

# The Family Voice



A newsletter by  
and for Caron  
Renaissance  
families

Dear Families and Friends:

We hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. It was wonderful to see so many happy and healthy patients and family alumni at the 2013 Gratitude Weekend. Can you believe over 500 guests were at the dinner? I hope you were one of them, but if not, there's always 2014 and planning is already underway. A few glimpses of the dinner lie within this issue. See page 7 to find the link to the short film featured at the 2013 Gratitude Dinner which was produced by some of our patient alumni.

You can never reflect too often on the difference between abstinence and sobriety. As patients refrain from active use and family members refrain from active enabling, it's prudent to ask, "Am I doing enough to catch the spiritual, emotional and mental relapses that will otherwise lead back to the active behaviors of my addiction?" Abstinence is simply the act of not using the drug. Sobriety, an adult undertaking, is an active and committed spiritual, emotional, mental and behavioral process often accompanied by a variety of support such as therapy, 12-Step or other support groups, spiritual work and an active network of individual supports on a similar journey who can help "keep our memories green" and our path uncluttered.

In this issue you'll hear from a stepparent and a former patient, both who address the steps families have taken to support both their sobriety as well as their loved ones' sobriety and what keeps them sober today. As the "promises" unfold, a few of our former patients share with you their sober business successes very much steeped in sobriety and gratitude. As you know, esteem is fueled from estimable acts, and esteem fuels motivation for ongoing recovery. In this issue you'll also hear how current patients regain their esteem while forging forward with college and employment.

Thanks to all of you who submitted material for this issue. Your heartfelt submissions and letters and emails "keep us coming back," and we trust they will also give our readers the hope of sobriety.

With gratitude,  
Mary, Yasmin, and the team  
at Caron Renaissance

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**Submissions for the Summer 2014 issue of The Family Voice are due by April 15, 2014.  
To make a submission, please visit [www.CaronRenaissance.org/TFVSubmissions](http://www.CaronRenaissance.org/TFVSubmissions)**

## Message From A Family Member: A Stepparent's Perspective

By Jim G.

What is my role as a stepparent in the treatment and recovery of my 27 year old stepson? How involved should I be? Can I make a difference?

These were just a few of the many questions racing through my mind as my wife and I drove the two hours to Caron in Wernersville on Labor Day weekend of 2012 preparing for our participation in the five day Family Program. **Our son was now a young adult, and his life was spiraling out of control from a drug addiction.** We had first met six years earlier when his widowed mother and I began dating subsequently marrying one year later. Over these six years, my stepson and I had a respectful, but distant relationship. We shared many common interests and I was always willing to help him, but it was mostly superficial interactions. **Now I was being asked to drop everything in my life to attend these family sessions. I had no idea of what value I could be.** My wife had dealt with much of our son's addiction herself, choosing to keep me involved only when necessary. I had little experience with this disease and was naïve enough to think 30 days of treatment would fix all of his problems.

Now, eighteen months later – with subsequent stops at Caron Renaissance, two relapses and two different halfway houses –our son is nine months sober and developing into a productive, self-assured, respectful young man.

I'd like to share some perspectives as a stepparent.

**It was apparent I needed to be educated on the disease of addiction.** Early during the Family Program, I was introduced to the concept of enabling. It became clear to

me that my wife (to a large extent), and I (to a lesser one) were unwittingly enabling our son's addiction. Every car payment met, late cable bill paid, assistance with rent – all the nurturing things parents do to help their healthy children – were doing the opposite for our addicted son. Working with the Caron Renaissance counselors, I began to understand how destructive this was for him. Their coaching gave me the moral courage to support stopping these behaviors.

But this change was much more difficult for my wife. She was his mother! She knew him as a happy, delightful adolescent. **To take all this tangible support from him, to possibly put him out on the street was not going to be easy.** My primary role as the stepparent began to develop. **I needed to be my wife's emotional support.** I was prepared to support her decisions no matter what, but I also wanted to have an influence on that decision. My wife and I talked frequently, and with my newly acquired knowledge, we were more prepared to communicate effectively.

Just as the professionals at Caron Renaissance predicted, our son called twice during his stay at Caron Renaissance to say he was leaving. On both occasions we stood firm. You cannot come home! We will not support you financially! Both times he returned to treatment.

A year and half later, I look back on this experience with cautious gratitude and optimism. **I am pleased I was able to play a small part in helping a valuable life get back on track** and excited with my new relationship with my stepson, always cautious to take one day at a time.



Would you like extra copies of *The Family Voice* for support groups, office or even just to have for a friend in need? Your VOICE is being shared with those that need to hear the message. If you'd like to share an issue of *The Family Voice* in your community, you can request extra copies by emailing Yasmin at [ydovas@caron.org](mailto:ydovas@caron.org) or Mary at [mdavis@caron.org](mailto:mdavis@caron.org).

# Message From An Alumna: They Gave Me the Desperation Needed

By Dana B.

For a long time, my only perspective on the world or people came through the blurred scope of a bottle of alcohol. When I arrived on the doorstep of Caron Renaissance, I had very little life left in me. I was walking, talking and breathing, but I was a mere shell of a person. My spirit was gone. I was coming from a week and a half stint in the ICU from alcohol withdrawal and a brutally abusive relationship that had taken a profound toll on me mentally, physically and emotionally. I was determined in my path of self-destruction because **I was no longer able to deal with reality.**

My family had been told in my first 48 hours in the hospital to be prepared for the fact that I probably wouldn't make it. The inevitability of my death scared my family enough to facilitate a plan of action in the form of Caron Renaissance. I saw the desperation in their eyes, but I did not have that same intense desperation. **I didn't fear death. I feared life.** Broken down into simple terms, that's exactly what Caron Renaissance was offering me if I chose to accept it - life.

I wasn't ready at first. I was too busy fighting all the wrong things and **left twice over a 4-month period.** I had my own agenda and took only the suggestions I deemed necessary. The therapists and staff tried to get through to me the urgency of my situation, but their words were falling on deaf ears.

My real work did not begin until I realized it was time to put down my pride and listen. It became abundantly clear to me that simply being in a state of sobriety was not the only thing I needed. **I needed to get to the underlying issues that had led me to this place in my life.** I was ready to admit that I didn't have any answers, and that I needed help. I was scared

of who I was, who I had become and who I could become if I continued down this path. I finally felt the desperation.

