

VOLUME XXX

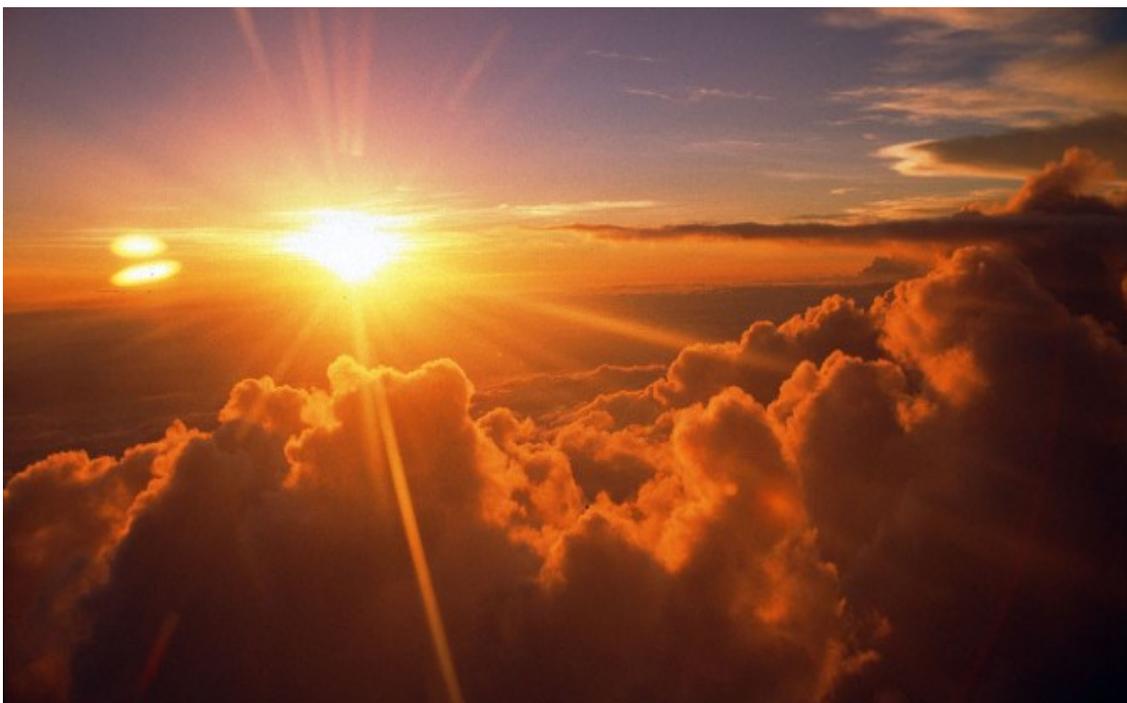
THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

LIVING MIRACLES

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THE
RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
3995 SOUTH
COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA GA
30080

I'm a Living
MIRACLE

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	October 4, 2019	Day Hospital Auditorium
Men's Workshop		Friday—October 11, 2019	Rock Eagle
Women's Fall Workshop		Friday—October 11, 2019	Rock Eagle
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—October 12, 2019	Serenity Garden
Georgia Prepaid Conference		Thursday—October 17, 2019	Savannah Civic Center
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	November 1, 2019	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—November 14, 2019	Serenity Garden
Bowl-A-Thon	1:00pm	Saturday—November ?, 2019	TBA
Gratitude Dinner	5:00pm	Sunday—November 17, 2019	Gym: Set-Up: 3:00pm Dinner: 5:00pm Meeting: 6:30pm
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	December 6, 2019	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—December 14, 2019	Serenity Garden
Scottish Rite Santa	7:00am	Wednesday—December 25, 2019	Scottish Rite Childrens Hospital
New Years Eve Dance	8:00pm	Tuesday—December 31, 2019	Set-Up: 10:00am
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	January 3, 2020	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—January 11, 2020	Serenity Garden
GSSA		Friday—January 2020	Macon
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	February 7, 2020	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—February 15, 2020	Serenity Garden
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	March 6, 2020	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—March 14, 2020	Serenity Garden
Men's Workshop		Friday—March 20, 2020	Rock Eagle
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	April 3, 2020	Day Hospital Auditorium
Garden Work Party	9:00am	Saturday—April 11, 2020	Serenity Garden
Women's Spring Workshop		Friday, April 2020	Rock Eagle
Feed Woodland Ridge	12:00pm	April 2020	Woodland Ridge

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**Thank you to those who submitted articles for this edition of the Newsletter, if we have learned anything in recovery it is that
We cannot keep what we have if we do not give it away!**

If you would like to submit an article for the next Newsletter, please email it to Elaine B. at ehb216@yahoo.com or Dawn L. @ dawnliistro@gmail.com using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

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OBJECT OF WONDER

SUBMITTED BY: RAY W.

