

# A View from Serenity Hill



La Hacienda's Newsletter for Alumni

February 2013

## What's New with Alumni Services

La Hacienda's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year brought some changes to our Alumni Services Department. First of all, Krystle Conner moved from doing follow-up phone calls for the past two years to a new position, Alumni Support Representative. Krystle jumped in with both feet in organizing the reunion last September and did a wonderful job. She also began focusing more of her time on Big Book and Step Study lectures with the patients as well as helping them navigate through step work. Louis Romano expanded his role with alumni and has begun visiting alumni meetings in our various cities and helping with other alumni activities, while continuing with Big Book lectures and step work with the patients. Pam Searfoss, who you may have known as Patient Advocate or working at the gate greeting everyone coming and going, has joined us as the Alumni Follow-Up Coordinator. Pam took Krystle's place as the voice on the phone who calls to check in and see how alumni in their first year are doing. Sherri Layton gives leadership to the department in her role as Outpatient Services Administrator. She has been with La Hacienda for 21 years and was part of the group that defined our One Voice, One Message several years ago.

### Looking ahead –

The Alumni Services staff has been more active in our alumni groups around the state and will continue to be in the future. Krystle, Louis and Sherri have all been visiting our meetings and we were at each of the Christmas parties. It is such an encouragement to us to see our alumni there each week ready to reach out to the new person coming home from treatment and beginning to find their way in the recovery community. This support is so critical, as many of you have experienced in your own journey. Those of us back here in Hunt are only able to offer limited support because we just aren't close by. We have to rely on local alumni to be that first hand to reach out and we want to do all we can to enable our alumni and our alumni groups to be best prepared to do that. To that end, you will continue to see us at local alumni meetings, generally speaking once a month. Let us know if you would like someone for a speaker meeting. We have clinical staff members who are excited to visit alumni groups as well.

We are working with conference committees to create opportunities for our alumni to participate in their local conference around the state.

We encourage all of our alumni groups to attend the reunion May 3 – 5<sup>th</sup>. We hope each group will have some type of city gathering during Reunion. We can help you get information to do that; just let us know. Please note the date change from September!! We also invite you to submit a design for the reunion t-shirt! Send to [slayton@lahacienda.com](mailto:slayton@lahacienda.com) by 5 pm on February 28th.

Our Business Development Department is sponsoring an alumni fellowship activity in several of our cities this year.

Let us know how we can help you achieve the goal of strengthening your group to best reach out to the new alumni returning home. Also, we want to hear your feedback about alumni services in your area. Please feel free to share your compliments, needs or concerns. You can reach Sherri at [slayton@lahacienda.com](mailto:slayton@lahacienda.com) or (830)238-4222 ext 103. We look forward to seeing you in May and at your alumni meeting between now and then!

Save the Date

41st Annual

Alumni Reunion

May 3-5, 2013

Alumni Reunion  
T-Shirt Design Contest

"The spiritual life is not a  
theory. You have to live it."

1 color screen printable

All entries due by February 28, 2013

Submit to [slayton@lahacienda.com](mailto:slayton@lahacienda.com)

Winner receives 1 hotel night during reunion

La Hacienda Treatment Center  
PO Box 1, Hunt, Texas 78024  
(800) 749-6160 • [www.lahacienda.com](http://www.lahacienda.com)



Hello Alumni,

I can't believe that I have been a part of the Alumni team for 6 months already. How time flies! For those of you that I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet, my name is Krystle Conner and I have recently joined the Alumni team here at La Hacienda. I worked as the Alumni Follow-Up Coordinator for 2 years when God presented me with this opportunity I just couldn't pass up. I'm very passionate about recovery and helping people recover through what the Big Book calls a "vital spiritual experience". I am excited about working more with each and every one of you on your recovery journey.

Many of you already know who I am just through the Big Book lectures and follow-up calls that I have done for the last couple of years. I have also had the opportunity to visit most of your alumni groups over the last few months—what fun that has been! I am a firm believer in the Fellowship and love the fact that La Hacienda has such a strong alumni support system. I know the support I received after I left treatment at La Ha was tremendous and really helped me along in my sobriety.