**I am fortunate to have a family that got better before I did,** and the family program was an integral part of this process. When I came to Caron Renaissance, my parents didn't recognize the person that had become their daughter; my sister had lost her best friend; and my brother was powerless to protect his little sister from herself. For their own self-preservation and that of our family, they took all of the suggestions they were given by the therapists. **I firmly believe if they did not stick to their bottom line, I would not be writing this now.** I am grateful to Caron Renaissance for a plethora of reasons. I've had the privilege of working with therapists and staff that believed in me even when I refused to believe in myself. I was challenged when I wanted to give up. I was allowed to stumble when I needed to see that I had the strength to get back up. I was shown that my inherent flaws are just attributes being utilized in the incorrect capacity. I now see that this process is an opportunity to become a better version of myself. The person I was during my addiction no longer defines the person I am today.

Today I'm still a work in progress, but the key word is work. **I have a relationship with my family that continues to get stronger, not because I'm suddenly perfect, but**

**because I keep fighting.** I have a job that I'm proud of that utilizes my education. I have healthy relationships with people in my life based on love and respect. I still work twice a week with my therapist who patiently gives me the tools and insight I need to help navigate my journey. I am now able to help people through my own experiences while continuing to learn from those who have been where I stand now. Today I choose life.



## ALY! Chasing A Dream and Giving Back

In the darkest moments of my sobriety, it's often my gratitude that has kept me afloat. The universe always provides for me. Do I have running water, I ask myself. Yes. Do I have electricity? Yes. Is there food in the fridge tonight? Yes. Food in particular has lifted my gratitude to an all-time high.

In the last year I have been inspired by my travels in California. I've worked on a Japanese fruit and vegetable farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains and for a forward-thinking grocery store in San Francisco. Upon my return, I completed a Permaculture Design Course (PDC) with Permaculture Miami.

With the help of some long-time friends, another Caron Renaissance alumni and a generous donation from the Renaissance Institute Alumni Association (RIAA), I created a non-profit called, *In The Garden*. Our mission is "to serve as an urban garden space that provides educational opportunities and increased access to local and fresh food." Currently we are working on Project Pineapple—an edible landscape project in an already "artsy" alleyway in Delray Beach. We are also talking with a few local churches about signing a lease on some unused land to begin building the garden.

If there is one thing I took from Renaissance and from living in the 12-Steps, it's that I have to becoming willing



IN THE  
GARDEN

to take action. So instead of dwelling on the issues of food insecurity or my angst towards the industrial agriculture system, I became part of the solution. The solution is to educate. The solution is to plant more fruit trees, more kale, more pineapples and more sweet potatoes! The solution is to save and share seeds and organic soil. I want to give people the means to grow just some of their own food supply.

This way of thinking is a gift. The only thing I thought about before Renaissance was me or the next drink.

I'm proud to be an alumni of Caron Renaissance and truly believe that as a result of completing, I was propelled to take on early sobriety and my newest frontier—emotional sobriety. On June 30th, I will celebrate five years of beautiful sobriety.

I do what I can with what I have. That's my motto. In The Garden is my way of giving back to a community that has been beyond generous to me. I've never been happier and I'm chasing my dreams, one day at a time. If you would like to know more about In The Garden, you can visit our website [www.inthegardeninc.com](http://www.inthegardeninc.com) or contact me at [inthegardeninc@gmail.com](mailto:inthegardeninc@gmail.com). There are several ways to give including sponsoring one of our scholarships, volunteering in the garden or contributing to purchasing gardening supplies.

With love, Aly Lewis

## ERIC! Taking the Next Step

My name is Eric Dresdale. I am a 30-year-old entrepreneur and alumnus of Caron Renaissance. I completed the program in February 2011.

My entrepreneurial journey began four months after completing Renaissance. However, the genesis of the idea was really born in my last month as a client at Caron. I had been moved into the vocational/job search phase of treatment and was riddled with anxiety and fear about having to interview with employers. I had been in the professional world, working in commercial real estate in New York City for seven years prior to becoming a client of Caron Renaissance, and had been on countless interviews before. This was very different though. I was put in a position where I had to start from scratch and tell

my potential employers that I was in addiction recovery. During my job search, I realized that I could go to my bank account and take out money. I spent \$500 in under two weeks. I didn't relapse nor did I engage in any cross addictions like gambling. I was engaging in impulsive and compulsive behaviors and spending money to fill an emotional void. After dealing with my many consequences, which I am now grateful for, I eventually completed the program.

As I re-entered society, I immediately started working with new guys in recovery. Many times they would come and tell me they relapsed. Every time I would ask "How? You don't have money, you don't have a job. How did you pay for the substance?" Every time the response was the same. "Mom/Dad sent me money for a haircut, food, clothes, etc." That's when the light bulb went off. I realized, based

(continued on next page)

# Entrepreneurial Spirit: Alums Show Passion, Talent and Success!

off my mistakes and others, that there needed to be a more structured and restricted payment method; one that would hold people in early recovery accountable for where they were spending the money they were given. That's how the idea of the Next Step Prepaid MasterCard program was born.

The Next Step Prepaid MasterCard program is based on a simple concept: by eliminating cash and adding restrictions we could reduce the likelihood that someone would relapse and bring about behavior modification. I had never started a company before and had no idea what I was doing, but I knew I had found a problem that needed a solution. Armed with a new sense of self-confidence and coping skills, graciously given to me by Renaissance and the 12-Steps, I was determined to learn and overcome any obstacle to turn my idea into a reality.

I launched the first Next Step Prepaid MasterCard program for families in November 2012. The card could not be used to access cash, had spending limits and restricted the cardholders from going to merchants that could be detrimental to their well-being and growth (i.e. bars, liquor stores, gambling establishments, etc.). The program operated for six months. I had 150 families using the card over that time period. I had the pleasure of speaking with all 150 families over the course of the program's lifespan. The results were amazing. Out of 150 cardholders, we only had four known relapses. 90% of the users showed improved spending habits, and the majority of the families reported back saying that the card gave them peace of mind when trying to provide some financial support with boundaries.

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## **ELISE! Humility, Sobriety, and Achievements**

In November, Caron Renaissance honored me with a beautiful laser engraved award that reads, "ELISE: In Recognition of your Entrepreneurial Growth and Professional Achievement." Professional achievement - imagine that! To apply that phrase to an addict like me is inconceivable.

I entered Caron Renaissance in July of 2007, a tattered apathetic soul recently released from the ICU. It was my seventh residential facility and my third attempt at long-term treatment. Since that July, and as a direct result of following the Renaissance program and continued recovery through the 12-Steps, I have not taken a drink or a drug. Everything else has fallen into place, as if by magic.