An “object of wonder”? Yes, when something truly wonderful occurs, and the observer exclaims, “it’s a *miracle*!” Comes from the old Latin word *miraculum*, and according to Webster’s College Dictionary means “an extraordinary occurrence that surpasses all known human powers or natural forces and is ascribed to a divine or supernatural cause, especially to God.” I immediately thought of that scene in the *Big Book* (p. 11) where Ebby Thatcher – an alcoholic thought incurable and destined for total destruction – comes to see Bill W and testifies to his newfound sobriety. “Had this power [of recovery] originated in him?”, Bill mused and concluded: “Obviously it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me at the minute; and this was none at all.”

There sat Ebby, now an

“object of wonder” to Bill who then admitted, “That floored me.” Yes, such an “object of wonder” does indeed amaze the one who experiences it, an experience that Bill goes on to describe: “Here was something at work in the human heart which had done the impossible. My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table. He shouted great tidings.” So it is with such an “object of wonder”!

And so it is with almost any AA meeting, where one hears – and sees! – the fruit of such miracles, including my own. For nothing short of a miracle could have snatched me from the road of destruction that I was on, traveling ever faster away from all sanity and from the last shreds of happiness. My life had become a daily exercise in futility, trying to gain “freedom” from the “burden”

of my work, of friends and family, from all those daily “intrusions” upon my plan to “relax” by having another drink. I had become an “object of despair” to myself and to others. But when I began to see the great changes in others, changes from near-death to life, I had to admit – now joyfully – that it “floored me.”

It’s truly wonderful to no longer dread the dawning of each day, the rising of the sun as I do my Eleventh Step, and the beginning of the fulfillment of the new day’s obligations (and opportunities) – all without the “need” to drink in order to cope. All this still floors me at times, floors me so thoroughly that I put my knees on the floor and give thanks to the Source of all these “objects of wonder,” both those I’ve experienced personally as well as those the fruit of which is so marvelously present in those around me here at Ridgeview and in AA.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

Q1: Which of the Twelve Traditions in the Day Hospital has the wrong word at the end?

Q2: Where is the sign "Life is like a box of chocolates" located?

Q3: What was the original color of the elephant in front of the Administration Building?

Q4: In what year was the Serenity Garden built?

Q5: How many Spring Fling T-shirts were used to make the quilt on display in Pro-North building?

Answers on page 14

SPRING FLING 2019 DONATIONS

Bad Daddy's Burger Bar	Richard & Fran Becker
Blue Moon Pizza	Salon Red
Davinci's Pizza	Sky King Fireworks
Drew's Wood Works	Thai Of Austell
Ebony & Ivory BBQ	The Little Market Place – Shop
Los Bravos Mexican Restaurant	The Massage Guru
Love Street	Varners Restaurant
McCray's Tavern	Vickery Hardware
Mcentyre's Bakery	Woodstock Antiques
Mezza Luna	Yoltz Salon
Monterrey Mexican Food	Zucca Pizzeria / The Corner Taqueria
Rev Coffee	

2019 HOLE SPONSORS
SAM ANDERS SERENITY SCRAMBLE



Atlanta Falcons
Danny Scott
Cam Still
Sharon Linder



Wade Ford
Twin Lakes Recovery Ctr.
Sam Anders
Ridgeview Institute

A MIRACLE EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

“Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss.” – Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 89

I consider one of the greatest miracles ever is getting to experience recovery each and every day. I don't mean just my own recovery, but the recovery of others who were just as hopeless and defeated as I was when I first got to Ridgeview. Getting to share with others, to read the AA literature together, to genuinely care

about someone other than myself – these are miracles to me.

I realize that miracles are happening all the time if I just pay attention to what is going on around me. “For me, every hour of every day and night is an unspeakably perfect miracle.” (Walt Whitman)

IN PLACES WE DON'T CHOOSE

SUBMITTED BY: RENEE S.

I came to Ridgeview a little over a year ago in desperation because of insomnia and anxiety. In my suffering, I was beginning to think that I might be better off dead. That scared me because I had never had suicidal thoughts before. I had to lay down my pride, enter a mental hospital, and put myself at the mercy of the doctors here. And I found mercy. In my church, we sing a song that says, "He makes all things new/ In places we don't choose." Well, I would never have chosen Ridgeview if I hadn't had to. But through the Alumni Association, I have found new friends, a new family of people who understand me. That is a gift.

"He makes all things new/ In places we don't choose."
Well, I would never have chosen Ridgeview ...

The medications I was given gave me relief from the insomnia and anxiety for a whole year. There were also some rare side effects that still affect my speech and muscle tone. I trust I will get those back. But even if I don't, I have still come out ahead. There is a poem, attributed to an unknown soldier, which sums it up:
I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for but got everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am, among all people, most richly blessed.



DISCOVERING MY MIRACLES

SUBMITTED BY: BRANDY C.

I have been depressed for as long as I can remember. As I got older, things got worse: losing jobs, not leaving my home or getting out of bed, as well as having angry outbursts for no reason. I finally decided to get help. I was diagnosed as bipolar, and my therapist at the time suggested an Intensive Outpatient program to get out of the house, have a schedule, and learn to meet and communicate with people.

