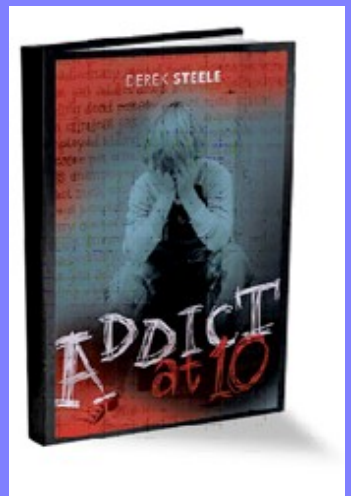
services is what allows people to move through the different stages of recovery. Derek also had people in the community at large who were able to see his potential and encourage his professional growth.

The other feature of the book that is helpful is the time Derek spends talking about Stage II recovery issues and utilizing the tools he learned to work on interpersonal relationships. It is often times very difficult to find good examples of individuals who received the gift of recovery at an early age, and were able to apply the principles so effec-

tively in so many different aspects of their lives.

In the current climate of evidence based practices and outcome studies it is important for all of us to remember that change happens not only because of the techniques employed, but also because of a personal connection with the community of recovery and stories of hope shared by others.

I urge you to read this book, and consider adding it to the library of recovery literature you recommend to the people that you know continue to struggle for hope in the face of addiction.



How I overcame Addiction, Poverty, and Homelessness to Become a Millionaire by 35.
By Derek Steele

**George Youngblood,
LCDC, NCACI, ADCIII
Executive Director of Teen
and Family Services**