Despite being successful in proving the concept, the program was riddled with problems, and I would have had tremendous difficulty trying to grow the company. I was forced to make the tough decision of dissolving the family card.

Not willing to give up, I decided to continue pursuing my dream. Immediately after dissolving the family card, I decided to pivot the company. I am now one month away from launching the Next Step Prepaid MasterCard program for addiction and mental health providers. The goal of this program is to make the management, monitoring and distribution of client spending allowances easier for facilities, while introducing money management earlier in the clinical process to the clients. Every facility will be able to create their own customized program of restrictions that best meets the goals of the organization. I am proud to say that we already have over 800 beds of facilities from around the country signed up for the new program and have been honored with several awards as one of the most promising technology businesses in South Florida.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this article, this has been a journey. It's been an incredible journey filled with ups and downs, triumphs and defeats. I have been forced to face my deepest fears and cope with emotions that would have caused me to use in the past. I have had to deal with betrayal, rejection and periods of extreme self-doubt. Through it all, I wouldn't change a thing. It has helped me grow spiritually and as a person. I have accepted the possibility that this may end in failure, but I can say with confidence that I have no regrets.

I attended graduate school in London at the Courtauld Institute of Art starting in the fall of 2009. Upon graduation, I returned to Florida where CR granted me the privilege of working as a Counselor Assistant, an experience I cherish. In 2011, I was recruited to an academic job. Since then I've been teaching composition, history of art and visual culture at the University of Tampa. Recently, I was the Managing Editor for the inaugural year of International Street Photographer Magazine.

Before Renaissance, I was a destructive force in the lives of others and myself. Today, I'm a published writer, international speaker and teacher of higher education. The program and the people at the Renaissance Institute saved my life, and then they gave an award to me! I am forever humbled.

# CARON RENAISSANCE NEWS AND EVENTS

■ **Sid Goodman, Executive Director of Caron Renaissance** has been appointed Vice President of Caron Florida Clinical Operations. Along with his role as Executive Director of Caron Renaissance and Caron Renaissance Ocean Drive, Sid will take an expanded role at the Hanley Center, a Caron Treatment Center, providing supervision and guidance of clinical operations.

■ **David Schoentag, Family Therapist at Caron Renaissance** has assumed duties as Clinical Director at Caron Renaissance Ocean Drive. David will be greatly missed at Caron Renaissance, but we wish her well and congratulate her on a position well earned. David was also a guest facilitator for the third year at the Third Annual Jewish Recovery Center Retreat and Shabbaton held in Boca Raton from February 7th to 9th, 2014.

■ **Mary Davis, Director of Family Services at Caron Renaissance**, was awarded the 2013 Peter Fairclough Memorial Recognition Award for dedication in furthering the fields of chemical dependency and mental health.

■ **Les Arouh** recently joined the staff at Caron Renaissance as the Development Officer. After serving several years on the Florida Board of Directors and three years as the Florida Board President, Les brings to Caron Renaissance and Ocean Drive a passion for recovery and raising scholarship dollars for those in need.

■ **Elizabeth Schane** recently joined the staff at Caron Renaissance as a primary therapist. Liz holds a Master of Science Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and brings to Caron Renaissance a history of working with many different populations with addiction and mental health problems.

■ **Brad Sorte, Family Therapist at Caron Renaissance**, was guest presenter at back-to-back conferences (The New Age of Addiction) on January 9th and 10th, 2014 in Frederick, MD and Towson, MD. Brad provided an overview of the key components of Caron Renaissance's clinical philosophy and how it relates to the Residential Family Restructuring Program. Brad will be presenting again for The New Age of Addiction series in Washington D.C. on May 2, 2014.



## New Caron Renaissance Family Support Group Draws a Crowd from South Jersey/Philly Area

A little snow and cold didn't stop 25 Caron Renaissance family members from recently showing up at the Center for Family Services, Living Proof Recovery Center in Voorhees, NJ.

Family therapist, Ryan Hanson met up with alum mother, Randy M. to kick off the first Caron Renaissance Family Support Group (CRFSG) meeting targeted for South Jersey and Philadelphia area family members. Clearly it was a success! Thank you to all who came out in support of your local fellowship and recovery network.

The South Jersey/Philly CRFSG meeting is Caron Renaissance's fifth established family support group meeting, spanning from Boca Raton, Florida to New York City. We hope to continue to meet the needs of our family alumni in other areas as well. Any family member wanting to launch a meeting in their area can contact Mary Davis at [mdavis@caron.org](mailto:mdavis@caron.org) or Yasmin Dovas at [ydovas@caron.org](mailto:ydovas@caron.org).

Meeting information on all five CRFSG meetings can be found in the back of this issue. We are so happy to continue to serve our families during and after treatment with these meetings and keep family recovery a priority for so many. Thank you to Randy and our other parent alumni who have helped with the start up of meetings. We are so grateful for your service and commitment to family recovery.

**NEWS: A CR Family Support Group is coming to the Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia area in June 2014! Ryan Hanson will be there to kick off the first meeting so please contact Mary Davis or Yasmin Dovas if you are interested in joining or have a location suggestion.**



# CARON RENAISSANCE NEWS AND EVENTS

## ALUMNI DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 7, 2014

**Caron Renaissance Alumni and Family Recharge Event is coming to the VA, MD and DC area**

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**SAVE THE DATE: November 21, 2014  
The Alumni and Family Gratitude Dinner Weekend**

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### **Alumni Work to Dispel Myths About Recovery**

A group of Caron Renaissance alumni got together last year to create a film in honor of The Gratitude Weekend and as a way for them to have their voices heard about what recovery means to them. The entire film is completely made by our alumni from the filming, editing, directing, music and production process. Alumni Brian C. and John E. filmed, edited and directed the footage, alum Stephen L. composed the background music and the testimonials are from alumni going as far back as 10 years. **Please take a look at their achievement in case you missed it: [www.caronrenaissance.org/riaa-gratitude-video](http://www.caronrenaissance.org/riaa-gratitude-video)**

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### **A Call to Help Raise Gratitude Dollars!**

We are inviting families, friends and the community to sponsor this year's Alumni and Family Gratitude Weekend. This is a chance for scholarship dollars to go even further and help those who can not afford treatment have the same opportunity as those who can. The alumni department at Caron Renaissance is asking for you or your company to share the gift of recovery as we work toward raising \$100,000.00 in the name of GRATITUDE and the Lifesaver Scholarship Fund. Contact Les Arouh at [LArouh@caron.org](mailto:LArouh@caron.org) for further information.