I.O.P was a blast, but it was also work. Having to get up, go outside, catch the bus, and be around people was daunting at first. I was unsure of what I was doing, but I was learning about myself. In my last couple of weeks, I was wondering what I was going to do next. I didn't just want to sit on all of these tools I had learned. Besides, my only alternative was more depression, and

possibly self-harm.

I decided I should give back and volunteer. After many inquiries, I finally met the Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee director, who turned out to be a beautiful soul. He bluntly told me to just show up at the Pro North building on a Thursday. Once I showed up, I met an awesome cheerleader who told me this was where the *real* healing begins. I didn't believe that statement then, but now I'm another cheerleader saying the same thing!

When I attended my first alumni meeting, I was welcomed. It was intimidating at first, but I started using my tools to communicate. Over time, the hugs, smiles, and laughs started to heal my broken childhood. I celebrated my very first Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve with

the Alumni. I have made friends and family, when I truly thought I couldn't even be likable enough to have a social life. Even my I.O.P case manager has become my new therapist... And the miracles keep coming! Words cannot express the heartfelt gratitude that I have for this experience. Ridgeview has truly become my home.



MIRACLES

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C.

“The age of miracles is upon us.” This has been my experience since I came into Alcoholics Anonymous. In fact, my entire life has been filled with miracles that I never realized until I came into the program and started working the Twelve Steps.

For this article, however, I’m not going to write a story about the marvelous gifts that have been given to me in abundance. With my wife Lisa’s permission, I want to relate a recent set of miracles that she experienced while in California.

Lisa and I received a phone call from her son’s fiancée one Friday morning informing us that Dustin, Lisa’s son, had just been rushed to the hospital after suffering a seizure. Dustin and his fiancée, Hillary, had recently moved to Sacramento and didn’t know anybody yet. While my wife was getting ready, I helped her pack, and we somehow purchased a plane ticket for a flight that was due to leave in a few hours. We hectically rushed to Hartsfield-Jackson, and Lisa boarded her plane on time. During the trip to the airport, Lisa was on the phone with her AA as well as her Al-Anon sponsors. Word travelled fast and friends, sponsees and relatives (mine as well as hers) started calling. After dropping my wife off, my phone continued to blow up with phone calls. I realized that Alcoholics Anonymous is a tight-knit family that cares for one another. Miracle number one!

Keep up with me now, because the miracles are just beginning. Lisa made it out to California after 12 hours of flight delays and plane changes. Her son was in ICU diagnosed with a tumor on his brain. Lisa spent three or four days sleeping in the ICU ward with her son. Dustin and Hillary’s apartment was starting to get small and crowded, especially after some of their friends began showing up from Atlanta. Once Dustin was stabilized, he was

transferred to a regular room. Being removed from the respirator, her son was now able to talk and express his strong displeasure with the entire process thus far! I wasn’t there, but I can only imagine that it was a very colorful diatribe. Lisa deemed this to be an appropriate time to find an AA meeting.

As God would have it, the closest meeting was a 10-minute walk from the hospital. Lisa met several women with long-term sobriety who reached out to her and gave her a ride back to the hospital that night. The following evening, Lisa met one of the women, named Joey, for dinner before the meeting. Joey invited Lisa to come over to “Ladies Game Night” at the home of one of the other women.

Lisa was talking to Joey one night and mentioned that she missed her two “frou-frou” dogs back home. Joey told Lisa that she had a “frou-frou” dog named Molly Dawg, and that she should come over and visit. The next day my wife went over and met Molly Dawg. It was during this visit that Joey mentioned to Lisa that she had an extra room with a key to the house. Since Dustin and Hillary’s apartment was small, my wife decided to accept Joey’s offer.

Cutting to the chase, after eight days in the hospital, the doctors determined that Dustin’s tumor was not malignant and could be treated with medication. He was discharged. During this time, Hillary’s mother had flown in from New York to be with “the kids.” Back in May or June, before any of this happened, the couple had planned on getting married sometime in August by a Justice of the Peace, without telling anyone. However, since both of the mothers were in California visiting, they decided to get married the following weekend. Amidst all the chaos of post hospital check-ups, out of town friends, etc.,

Dustin and Hillary were able to get a marriage license within 24 hours (which I guess is unheard of). Being on a budget, they were now wondering how to find a Justice of the Peace and how much would it cost? It so happens that Lisa’s friend Joey had a license that enabled her to perform weddings. Thus, Joey performed a beautiful ceremony at the World Peace Rose Garden in downtown Sacramento – free of charge. You can’t make this stuff up!

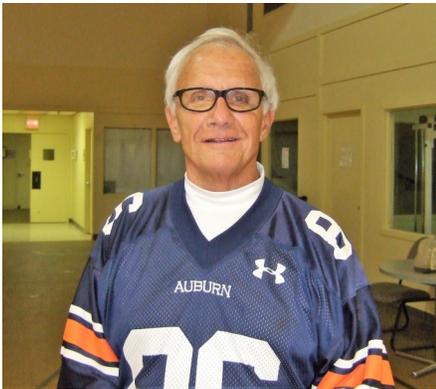
It’s six weeks later as I’m writing this. Lisa is back home. The happy couple are “chilling in CA,” (it’s what they say in California). Lisa talks to the newlyweds from time to time to see how Dustin’s health is. We don’t have to worry too much, however. Joey is also a registered nurse who has agreed to stay connected with the newlyweds.