Alumni Reunion is coming in May and I look forward to seeing some old faces and, of course, some new! Hope to meet you soon as we trudge the road to happy destiny.

Happy, Joyous, and Free,  
Krystle Conner

## *Book Review: A Man's Way Through The Twelve Steps*

*by Scott Mitchell, LCDC*

Early this year, I was asked to represent La Hacienda at a referent's weekend event at an extended care facility. During this very informative and refreshing weekend, I met a diverse group of men working in the field of addiction counseling from all over the country. One of these men was Dan Griffin, author of the book, *A Man's Way Through The Twelve Steps*.

At first glance, I found Dan to be personable, witty, and engaging. After just a few minutes of conversation, however, it became clear to everyone present how deep this man's passion was rooted within him. It is this same passion for helping men in recovery that burns strongly throughout his book.

Endorsed by such notables as Stephanie Covington, Ph.D. (*A Woman's Way Through The Twelve Steps*) and William Cope Moyers (*Broken*), *A Man's Way Through The Twelve Steps* examines the conflict within the male psyche of striving to be a strong man while facing surrender to a spiritual program of recovery. Griffin borrows from the example set by Dr. Covington in her book and makes use of hundreds of interviews with men in recovery to help gain some practical understanding of the 12 Step Program from a man's perspective.

One criticism heard about the book suggests that Dan Griffin is trying to "rewrite the Twelve Steps." This is clearly not true and anyone who asserts such has likely not read the book as it clearly coincides with 12 Step principles and is consistent with the message of AA. In fact, the book is well written, engaging, and maintains the spirit of *Alcoholics Anonymous* by communicating experience, strength, and hope to men seeking sobriety. While he makes frequent use of quotes from "The Big Book," Griffin also addresses such modern day concepts as sexism and homophobia and how they relate to powerlessness. Then, to keep it genuine, he weaves the stories of the men he interviewed into the text and brings forth their collective wisdom in a way that lends reality to principles being asserted.

Published by Hazelden and also available in e-reader format, *A Man's Way Through The Twelve Steps* is a great tool for a counselor to use to gain insight into the struggles of men in recovery but also a resource from which to give assignments to clients who struggle with addiction. In addition, sponsors and men's groups would find this book to be an asset in discussions and step study situations. Lastly, it is a good book to read for self improvement or to gain better insight into the 12 Step Program.

If this book piques your interest, you can find out more about the author and his doings at [www.dangriffin.com](http://www.dangriffin.com).





## Brain Food for the Recovering Soul

*As your faith is strengthened you will find that there is no longer the need to have a sense of control, that things will flow as they will, and that you will flow with them, to your great delight and benefit. — Emmanuel Teney*

### Medical Rounds

#### Emotions

by David Hager, MD

Anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise—why do we have these emotions? Anthropologists point to evidence that modern humans (*homo sapiens*) have been on this planet for about 200,000 years. Previous versions of us go back millions of years. The life we take for granted ... cars, lights, sewage systems, skyscrapers, smart phones, free-ways, airplanes, electricity ... seems "normal" to us. It's what we know. But, it's not "normal" for our species. This modern life has suddenly accelerated into existence over the past century or two, or about 0.1% of our time on this planet as "*homo sapiens*." And, human civilization in any form has only existed for about 10-15,000 years. So, for over 90% of our time on Earth as modern "*homo sapiens*", we have been hunting and gathering in small groups. Historically, that has been our "normal" existence, not office cubicles and shopping malls. Like other creatures, we are still wired for survival long ago. Our basic wiring hasn't changed. But, how we live has. In the constant bustle of our modern, technocharged, "normal" lives, it's easy to lose sight of why we actually are the way we are. Our basic wiring, as with other animals, includes emotions. Why?

#### Communication

Can you tell how a dog is feeling? Do you respond to that? Can your dog tell how you are feeling? Does it respond to that? Emotions are a very basic form of communication for social animals (like dogs and humans) - so basic that emotions allow communication across species. Much of this happens through emotional "resonance," which is why emotions seem to be "infectious." For instance, people tend to feel more cheerful around a cheerful person or a dog becomes excited around an excited person.