## EMPLOYMENT BOUND

### **CR Vocational Program Experiencing High Levels of Patient Employment**

Once again, the last quarter of 2013 led to impressive numbers of patients securing employment prior to entering the Intensive Outpatient phase of treatment where refinement of recovery life skills are the focus, including readjustment, autonomy, budgeting and solidifying a recovery lifestyle to support ongoing sobriety and continue care planning. The pride and increased self-esteem of our patients as they embark upon and sustain employment, sometimes for the first time, is often one of the keys to ongoing success in recovery.

#### **Congratulations to the Caron Renaissance Employed!**

Over the last quarter of 2013:

- **49 patients secured full-time employment.**
- **9 patients secured part-time positions.**
- **11 patients secured professional positions.**
- **28 patients secured para-professional positions.**
- **19 patients secured service positions.**

17 days is the average length of time a Caron Renaissance patient takes to secure employment from the start of their job search! Under the guidance and support of Vicki Stanbury, M.Ed. and Austin Garrett, MS, CBHT, CRSS, patients develop and review their resume, secure appropriate identification and participate in a vocational process to prepare for the job search where patients address related anxieties and issues in the group. Each is given a bus pass and will check in twice daily with Vicki and Austin to review daily plans and outcomes. The rest, from experiencing public transportation and bus routes to seeking and securing employment is all on the patient.

Patients inform prospective employers that they are in treatment and will need hours that work around evening group commitments. Clearly, identifying themselves as an addict in recovery is not interfering with job offers. Once a job is offered, patients allow Vicki and Austin to speak with the employer to confirm employment and offer the employer contact with Caron Renaissance as needed.

# CARON RENAISSANCE NEWS AND EVENTS

*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* 1 Timothy 1:5

**John Baudhuin**, MA, CAP, Director of Spiritual and Auxiliary Services at Caron Renaissance retired from Caron Renaissance on February 28, 2014. John will be greatly missed, but we wish him the best in all his retirement will offer, as he has so earned it.

John re-joined Caron Renaissance, September 28, 2009, jumping in at a time when the CR staff was grieving the sudden and tragic loss of our beloved Program Director. John was not only there for all of us with his compassion, support and spiritual guidance, but quickly assumed the position of Family Director as staff needs were quickly changing. On October 18, 2010 John transitioned to Director of Spiritual and Auxiliary Services, developing the Caron Renaissance spiritual program as we know it today, complete with spiritual assessments and consults for all patients, patient retreats and coordination of local faith leaders for our Spiritual Friday program. John also developed a strong alliance with Rabbi Meir Kessler and the Jewish Recovery Center's Shabbat Recovery Service held weekly at the Chabad of Boca Raton.

John never said no and took on training staff in experiential group work as well as facilitating trauma and grief and loss groups. John's work ethic and commitment to the Caron Renaissance program is unmatched. Along with developing and leading the spiritual program at Caron Renaissance, leading groups and filling in for staff, often times at a minute's notice, John was instrumental in reviewing clinical charts and documentation and was a large part in Caron Renaissance repeatedly receiving CARF accreditation with stellar scores. When John was not involved in the above, he was regularly writing for various publications.

John will truly be hard to replace. John has been a blessing, and we thank him. He shared a true goodness and so much good has come from it.

## EMERGING FROM WITHIN

**Awakening, Transforming and Taking Flight Through Spiritual Practice**

Hosted by Caron Renaissance and Unity Church of Delray Beach

**Saturday, March 15, 2014**  
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Please join us for a very special day of spiritual healing for **WOMEN**.  
Female patients currently in the Caron Renaissance program can attend through the personal invitation of an alumni.

**- Program -**

9:00 AM - Meet and Greet with Coffee and Refreshments  
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9:30 AM - Opening and Spiritual Message with Laurie Durgan  
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10:30 AM - Vinyasa Flow Yoga with Jessica  
\*\*\*

11:30 AM - Meditation in Motion Art Activity  
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1:00 PM - Lunch  
\*\*\*

2:00 PM - Closing with Laurie Durgan and Butterfly Release

Each life experience is an occasion for us to learn and grow,  
to discover that which is within us, ready to emerge...to blossom

\*Please wear loose clothes and bring a yoga mat if you have one.  
This event is free of charge, but the suggested donation is \$25 per person to offset event costs.  
There is no charge for female patients of Caron Renaissance.

Please RSVP by March 7th with Yasmin Dovas at [ydovas@renaissanceinstitute.net](mailto:ydovas@renaissanceinstitute.net) or 561.241.7977.



## CR College Bound Celebrates New College Grads

Treatment no longer means stopping academic pursuits. Caron Renaissance patients have the opportunity to work with their colleges to complete degree work while in treatment. Many Caron Renaissance patients have done just that. Jonathan Saltzburg, Director of Collegiate Recovery Services meets with all interested patients and with Jonathan's guidance, patients coordinate studies with their respective college or university.

- In 2013, over 50 patients continued studies with their respective college or university while in treatment and four graduated from their designated college or university while attending treatment. Over 25 patients pursued college locally and more than 15 entered college for the first time.

**Congratulations to the 2013 College Graduates from Caron Renaissance.** The following honors have been awarded:

- Bachelor of Arts, Vanderbilt University(2013)
- Bachelor of Science, University of South Carolina (2013)
- Bachelor of Science in Teacher Education, Drexel University(2013)
- Bachelor of Arts, Franklin & Marshall College (pending)
- Bachelor of Science, University of North Carolina(2013)
- Bachelor of Business Administration, Northwood University(2013)



**Congrats to alumni Chelsea G.**, for making the Dean's List at University of Delaware, and **Corinne D.** for making the Dean's List at Lynn University, both for the Fall 2013 semester.

**Congrats to Michael L.** for his selection as a "top 24 Recovery Activist under the age of 24." Spark Action, along with the National Institute on Drug Abuse, chose the top 24 young people age 24 or under who are focused on young people making a difference in their communities to promote awareness of science-based drug facts and to prevent substance abuse. (Thank you to all our alumni who rallied and voted for Michael!)