This is just another example of God showing off. It’s been my experience over the years that if you keep vigilant with your program and pay attention throughout the day, you’ll catch your Higher Power loving you.



THURSDAYS WITH SAM

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.



PART I (Part 2 coming in Spring 2020)

Sam is a tanned, gray-haired, seventy four year old man, who stands about five and a half feet tall. The interview took place at his office on Wednesday April 24, 2013 and lasted approximately ninety minutes. His southern drawl and sincere manner accounted for the fact that the conversation flew by in an instant. There was never a moment of uncomfortable silence or a display of hesitancy regarding his self-reflection, and it was apparent that Sam is a man who is comfortable in his own skin.

That is the case in Sam's life now, but it soon became evident that "feeling less than" everyone else was how he had spent most of his life. It was not until he was 43, and got clean and sober from drugs and alcohol, that the feeling of un-ease had been lifted. Immense gratitude for the gifts of 30 years of sobriety, and a belief in a God of his understanding are the things that are paramount according to the world of Sam. Understanding his background may shed some light on his present state of mind and explain the overwhelming sense of grace he exhibits.

"I'm Sam, I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict" is how he describes him-

self in certain venues, so the memory of his first drink at 8 years old is important to him. That drink started a cycle of using outside substances to feel like he belonged. The rise and fall (professionally and personally) that inevitably comes with addiction was necessary for Sam to experience in order for him to arrive at the full life he enjoys today. The end of his first marriage brought him to the love of his life, Sharlot, and his eyes sparkle whenever he mentions her. Losing his prestigious banking career due to his alcoholism and self-destructive behavior led him to the important position he still holds with a treatment center twenty-eight years later. He loves his job. Being the continuing care coordinator feels to him like he "hasn't worked a day since" he arrived. Finally, stumbling into the program of Alcoholics Anonymous has introduced him to friendships and healthy relationships he never dreamed of having in the past. Sam makes it clear that, what he thought were tragic episodes, in reality have turned out to be blessings. Life lessons that have made him into the man he is today.

Sam grew up in a small town (Villa Rica, Ga.) of a couple thousand residents. His family was large and influential, thanks mostly to his grandfather, who was a "big fish in a small pond". Sam felt very loved by the town and his extended family, but his parents had divorced before little Sammy was born. That event played a large part in determining his life course. Despite the love showered on him, he remembers feeling like "I was always an outsider looking in the window" at everyone else. He

just was never quite comfortable in his own skin. A single parent, his mom worked multiple jobs in order to spoil him with material things. This love of "shiny things" would set the stage for Sam to search for inner happiness with outside remedies. Awards for achievements in sports followed and his mom's attitude

Losing his prestigious banking career due to his alcoholism and self-destructive behavior led him to the important position he still holds with a treatment center twenty-eight years later.

was that if he didn't excel, he wasn't trying hard enough. A close relationship with an uncle eventually faded when that uncle had a son of his own and moved further away. Drinking, college, and a respectable position in the world of finance would fill the void in his life,

temporarily.

Upon graduating college, he went to work at his grandfather's bank. According to expectations from his family, Sam assumed the position he was supposed to have until retirement. He was obsessed with the prestige and respect that came with what he did for a living. To Sam, his career defined who he was as a person. Marriage, as expected, followed shortly thereafter. Eventually, due to his progressing alcoholism, he lost his job, and his marriage, and his home. At 42 years old, his self-concept was destroyed when he moved back in with his mom. Feeling like a failure with no identity, that "death" of his old life miraculously led Sam to his new life of love (24 year marriage) and a rewarding career. Getting sober at a treatment center changed his life and a fateful opportunity soon came knocking. Sam emphasizes that he is extremely grateful to his current employer, Ridgeview Institute, for offering him a

THURSDAYS WITH SAM (CON'T.)

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

chance when he was going through a tough time.

He could not have imagined, at the time, that the day would come when there would be a plaque on the wall of Ridgeview acknowledging him, as well as an auditorium named after him! There is a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in Sam's well-deserved recognition. He has touched the hearts of thousands of struggling alcoholics and addicts over the last thirty years, and humbly states that he is overwhelmed to have been a part of the Ridgeview Alumni Association, "the envy of other treatment centers around the country". He proudly adds that his mother was a renowned basketball coach and teacher, who had a gym named after her at Villa Rica High School. Another "small" accomplishment in his rich family history was the fact that his uncle Asa Candler started the Coca Cola Company. So maybe there was a little pressure to over-achieve in Sam's world.