#### Turning on and off parts of the body

When facing a hungry tiger - FEAR!! (fight or flight instinct.) Adrenaline flows to make the heart beat faster. Breathing quickens. Muscles tense. Sweat forms. Why? Muscles need more oxygen for running. Blood carries the oxygen. So, blood gets pumped around faster by the quicker heart beat. And faster breathing turbocharges extra oxygen into the blood. Muscle action (running) warms the body. Sweat cools it down so it doesn't overheat. So, when a person feels fear, the parts of the body that need to be turned on for running (or fighting) turn on. Basic mechanics. People with panic attacks know this too well. Panic makes perfect sense when facing a hungry tiger, but not down aisle 7 of the grocery store.

#### Information processing

If I'm in a jungle and know a hungry tiger is out there, my senses are heightened. I hear and see everything more vividly ... more loudly. Fear (anxiety) amplifies what I feel. Anxious people tend to feel things more loudly. They are more sensitive. And emotions help me to remember information. I'm more likely to remember a surprise birthday party from 20 years ago than what I had for lunch a few weeks ago. It's impossible for the brain to remember the constant ocean of information in which we're immersed every second of our lives. However, emotions are memory glue. People who write TV commercials know this well. Think of which ones you remember, and why. The more emotional an event, the more it sticks to the memory. This also includes painful or frightening memories.

Most mental health problems are "normal turned up too loud." The same is true in other areas of medicine. For example, it is normal (and necessary) to have blood pressure, but if that pressure stays too high, it must be addressed. The same applies to emotions. Understanding why emotions are wired into us helps to understand what "normal" is when exploring mental health and illness.

### Focus Group

#### Step Four:

#### Moral Inventory

by Charlotte Safir, LCDC

*"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

Having spent time in the considerations of Steps 1-3 and having taken the Third Step, it is time to LAUNCH into action. The 4th Step provides the launching pad; it is the ground upon which we will be rocked into the dimension of reality. Here is where the mind does its dead level best to shut the whole process down or at least hijack it.

Thoughts come racing into the consciousness like "That is not important, it was long ago, we are over that, I am not even angry anymore about that"—the internal critic, judge and editor all show up at once to short circuit the process of truth that begins to happen in the 4<sup>th</sup> Step. This is where one must write through the "chatter of a thousand monkeys." A good rule of thumb: if it comes up, it goes on the grudge list, no matter what the mind tells us. There may be no feeling connected with what is coming up, but it still goes on the list.

Once the list is done, then the 4<sup>th</sup> Step grid can be set up. I needed help with going across the page. I was asked to look at myself from an entirely different perspective. This was self reflection that actually went somewhere. It was not the negative self talk and ceaseless self battering I had been used to doing. This was about the aspects of self that were affected by my resentments and how I had reacted to them. I had absolutely no practice doing this. When stumped, which happened a lot in the beginning, I asked for help. After writing inventory over time, one of the transformations was the separation of what I do from who I am. I am no longer emotionally defensive when looking at my part. I am freed from the tyranny of conditioned behavior through this simple process of self reflection. I see it all in black and white set before me on the page. I can no longer fool myself into thinking it is all about what others have done to me.

The action inherent in the 4<sup>th</sup> Step is the catalyst for profound change. I heard someone once refer to the 4<sup>th</sup> Step as "an internal shower." This Step creates more internal space for the healing balms of light, wisdom, truth and honesty. It allows this Benevolent Power to begin to sweep away the lies and misperceptions we have based our lives on.

If you have done Step 3, don't wait! Get moving on Step 4. If you have done inventory before, my question to you now is "how long has it been since your last inventory?"