**Congrats to Phil S.** for successfully passing the NYS Real Estate License Exam.

Now available to Caron Renaissance patients and alumni attending local colleges and universities

### Collegiate Recovery Housing at Caron Renaissance

Contact: Jonathan Saltzburg, Director of Collegiate Recovery Services at [jsaltzburg@caron.org](mailto:jsaltzburg@caron.org)

### Students in Recovery (SIR) Meetings

Alumni and patients in college/school are encouraged to attend this support group

**When:** Every Tuesday at 7:45pm

**Where:** Caron Renaissance Beacon Square Office,  
Room 129

**Contact:** Jonathan Saltzburg, Director of Collegiate Recovery Services at [jsaltzburg@caron.org](mailto:jsaltzburg@caron.org)



# Submissions From The Heart

## A Thought on Healing

Following a discussion with some of the spiritual leaders last week, we realized we had not done enough with the topic of healing and the role spirituality plays in healing. We gathered the patients together, and I introduced a story from the Writings about a soldier in ancient times named Naman who was afflicted with leprosy. His servant told him of a great man named Elisha who was known for healing. Naman went to Elisha, who was many miles away, and the meeting left him offended. First of all, Elisha wouldn't even come to the door to meet with him, and second, the prophet gave him a very strange directive for his healing: he was to dip himself into the Jordan River seven times. Naman resisted until he became desperate, and he finally complied, dipping himself seven times into that river. Of course, he was healed.

I suggested that the story is ours today. First of all, we have to overcome our grandiosity and entitlement; Naman thought he was so important that the man should stop everything to meet him. More importantly, we have to be willing to follow directions. Certainly, a long list of 12-Steps must sound odd to someone who merely wants to quit drinking and doing drugs. Yet when we reach a certain point, as the book says, we are ready to take certain steps.

The groups were asked what they thought of healing, had they ever seen or experienced either a physical or emotional healing where spirituality was involved and how they would encourage others.

From a patient: "My healing started when I became grateful for what I had been most ashamed of."

From a leader: "If we can change the way we look at things, the things we look at will change."

From a patient: "It's like the story of the three frogs. You have to actually DO something in order to be healed." Of course, I had to ask about the frogs. "Well, there are three frogs on a log, and one of them decides to jump in the water. How many frogs are still on the log? The answer, of course, is three. Deciding isn't enough."

One of the leaders had the patients each select a color from a wide array of paint chips she had acquired from a local home improvement store. The idea was to select the color that represented where you are spiritually. "I chose this one," said one of the patients, "because I thought it was black. But now in the light, I can see that it's dark green. I think that means I'll find my way spiritually through



*Dearest Mindy Z,*

*I just read your reflection from your raw and broken heart in the holiday issue of The Family Voice. I applaud your bravery to send in the unfathomable truth of your son's passing. I want to let you know your courage supported me as a strong reminder and anchor into the harsh cold reality of the deadly grip addiction can have on our loved ones.*

*My heart goes out to you Mindy. I am going to wrap you in love and light while your heart begins to heal. Within the depth of your pain and sorrow, you touched the life of another mom.*

*~ Steph*

nature." Another more sadly said, "I chose red because, in a way, I'm still bleeding."

One of the leaders told of how just a little bit of faith can change things. "About ten years ago when two hurricanes hit here in just three weeks, the church was without electricity for almost two weeks. I had to get something in the church, and it was already dark. It was so dark in the church that I had to almost crawl and feel my way through. Then I remembered that we had a few candles left over from last Christmas Eve near the altar, and I knew there was a lighter there. So I found the only remaining candle and lit it. To my surprise, it lit up the entire sanctuary, a space that holds over 300 people." One of the patients countered quickly, "What if you don't have a candle?" The simple answer, "Find someone who knows where the candles are. That's what a sponsor, a mentor or a spiritual director is for. They know where the candles are."

John Baudhuin, MA, CAP  
Director of Spiritual and Auxiliary Services,  
Caron Renaissance

### The Family Relapses First

The therapist in my evening group often said this. I was a patient at Caron Renaissance as was my daughter. She was being treated for her addiction, and I for my enmeshment and co-dependency.

Given my family history, I was aware of the far-reaching parameters of the disease. What I did not recognize, but the therapists did, was how I could unwittingly sabotage my daughter's recovery through my own attitudes and behaviors.

It was a difficult experience. I continued to strive for an easier, gentler way but was not allowed that option. Every aspect of my persona was examined, discussed and challenged with no room for excuses. At completion, I was still forced to consider my efforts and evaluate myself on a daily basis.

My daughter has completed, has two jobs, is in a halfway house, is participating in after and continuing care, has a great sponsor and is working the steps. We are, as they say, cautiously optimistic.

Thank you Caron Renaissance, for saving my daughter's life and giving me a chance at one.

~ Stephen He

*I just celebrated ten years sober. With two kids and five years of marriage, I'm forever grateful to Renaissance.*

*"Life begins on the other side of despair." --Jean Paul Sartre*

*~ Porter*

### ANOTHER 'AHA' MOMENT

I was cleaning the lovely grills from my island countertop vent, super greasy which is a testament to all our delicious, yummy meals over the last (few) years. I think you're supposed to do this annually and I finally figured out how to get the damn things down and was pleased with myself for having the right "grease release" detergent to soak them in the sink with.

THEN IT HAPPENS...

I kept looking at these grease laden vents waiting for them to do their magic like I see and have seen a thousand times in commercials - release the grease. Hmmmm, I kept doing other things and coming back to the sink, expecting some magic to happen, something to be different because that's what the commercials show.

Then it finally came to me that I HAD TO USE A SCRUB BRUSH. It wasn't doing what the commercials said it would do, it wasn't doing what I wanted it to do. No matter how long I stared at it and reminded it what it was supposed to be doing, I was going to have to put my hands in that hot chemical water and scrub it MYSELF.

WOW! Another reminder of why I need Al-Anon.

~ Francesca F.

Hi Everyone,

I haven't been able to make it to a physical meeting yet for CRFSG, however I am a Caron Renaissance mom. My son was at Caron Renaissance from April to Sept 2010 and even though he relapsed, left Caron and relapsed two times after that at different facilities, he is celebrating two years clean and sober today.

For parents whose children are struggling in or out of recovery, for which I was one, I'm hoping this post from my son will offer you HOPE!!! We never ever know when the miracle will happen and honestly the miracle happens only one day at a time. This day, December 5th, my son celebrates two years clean and sober and that's all he's got - TODAY!!! Just like us, we only have this very day to do the next right thing! A few acronyms for HOPE that I've come across through my years of recovery -

**Hold On Pain Ends,**

**Hold On Peace Exists, and most importantly,**

**Hold Onto Prayer Everyday!**

Happy Holidays to all!!

Luv, Julie (and thanks for letting me share HOPE!)