He recalls that his parents' divorce was the first in his large extended family, but most of his memories of childhood were of happy times with vacations and celebrations. Everyone congregated at his Grand Daddy's large house on Sundays for dinner. Another tradition was that the "Big House" was the place where Christmas was experienced for himself and many of the relatives. The fact that the property housed the only tennis courts in town also made it a destination for large crowds and constant activity. Summers at beach on the Florida panhandle were a great way to pass the time during his adolescent and early teen years. Sam states that in looking back over those seemingly happy times, he realizes there was one constant companion: fear.

Part of the fear could have been caused by the high expectations placed on Sam from an early age. He explains that his family had pretty much planned his life for him regarding school, the bank, and marriage. Making his own choices didn't really happen until he had hit bottom and they were forced upon him. "Not so much choices, but through grace or something, doors opened that I walked through" is how Sam recalls it. He said that "I always searched for peace, and I have finally found it".

One of the latest challenges he has faced has been the gradual loss of his vision. Macular Degeneration has forced him to relinquish his driving license and accept the help of others regarding transportation. This loss of role identity and independence has not been easy for Sam, but like many of his past experiences, there have been numerous blessings as a result of this physical malady. The opportunity to give back something to Sam after all that he has done for so many people is something special indeed. Staying openminded and willing, Sam has adapted quite nicely and appears to accept the concept of being "chauffeured" around. The team of drivers responsible for getting Sam to and from work (and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings) has received more in return than they could have ever hoped for. In a classic case of reciprocal exchanges, "alone time" in a car with Sam has led to deeper friendships and more loving relationships than ever for all parties involved.

It may be accurate to say that Sam is no longer defined by what he does for a living, but it is also true that his "family" today consists largely of those friends he has in recovery. This social network is what helps keep him

young in spirit and renders retirement talk a moot subject. The passing years have seemed to simply add more love and wisdom to his role of mentor in the lives of numerous alcoholics and drug addicts. Giving back to others in need is obviously keeping Sam productive and chronological age is not a measurement that overly concerns him. He admits that "I'm not thrilled with being seventy four and I am not quite accepting of death, but I'm working on it".

He emphasizes that an important part of his wellbeing is his relationship with a higher power. It is not a religion, but a "spirituality" that comforts him in times of stress. The concept of a connection with a God of his understanding came to him through the twelve steps and the recovery process. Practicing spiritual principles in every area of his life gives him the comfort and peace that had been missing for so long. That relationship with a higher power, his loving wife, and close friends has filled that hole in his soul that shiny things, alcohol, or drugs could never fill.

One cannot leave the presence of this man without feeling they have just experienced an encounter with someone who has a loving heart and a warm soul. Sam is a person who is aware of his many blessings, humble about his talents, and grateful for the life he has today. There is not much more anyone can hope to achieve!

(END OF PART I)



WORD SEARCH

SUBMITTED BY: DAWN L.

I	Z	I	L	Q	C	S	H	J	S	P	O	N	S	E	E	N	E	A	R
D	E	P	R	E	S	S	I	O	N	X	B	W	U	D	A	Q	R	Y	Z
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ACCEPTANCE

AFTERCARE

ALCOHOLISM

BIG BOOK

COURAGE

DEPRESSION

FAITH

FEAR

HONESTY

HOPELESSNESS

HOW

HUMILITY

OBSESSION

OPEN

PATIENCE

RECOVERY

RELAPSE

SERENITY

SOLUTION

SPONSEE

SPONSOR

SURRENDER

TWELE AND TWELVE

WILLING

WISDOM



SPONSORING MIRACLES

SUBMITTED BY: BLESSING D.

“Here was something at work in a human heart which had done the impossible. My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table.”

“Bill’s Story,” [The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

My name is Blessing, and I’m an alcoholic and an addict. My disease took me to my knees in utter despair and hopelessness almost five years ago. I “came to” in Ridgeview detox, then slowly “came to believe” within the rooms of alumni, aftercare, meetings, and with the help of my sponsor and the Twelve Steps. I wake up every day grateful to be alive, because it’s a miracle I survived my past. But enough about me. My joy comes from those I am fortunate enough to sponsor. They are the miracles in my life. My Higher Power works through them and the other amazing men and women in the program. When trying to decide what to write for the newsletter, God tapped me on the shoulder and reminded me of a story. This is the story of how I met Jenn.

On Sundays I chair meetings in the detox unit. The stories I hear week after week are raw and real and keep alive my gratitude. I’ve been fortunate to meet and sponsor several women from this service work. Just over two years ago, a woman named Jenn sat in one of these meetings. She had the look of desperation that most do, but there was something else in her words that caught my attention. I didn’t know what it was then, but I do now. It was willingness. It was hope. It was my Higher Power showing me a miracle.

I didn’t get the chance to

talk to her after the meeting. And although we announce alumni and aftercare at each meeting, most are not ready to hear the message. Most don’t take advantage of what Ridgeview alumni has to offer, but every once in a while, I see it happen. They come to aftercare, they start giving back, and the light comes on. And that makes all the difference in the world.