# How Can We Help You?

## Frequently Dialed La Hacienda Phone Numbers

**800-749-6160**

### Billing/Collections

#### **Insurance Accounts**

*Last name begins: A – K*

Ext. 671

*Last name begins: L - Z*

Ext. 673

#### **Self Pay Accounts**

*(from admission or balance  
after insurance payments)*

Ext. 674

#### **All IOP Accounts**

Ext. 670

### Medical Records

Ext. 605

### Alumni Support

Ext. 515, 516

### Alumni Followup

Ext. 519

### Inquiry Call Center

Ext. 550

### Operator

Press 0

## Episode One:

# So You Dialed Our Number . . . Now What?

*Meet the charming, compassionate men with whom you will be speaking.*

### Holly “The Mule” Shirley

Inquiry Call Center Manager

#### **Years of service at La Hacienda – 21**

Holly loves spending time with his family and enjoys being around people in general. For relaxation he reads and takes walks. He has a particular passion for traveling to fun places with his wife and extended family.

### Ray “California Kid” Bliss

Inquiry Call Center Representative

#### **Years of service at La Hacienda – 13**

Ray is an enthusiastic reader. 80 books in 2012! He enjoys strumming the guitar and has a passion for martial arts—Aiki-jujutsu in particular. Cooking, internet/library research on different subjects and computer gaming are also on his list of activities he delves in outside of work.

### Rod “Rebel Rod” Ames

Inquiry Call Center Representative

#### **Years of service at La Hacienda – 10**

Rod is the celebrity among us. He has been the host of a local radio station for 3 years and thoroughly loves music, especially rock, blues, rockabilly and hard-core country. He is also a writer working on an autobiography. For outdoor recreation he spends time camping, hiking and fishing.

### Dwayne “No Nickname...Yet” Mahon

Inquiry Call Center Representative

#### **Years of service at La Hacienda – 5**

Dwayne loves to cook and try new dishes. He enjoys being creative in the kitchen making others' recipes his own. He's happy walking nature trails taking in the sights. He has a passion for bantering in good conversation with others.

### Alan “The New Guy” Ammentorp

Inquiry Call Center Representative

#### **Years of service at La Hacienda – 1**

Alan enjoys all kinds of outdoor activities including scuba diving, skiing, traveling, hiking, rock collecting (he's our campus geologist), swimming and catching snakes... what??? His real passion is golf.

### David “Woohoo” Cawthon

*After 17 years of dedicated service to La Hacienda's patients and their families, David retired on December 31st. His La Ha family misses him and we wish him many blessings in his new endeavors.*

### Stay tuned for the next episode:

*So, now I am on the phone with one of these charming guys....what are we going to talk about?*

## From Leonard's Kitchen to Yours

### Braised Beef Cubes

1/4 cup flour  
2 lbs beef stew meat  
3 tbs vegetable oil  
1 onion, chopped  
2 cups water  
Kitchen Bouquet, as needed

Add a pinch of salt and pepper to the flour. Roll stew meat in flour mixture. Brown meat in vegetable oil in a frying pan. When meat has begun to cook, add chopped onion and cook until meat is no longer pink. Add water and simmer until meat is tender and sauce thickens. Add Kitchen Bouquet as needed for rich darker color.

Serve over noodles.



# La Hacienda: A Legacy of Healing and Hospitality

In 2012 Hunt, Texas celebrated its Centennial but the legacy of healing and hospitality in these hills where La Hacienda sits dates back to the late 1800s. "Grandma" Joy served as the local doctor to this community until 1920. A different kind of "doctoring" takes place on this hilltop today.

The beginning of a long history of hospitality started with the first hotel built on the property, Zumwalt Hotel. It was built in 1922 by Isaac and Elver Zumwalt but was destroyed by fire in 1924. Then in the late 1940s, CD and Jeanie Pearl Kirk contracted the original building of the Hill Top Hotel. Today you know that building as the dining hall/Counselor Row/ Arriba Room. The beautiful mosaic tile floor in the upper level of the dining room still survives from that time. In 1954 the property changed hands and the name changed to Villa Camille. It was a private resort visited by the likes of Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and Eddie Rickenbacher. During this time additional buildings were added – the Bodega, Casa Bonita, our Inquiry Call Center, and the swimming pool. We hear stories from old-timers in the area who attended their high school prom in what is now our dining hall or spent their family vacation at the resort. In 1968 the name was changed again to La Hacienda Resort but that was short lived.

Finally, in 1972, National Living Centers purchased the property and it became what it remains today--La Hacienda Treatment Center.