## Program Spotlight: Aftercare Program

By Brian Gong, BS, Counselor Assistant

The Caron Renaissance Aftercare Program is designed to help individuals continue to move from a dependent position in life to an interdependent one by helping newcomers and supporting peers. This further supports the Caron Renaissance clinical philosophy and demonstrates a very important tool in the recovery process: the cycle of giving and receiving. **By giving back to others in a healthy, supportive and non-enabling manner, individuals are able to help themselves.** This principle is further exemplified via the well-known AA concept of, “we can’t keep what we have unless we give it away.”

Aftercare comprises two components: the buddy system and a free, peer-led weekly support group. The buddy system matches up new patients and alumni based on a variety of considerations such as age, interests, developmental history and character pathology to name a few. New patients are given phone numbers to Caron Renaissance alumni and are asked to reach out for the purpose of developing a robust support network and healthy interpersonal relationships. **This process not only provides new patients with their first sober supports** (who can empathize with their situation because they’ve been there!), **but also provides alumni the opportunity to “pay it forward,”** help others and further their own recoveries. The **weekly aftercare group provides a supportive and accountable environment** in which individuals may discuss how relationships with their

aftercare buddies are going and any other issues which they may be dealing with in their lives. Each group is led by two volunteer alumni facilitators who are trained and empowered to manage attendance issues, lead the group discussion and communicate needs to the aftercare staff.

I have no doubts as to the effectiveness of the aftercare program for both new patients and alumni. Those alumni who make it a priority to take the time to stay connected to the program and give back to current patients say **they experience tremendous benefits to their recovery programs.** It is a wonderful and amazing sight to see alumni, proud of the work they’ve done and the progress made in their lives, taking patients out on pass and sharing their recovery experiences. New patients who make active efforts in reaching out, asking for help and cultivating these relationships find the process extremely rewarding and helpful as well. Individuals experience the powerful transformation they can make from old attitudes of ego and selfishness to ones of humility and being others-centered.

We’ve recently reintroduced the process of aftercare members coming back to attend their buddies’ evening groups. **Once per month, members join their buddies and their primary group,** offering a unique and fruitful perspective to the group process. We are constantly evaluating the program and **finding new ways to benefit members and help them become more interdependent and strong in their recoveries.** The Caron Renaissance Aftercare Program is here to stay!



## Clinical Spotlight: Nicotine Cessation Group

By Ryan Hanson, MS, Family Therapist

### **Fact: People are more likely to maintain abstinence and motivation with support.**

The Nicotine Cessation Group meets once per week to increase tools and motivation to quit using nicotine products with a goal of abstinence. Patients are referred to the group by expressing an interest in nicotine cessation suffering from a medical issue or violations of the facility or family nicotine guidelines.

### **Fact: Studies show that patients who quit using nicotine products while quitting other substances and unhealthy behaviors are more likely to maintain abstinence from other chemical and process addictions.**

Group members are challenged to address the consequences of their nicotine use through timelines, financial assessments, education about health implications, self image, dealing with cravings and triggers and cognitive and behavioral interventions and direct connection to their relapse process. This contradicts local 12-Step misinformation that “it’s better to quit things one at a time”.

### **Fact: Family boundaries should be set regarding use of nicotine products that are consistent with the expectations the family is setting by asking to have an adult to adult relationship.**

Patients are treated as adults with the right to choose but are challenged to take adult responsibility for their behaviors. Parents and families are involved in the treatment process and empowered to set limits, both emotional and financial, consistent with the family value systems. For instance, families can begin challenging how patients choose to prioritize and spend their weekly food allowance. For example, are patients spending food money on cigarettes? Patients support one another in determining how to best accept responsibility in their treatment process.

### **Fact: Patients are challenged to be accountable for their behaviors in and out of groups. Integrity is a consistency in behaviors across situations.**

Patients are challenged to use tools consistent with Caron Renaissance philosophy including being accountable to their peers, their support systems, experiential learning and their own conscience. Patients are challenged to develop internalized ego strength supported by their recovery tools. At times and in consultation with the treatment team, patients are supported through the use of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) when deemed clinically and medically appropriate with the goal of abstinence from nicotine products.

### **Fact: NRT’s can be viewed as a step toward quitting but are not meant to be a substitute for learning to manage emotions nor a substitute for other chemicals.**

Not every patient in nicotine cessation remains nicotine free. When relapse happens, patients are challenged to address the inconsistency in their recovery program which enabled their relapse.

What we see in the Nicotine Cessation group is a clearer understanding of the relapse process and ability to integrate the clinical philosophy in a very practical and meaningful way.



## Letters and Emails...

Yasmin,

22 years ago around the 6th or 7th of January, I arrived at the Renaissance Institute a broken alcoholic. I came by way of Arms Acres rehab center in Carmel, NY where I had been through their program twice and was seven days into my third stint there when the director told me I needed an extended care facility if I were to make it in this world. He recommended The Renaissance Institute in Florida. I, of course, knowing more than he did about recovery resisted his advice. Each day he would call me into his office and state valid, solid reasons for me to come to your facility, but I had an answer for each. After four days of his insistence I saw a picture over his shoulder that stated "Let Go and Let God". I had seen this particular picture many, many times as I had been attending AA meetings for two years but could not get sober. This particular day it sunk in, and I relented! I was petrified, but I would go to Florida and give an extended care facility a try.

I could fill pages about my journey while there in Florida - how I missed my wife (whom at this point was so mad at me she would not take my calls) and my 2 young daughters, how I developed the worse case of bronchitis and how the staff made sure I got my antibiotics and an alcohol-free cough syrup, (Who knew? Alcohol free cough syrup) or about the mandatory fun at the bowling alley on Friday night.

Renaissance Institute saved my life! I recently celebrated 22 years of sobriety and am happy to say that my wife of 33 years is no longer mad at me, and our family grew to four children and one beautiful little granddaughter. Our family has been through a lot in the last few years. My wife's parents and both my parents are now gone as well as my wife's sister, the school psychologist, who was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown CT. Through it all, I have Renaissance Institute to thank for the foundation I received all those years ago.

You may ask why I am writing after all this time. The reason; I don't think I ever really truly thanked the folks there at your facility. I am sure there is no one there from those days, in fact, the only name I recognize from your website is Sid Goodman, but I still feel compelled to thank someone. The director's name at the time I was there was Mark, and shame on me but I don't recall his last name. I do recall he had a ponytail and today would be roughly my age, somewhere around 55 years old. I owe a special debt of gratitude to him for his insistence that I stay even after my insurance was pulled as I was on a Cobra plan. If you know where he is and how to reach him feel free to forward this note.