But I didn’t reunite with Jenn in alumni or aftercare. It turns out Jenn had been trying to find me. Because my name is unique, I’ve been mistakenly called by other denominations including Faith, Hope, and Charity. Jenn, however, came up with a totally new moniker for me. She started asking around in outpatient if anyone knew “Miracle” who

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

did the detox meetings. Of course, nobody knew who Miracle was, and assumed Jenn may have been a little foggy in detox.

A week later, on a Sunday night, I happened to be telling my story at Ridgeview. Jenn wasn’t planning on attending, but

at the last moment someone called her and told her she needed to go. In bed and in her pajamas, Jenn wavered, but hopped out of bed and showed up (still in her pajamas), and heard my story. In all my drinking and using days, I was never anyone’s Miracle or Blessing. In fact, I was quite the opposite. But that night Jenn said I was hers. I wasn’t planning on taking on new sponsees, but when she asked me to sponsor her, I found myself saying yes.

Gandhi once said: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Since I sucked the life out of the universe for so many years because of my disease, the best way I can give back to this world is by helping others. If I’m

stressed, anxious or living in fear, my old way of thinking had me reach for chemical confidence to quiet the demons. Today I reach out to others and ask what they are going through. Jenn has gone through many difficult times in recovery, and that’s her story to tell. But walking side by side with her on her journey has shown me that in recovery anything is possible. I’ve seen miracles in her life happen over and over, all because she was willing to ask for help and put in the hard work. Fear, anger and resentment have been replaced with laughter, grace and dignity.

Like all of us, Jenn is a living miracle. She will credit me with her new-found freedom and happiness, but I only did for her what my sponsor did for me. Because I am also a living miracle. My sponsor’s name is Amy. The night before I checked in to Ridgeview, Amy stayed up all night to make sure I was still breathing. She arranged my intervention and called Ridgeview to ensure there was a room available. I will credit Amy for my life, and she will credit her sponsor, Diane. Diane will credit Clancy. . . .

Today, Jenn is an active member of the Ridgeview recovery community. She is on the alumni steering committee, sponsors several women and shares her experience, strength and hope in the detox meetings. How many new generations of miracles will be impacted by Jenn’s sponsorship? How many lives will be touched sitting across from Jenn at her kitchen table? I know I will be forever grateful that she was looking for a Miracle, and instead found a Blessing.



THE MIRACLE IS IN THE MESSAGE

SUBMITTED BY: LEIGH ANNE H.

Well I wasn't really planning on writing about miracles in recovery, but when I reflect on my life in addiction, depression, PTSD, and anxiety, and then on all of the miracles that have happened in recovery, I said heck yeah, I'll write an article! It says in the Big Book that we share with others about our release from Alcoholism so that they know it is possible. Many people passed that message on to me, so I feel it is my duty as a recovering person to share my experience, strength and hope.

There is so much history with my story, and I hope to not bore you with too much of it. I was born in Atlanta, the third of four children to a homemaker and a prominent veterinarian. My first real memories were of fear and terror, shame and guilt. I KNEW I wasn't supposed to be here.

From an early age I fantasized about being Joan of Arc and burning on the stake or overdosing like Marilyn Monroe; simply stated, I had a death wish... anything to get out of this place of violence, mental, emotional and verbal torture. First there were horses and quail hunting, dangerous in itself, but to a child in third and fourth grade, I found myself injured, but again, I escaped the death I so truly desired. As I grew older, alcohol, boys, and drugs became my new normal. I used to die; and died to use daily. All my junkie friends began to die, and I just knew my time was coming.

I left Atlanta and drove to California for a "fresh Start". They would "understand me" there. I was homeless, alone, addicted, lonely, scared, and completely hopeless. After three years of living like this, I was done with the lifestyle, but not the drugs. I came back Atlanta, got a job and succeeded in lower management at an upscale California restaurant chain and surprisingly, I did well and stayed on a good fitting for a while. You see, the thing with addicts is we can spot one another without a word of exchange. His name was Bob, and the supply was strong, plentiful, and close by.

... during my last arrest, I heard my higher power's voice THUNDER through the holding cell stating, "this isn't the life that I intended for you!!!!".

This was the beginning of my downward spiral, never again to rise above as an alcoholic or addict who could classify themselves as a "managing or functioning" addict / alcoholic. In the Big Book, it talks of *incomprehensible demoralization*. I can always recall that line, as I truly understood what they meant.

I was in and out of jail for about six months, and during my last arrest, I heard my higher power's voice THUNDER through the holding cell stating, "this isn't the life that I intended for you!!!!". Whoa? Did anyone else hear that???? All I knew was I better bring my A game this time. No more death wishes, no more not listening, no more doing the wrong thing, no more being a statistic!!! God has PLANS for me!!!