Owned by various medical hospital corporations over the years, it was purchased by a group of

individuals in 1991. Their commitment to the healing

work of La Hacienda led to its rebirth in many ways. Long overdue attention was given to the physical plant, including many building and remodeling projects. Improvements have included underground fiber optic cable throughout the campus, a wastewater treatment plant, and replacing paper charts with electronic medical records. New buildings include our beautiful Family Program building, an open air chapel and the Seekers pavilion on Serenity Hill, the two-story building near the ROPES Course that houses admissions/business office/human resources, a new front entrance with gate and guard house, doubling the size of the gym and adding a fitness trail. Almost ready for its grand opening is our new Special Care Unit which will double our detox bed space. Over the years our owners' commitment to the healing mission of La Hacienda has enabled the leadership and staff to develop and stay true to our treatment philosophy so we all approach our patients and their family members with One Voice One Message.

Today, over 60 employees are members of our 10+ year club—that's 10+ years of service, a true rarity in the treatment industry. La Hacienda's business philosophy – patient care first – might not be held in high esteem on Wall Street in this profit driven age but it has enabled us to continue the legacy of healing that began with

"Grandma" Joy over 100 years ago.



## Coming Soon!



## Our New Special Care Unit

## ALUMNI MEETINGS

AREA	DAY / TIME	LOCATION	MORE INFO
<b>AUSTIN</b>	Wednesday 7:30 pm	La Hacienda's Solutions 2100 Kramer Ln., Suite 300 Austin, TX	<b>512-835-1994</b>
<b>BEAUMONT</b>	Monday 6:30 pm	St. Andrews Presbyterian 1350 N. 23rd St. Beaumont, TX	<b>409-296-3653</b>
<b>COLLEGE STATION</b>	Thursday 6:00 pm	La Hacienda-College Station 702 University Dr. East, Suite 100-D College Station, TX	<b>979-846-9500</b>
<b>DALLAS/FT. WORTH</b>	Monday 7:00 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 1320 Greenway Dr., Suite 135 Irving, TX	<b>972-804-2812</b>
<b>HOUSTON</b>	Tuesday 6:30 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 2650 Fountain View Dr., Suite 120 Houston, TX	<b>713-805-5115</b>
<b>HUNT</b>	Sunday 11:00 am	La Hacienda Treatment Center 145 La Hacienda Way Hunt, TX	<b>830-238-4222</b>
<b>KERRVILLE</b>	Tuesday 6:30 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 429 Earl Garrett St. Kerrville, TX	<b>830-238-4222</b>
<b>MIDLAND</b>	Thursday 7:00 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 206 N. Midkiff, Suite 1-D Midland, TX	<b>432-697-0272</b>
<b>SAN ANTONIO</b>	Monday 7:00 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 8600 Wurzbach Rd., Suite 702 San Antonio, TX	<b>210-692-0001</b>
<b>WACO</b>	Wednesday 6:30 pm	2508 Washington Ave. Waco, TX	<b>254-662-3439</b>

## FAMILY MEETINGS

AREA	DAY / TIME	LOCATION	MORE INFO
<b>AUSTIN</b>	Monday 8:00 pm	La Hacienda's Solutions 2100 Kramer Ln, Suite 300 Austin, TX	<b>512-835-1994</b>
<b>BEAUMONT</b>	Tuesday 6:30 pm	St. Andrews Presbyterian 1350 N. 23rd St. Beaumont, TX	<b>409-296-3653</b>
<b>COLLEGE STATION</b>	Thursday 6:00 pm	La Hacienda-College Station 702 University Dr. East, Suite 100-D College Station, TX	<b>979-846-9500</b>
<b>DALLAS/FT. WORTH</b>	Tuesday 7:00 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 1320 Greenway Dr., Suite 135 Irving, TX	<b>972-637-6300</b>
<b>HOUSTON</b>	Wednesday 6:30 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 2650 Fountain View Dr., Suite 120 Houston, TX	<b>713-545-9788</b>
<b>SAN ANTONIO</b>	Monday 7:00 pm	La Hacienda Community Outreach 8600 Wurzbach Rd., Suite 702 San Antonio, TX	<b>210-692-0001</b>