I am happy, healthy (running the Boston Marathon this April), and sober thanks to the Renaissance Institute, and my life in AA.

- Tim

*It has been nearly a year since our son left Caron Renaissance. He is living on his own clean and sober. He is a completely different young man. The father and son relationship is as close as it has ever been.*

*Obviously, the best advice received was to love and support the patient but to completely cut all financial ties and force the patient to live on his own.*

*- Jeff C.*

*Hi Davida,*

*After shedding tears this morning over my inability to pay for my daughter's continued treatment, I'm now crying because I am so grateful.*

*Jen and Ernest called to tell me that my daughter's clinical care will be paid 100% by Caron Renaissance. I know that you played a part in allowing this to happen. My gratitude is beyond words.*

*I mailed you a letter yesterday to thank you for your kindness, compassion and toughness during the family therapy. It was very difficult for my other daughter and me, but we needed it.*

*This wonderful additional gift that Renaissance has given us is one of the most amazing things to ever happen to our family. After so much pain, I am so appreciative of this chance for all of us to continue building new lives. I am hopeful that it will not only save my daughter's life, but that it will help her grow into a humble, other-centered individual who will in some way contribute to helping others.*

*I'm sorry that you will no longer be our family therapist. We have been honored to have you. You, Jen and the whole Renaissance team are true angels.*

*Thank you so much,*

*- Joyce W.*

## Letters and Emails...

Jennifer and Davida,

I just thought I'd drop you both a line for an update. My son seems to be doing really well. My parents spent a weekend with him recently, and they feel the same way, which speaks volumes. There are a few red flags during our phone conversations which still concern me. He complains about work (some poor me moments) and I'm tempted to help him with money. I haven't acted on it though. We are all looking forward to his trip home for Christmas. His brother is hanging in there. Every now and then he says something that reminds me of Caron Renaissance so I know he got something out of the time with you.

I spent some time with another CR mother in DC a few weeks ago. She seems to be doing well. We attended the spirituality seminar through Caron Renaissance. It helped, I had my spiritual awakening and I practice that aspect of my new life daily. I have lots of gratitude - gratitude for everything that happened. My son is still sober; I have coffee money and have a wonderful family. Life is good.

I wake up every morning and "welcome" myself to this day. I can still hear his voice saying it in my head. I appreciate all that you've done for my entire family and have so much love for you both.

I'm going to try to visit my son for his year anniversary in February, hopefully we can say hello.

- Chris S.

Kim and Brad -

I realized I lost an opportunity on Thanksgiving to send you my deepest gratitude for what you both accomplished for my daughter (even she recognizes it, as she told me in our call this morning). If anyone had told me a year ago that she'd be where she is today, I wouldn't have believed it.

Renaissance is a phenomenal place - and you are both terrific. I learned a lot - and it wasn't easy, but definitely worth it (including every penny), and I couldn't have done it without you. Her dad and I have good weekly calls (on time). We're able to talk things through without her being defensive and with our being real. We think she's doing well, but are cautious because it is, indeed, one day at a time and our antennae are up.

I count my blessings - even though I fell backwards over one of the cats at the end of September (it's their mission in life to get between your feet and cause you bodily injury); I can hear Kim getting a good laugh out of that one. I had surgery for a big tear in my rotator cuff and a minor fracture in my wrist, so now I'm in PT to rehab the arm and get back full motion. But it's not fatal, and I'm happy.

My very best to you both for a wonderful holiday season and New Year. Keep doing the Lord's work.

- Carol

Hi Ryan,

Just checking in! My daughter is living in Brevard (my mom's condo) - her boyfriend is living with her, they seem to be working their program, they are paying rent and the bills with no help from me. She is trying to find a job, being drug tested and has tested no drugs in system.

Could you recommend a drug addiction counselor in this area, Melbourne, Merritt Island, Satellite Beach, Cocoa Beach - I didn't just want to pick one out of the yellow pages.

Thank you, Ryan. I'm working my program and haven't jumped in to fix anything :-)

- Gail E.

## Letters and Emails...

Hi Kim,

I can't tell you how good it is to hear from you. You got to me before I had a chance to write to you. Brian did tell me you had moved to working with families. I'm glad you're enjoying the change and happy for all the families whose lives will be changed working with you. We are on *The Family Voice* mailing list and read every word. Jim would be happy to write a piece for it. He will get it to you by the end of next week.

You asked for an update, and I will try to be brief. Our son came home this past Thanksgiving (made and paid for his travel arrangements) for the first time since he left for Caron Renaissance in August of 2012. When we picked him up at the airport, I almost dropped to my knees when he came through the baggage area. The change in him was remarkable - the confident way he carried himself (everyone swore he grew a couple of inches), his healthy appearance and happy smile and these are just the physical changes. Far more shocking were the more subtle changes - his contentment and gratitude just being with family, confidence and maturity. He was here for three days, and they were the most peaceful we have had in 12 years. Of course, they were all too good to be true in my mind.

My Dad passed away on New Year's Eve. Our son had always been close to his grandparents and was happy he had spent so much time with his grandfather at Thanksgiving. I called him that morning with the news. The adult son booked and paid for his plane ticket home, was eager to be with his grandmother and family, greeted and engaged old friends and family and handled the funeral service with maturity. He had a Sunday morning flight back to Florida. When I walked into the kitchen to make tea he was not only awake but dressed, packed (including wallet, phone and charger) had printed his boarding pass and was making coffee. Then he asked me if I wanted the sheets brought down to the laundry room from his bed!!!

He has also been working on his relationship with his sister. I think she actually misses him and looks forward to seeing him when he comes home. He truly values his friendships in Florida; All small changes that have turned him into a mature, happy adult who we all enjoy spending time with.

Our son has worked really hard, we have worked really hard but no one deserves more credit than you do, and I thank you in my prayers everyday.

All my best wishes for you and your family in the coming year!

- Jackie

Hello Davida,

*I hope this note finds you and your family well. I just wanted to tell you that as I reflected last week on what has happened in our family over the last year, we are very thankful for especially, YOU! You have been a great help to my son and to me and my wife. Especially me...you know with my talent for "catastrophizing" and all. You have taught us so much and have really made a difference for our son.*

*I just wanted to be sure to tell you this. We are indeed very thankful for all your hard work. It is a noble thing that you do. I hope you know how much it means to so many people and especially us.*

*All my best,  
- John*

Hi Yasmin,

I actually am returning to the area tomorrow. My son was moved on the 24th, and I am coming down for a few days to see the facility and connect with his health care team. Because his right lower leg is still without sensation or movement, I want to support him as he fights to reclaim function and sobriety. Please feel free to share my email with Brian in *The Family Voice*. He and Robin truly were/are my angels of sanity and hope. My son was at Caron Wernersville in May 2012 and my Nar-Anon group in Lancaster, PA has several alum families. One of those families told me about the Renaissance Family meetings, I found Robin's email on your website and the connection was made. I feel so blessed to have so many kind folks guiding me through this nightmare.