So, I got serious, went to Ridgeview (more than once), I went to Hope Homes for 18 months, met my earth person husband while I was living there. We married and had two beautiful, smart, funny and empathetic little girls and I am so proud to call them mine. My first relapse was after the birth of my first daughter as postpartum settled in. So, I went back to Ridgeview. It wasn't the last relapse or "refresher course" I needed, there were others. It was during my last visit to Ridgeview; I saw Eddie in detox and told him that this was the last time. He looked at me and said he had heard that from me before. That cut me like a knife, but it was what I needed to hear. I vowed to do everything suggested, and I have continued to do so. I knew this place was special and have known for a long time it would be the cornerstone of my recovery.

Today I have a fantastic sponsor and home group. I found a job I absolutely adore. I have the incredible support of the wonderful Ridgeview staff, doctors, therapists, and above it all, an UNBELIEVABLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and my amazing Aftercare Group which holds me accountable and I love seeing weekly! I LOVE MY LIFE AND THE FOLKS IN IT!!! Death is no longer my desire, but I do not fear it. Without finding Ridgeview, staff like Sam, Eddie, Donna, Bill, Tyroe, and the Lunch Ladies, all who showed me love when I could not love myself, without them I don't know where I'd be! This place has the sweetest soul!

“IT JUST HAPPENED”

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

Some call them miracles; some call them coincidences. Either way, when some positive thing happens in our lives without logical explanation, why analyze it? For instance, my last geographical “cure” for my alcoholism was a move from Florida to Atlanta where we just *happened* to buy a place within five minutes of Smyrna Hospital (that's what it was in 1990) and Ridgeview. On the day of my last drink, it just *happened* that one of

my brothers was visiting from Texas, just *happened* that he was present when I had a seizure. He called 911, which saved my life as I would have bled out on my basement floor if he had not been there.

After five days of IV detox, I was discharged from the hospital and admitted into Ridgeview where my wife had secured a bed for me. There I learned about the disease of alcoholism and about Alco-

holics Anonymous. It just *happened* that the meeting I was bused to, the “Sons of Serenity” Monday night at St. Jude's Episcopal Church on Windy Hill Road, turned out to be my home group. I just *happened* to find a sponsor there who helped me evolve from a selfish, self-centered person to a productive member of society.

GOD, MY LIFE IS IN YOUR HANDS

SUBMITTED BY: DONNA J.

Miracle /'mirək(ə)/ *noun* – a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.

Many events in my life have occurred which I Know a Devine Intervention took place, yet not fully understanding the depth of the true miracles. However, there are two events that shaped my life and beliefs that I'd like to share with you:

Picture it: a rainy night in Stone Mountain, GA on July 15, 1984. After church one Sunday, eight teenagers pile into a white Jeep Wrangler with a rag top and manual transmission...a rather crowded vehicle with two in the front, three in the back, two above the fender wells and one dude crammed in way back on the spare tire! I was riding on the driver's side fender well in the back, holding on to the roll bar. After a series of events got us lost on the way to the movie theater, the weight of the Jeep and speeding on slick roads, the Jeep flipped onto the passenger side and started spinning in the road. No traffic was around! As I'm dangling from the roll bar – with the fear that if the vehicle we hit the curb, it would flip and I'd be crushed – I said a prayer: “God, my life is in Your hands”, and I let go of the roll

bar. I came to walking down the double yellow line in the road with sirens and lights flashing everywhere, not realizing that I had just been spared certain death and had been knocked out for a little while, at least time enough for the emergency vehicles to arrive. No one was seriously injured.

I was 15 years old and never knew my faith in my God to be stronger.

Until July 12, 2017. An average Wednesday night and poor health had been building as I continued to drink myself into oblivion day after day for about six weeks. This night wasn't much different, except I blacked out yet continued drinking. As it has been told to me, at some point during the evening I phoned my mother. She could hear the TV in the background, but I never spoke. Mom hung up and called me back... somehow I answered the phone, yet still not able to speak. Unbeknownst to her, I was in a blackout with alcohol poisoning setting in fast and furious. Very worried and concerned, she called my sister to drive over to check on me. My sister was angry and didn't want to; this wasn't the first time she had come to my rescue. When she and my brother-in-law arrived, I was unresponsive. A 911 call, ambulance, three strong paramedics lifting my lifeless body onto

the gurney for rapid transport to the emergency room is what followed. The doctors advised my family that no plan of action would be made until I woke up, as my blood alcohol level was above that which could induce a coma. Approximately six hours later, I remember waking in that ER bed to the sight of my mother with her head in her hands in prayer. The feeling I had in that moment and the prayer in my heart was “God, my life is in Your hands”. When the doctors came in and asked me if I choose to live or choose to die, I chose to live then and I continue to choose it one day at a time, thanks to Divine Intervention of events from a phone call I don't recall making and my mother's intuition. I sought treatment at Ridgeview Institute and continue with the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

God never left me, even when I strayed from daily communication with Him. I was 48 years old and have never known my faith in my God to be stronger. I know that I *Know* God spared me that night, so I live my life to show others what a relationship with a higher power can bring: Peace, love, and serenity.

Sober since 07/13/2017

MYSTERIES SOLVED

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

A1: Tradition 8 has the words "special people" instead of "special workers".

A2: In the main entrance arbor to the Serenity Garden.

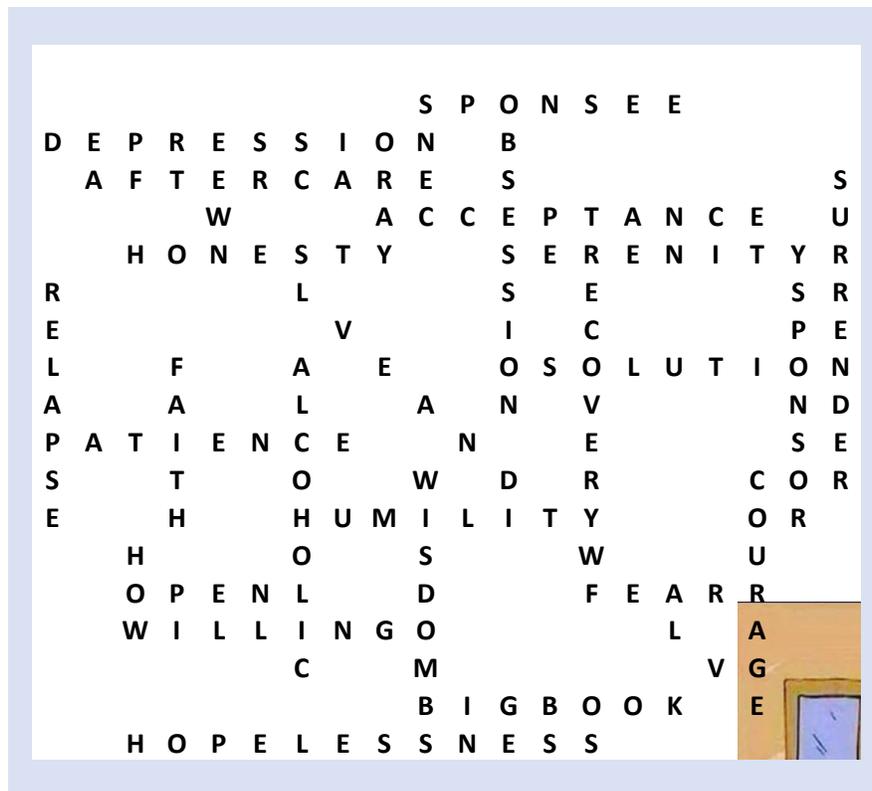
A3: Gray; it has always been gray.

A4: 2000.

A5: 20.

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

SUBMITTED BY: DAWN L.



Remember hitting your bottom? Do you remember that moment when you first began to feel some hope? Looking back, can you remember those angels who appeared at that precise moment when you needed help the most? I can.

I can also remember the abject fear of, "How am I going to pay for this?" No insurance, no real savings, no trust fund, no golden benefactor. Scared, having hit my bottom, finally able to ask for help. I was in a safe place. The rest would just have to take care of itself.

Treatment costs money, real money. Programs, therapies, prescriptions, food, housing and all the while life continues to go on outside without us. As active members of the Ridgeview Alumni Association our fund raising goal is an endowment fund that will one day be able to help financially that person currently in treatment. Whether it's more time in treatment, another couple of days in a half-way house, medications, daycare so the patient can make it to the program that week, the needs can be overwhelming at times. We all know how powerful a helping hand at that critical moment can make or break a spirit.

Our goal for the Endowment Fund has to be set high if we are to be able to generate any kind of meaningful income. To date we have raised \$111,000 towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account over which the Alumni Steering Committee has sole control.

When the day comes, and it will, that we are in a financial position to begin offering grants to patients, a review committee will be established. This group will be comprised of active Steering Committee members who have demonstrated a record of service, and a representative from the hospital. The committee will review the requests and make grants based on need, the patient's participation in their own recovery, and the patient's treatment team's input.

Obviously we are a ways down the road from making any grants. The next several years are about increasing awareness of our project, raising and investing the donations that come our way. Today, you can make a difference in the life of that person who is still out there.

Won't you make a commitment to be someone's angel, just for today? We have.

Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund Campaign

Date: _____

YES, I want to contribute to the Alumni Endowment Fund. I've been in Recovery _____ years and would like to give back \$_____.

YES, I am not an Alumni; however, I wish to contribute to the Endowment Fund. As a family member, friend, business owner or corporate representative/sponsor. Here is my donation of \$_____.

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Ridgeview Alumni Association is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee, 3995 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, GA 30080-6397

Serenity Garden—Memorial Brick Order Form

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Message to be engraved on brick: (2 Lines/14 characters per line, includes spaces) Cost \$30.00

(Line 1) _____

(Line 2) _____

* Please fill out name and contact number, even if you wish this to be an anonymous contribution, so we may contact you in case any questions arise about the inscription.

The Ridgeview Alumni Association is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee, 3995 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, GA 30080-6397

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Please put "Newsletter" in the subject line.

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Love & Service,
Communications Committee