Hope you have a happy holiday.

- Mother of a Caron PA Alum

## Letters and Emails...

Hello Yasmin,

I'm writing this letter because I am at a point in my life where I feel I owe the amazing staff at Renaissance much thanks and gratefulness. Please forward this letter to Robert Johnson as well as I do not have his email address.

I am a former patient of Caron Renaissance. I was admitted in 2008 for many different issues. I completed the program six months after being admitted. As I look back today, I realize that going to Renaissance saved my life in every way possible. I was facing years in prison or possibly committing suicide as a result of severe depression and loss of all hope whatsoever. The relationship with my family at the time was tremendously bruised and broken. With the help of my therapists, my relationship with my family is at its best, something I never would have expected at all. Throughout my time in treatment, I had a really difficult time but I knew this was my only choice, my only salvation. It worked. I wanted to get better! I hated being sick, hated feeling the way I did.

It's been about five years already since then, and I think about my time in treatment every single day. I remind myself of the state I was in before and where I am at now, and I am so grateful. Grateful would be an understatement.

Recently I was the proud owner of a beautiful restaurant in a New Jersey. I am now in the military in Israel serving a country I love. Many thanks to Robert Johnson, Nate Garlick and all of the other amazing people at Caron Renaissance. Joining the military was a huge and tough decision to make, but I knew I could do it. Thanks to the new sense of motivation in life I received at Renaissance, I feel as if I can do anything, including conquer the world. It literally feels as if I just completed the program yesterday. I will continue to relive what I learned at Renaissance every day. I pray for all those at Caron Renaissance and elsewhere struggling with the same issues as I did. Remember it's all up to you to change. If you let the amazing people at Caron help you and let them in, you will work through it all.

- H.R.

*Davida and David:*

*Today I am planning for the holiday this week. I have a simple dinner planned with some special guests, my son, who is 20 months sober, my daughter, who is five months sober and the rest of our family who are also sober from this disease. I want to thank you all for everything. I know the road has been long and includes many others besides you, but I know that it began to change with all of you. It's where I began to change and you were all right. It changed everything. So for today, which is all we have, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you for the chance, the path, our lives back.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.*

*- Jim M. and family*

Hi Ryan,

I just wanted to check in and say hi! Normally, so close to JRC, I would be writing with hopes to come for a visit, but unfortunately, my husband and I cannot come this weekend; a couple of months ago my sister was diagnosed with a very rare and advanced stage of cancer and her surgery is scheduled for this Friday in Pittsburgh. It's been a very intense and brutal two and a half months - the cancer came out of the blue, and it had spread to her ovaries. So my dear 31-year-old sister and her husband are not only terrified about this disease, but also devastated about the ramifications for her fertility.

I have been back and forth a few times to Vancouver while my husband held down the fort wonderfully here. I cannot imagine what this would have looked like for me last year or the year before. I can leave to be there for my sister, parents, grandparents, etc. and I have no worries about our son's safety and care or if he will relapse. It is amazing to have that sense of trust earned! His year plus of sobriety and his starting school (as a straight A student - HA!) is just awesome to see and appreciate, and we attribute these successes mostly due to the work he did and guidance he got during his time at Renaissance.

Aside from the turbulence and trauma about my sister (this was supposed to be a calm year, but Higher Power didn't get the memo), I am doing well. I love my masters in MFT and work, while busy, is good. Our son is delicious; he brings us so much joy.

I wish we could come visit soon- maybe we'll take an R & R break after things calm down. I hope all is well with you.

All the best.  
Abby D.

## Letters and Emails...

David,

*This email is long overdue & I've been meaning to write it for over a month. Thanks for all your team's accomplishments. Our daughter really is getting on about life well and is grateful for what we've all done. Your program is one of the hardest things I've done in my life, and it was worth every drop of the sweat and tears. Please give my best to everyone at Caron Renaissance. Let Joe Henry know he can have anyone call me as a reference any time. Thanks for giving me my kid back. We are giving her a lot of room & letting her move forward at her pace not ours. Happy Holidays.*

- Mike & Barbara M.

Dear Davida:

Words can't express how grateful I am for your guidance in helping our daughter and me work through our grief, anger and frustration. It was painful, but so necessary. Our daughter said she didn't realize how much she needed this therapy and is so glad she came.

Your toughness in confronting our daughter and not taking any excuses or crap were great examples of how I need to do the same. Detaching from her is my intention. You showed me how to raise my expectations in dealing with her. Now I understand what it means when you say that she needs to "do the work." I have work to do, too.

Jen told me yesterday that you would no longer be our therapist. I'm so disappointed! But I have to trust that Renaissance will provide us with another wonderful professional. Thank you, Davida. I will be forever appreciative of all you've done to save our daughter's life and repair our family.

- Joyce

Hi,

*My daughter flew to Renaissance from Caron PA, in April 2013 for what was going to become a long and much needed stay. When she made the decision to go to Renaissance (I had checked a gazillion "softer" rehab facilities on my own), I felt that a huge responsibility had been lifted from me; I made the decision to trust people I had never met, because they seemed to know what a monster addiction is. I started to follow directions.*

*During the following months, through weekly phone calls, Anthony and Susan managed to calm my fears about my daughter's life and gently and firmly redirect me where I belonged, to myself.*

*Thanks to them, as a full blown co-dependent, I am learning to become a better mother, to listen more, to feel my feelings (that I denied for too long), to respect my daughter's autonomy and to communicate in an honest, open and direct way with her and others. I know what boundaries mean and what accountability is.*

*My daughter is in a good place today, and so am I. I don't know about tomorrow, but I have the tools to work on myself and will try not to ever go back to my insanity.*

*The two weeks of family restructuring were incredibly tough and uncomfortable at times, but one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. I saw first hand the dedication, hard work and compassion of the staff everywhere. I enjoyed the humor too, and that is hard to find when addiction and emotional suffering are the reason we were all there.*

*To Anthony, you are a great guy!*

*To Susan, thank you, as a woman and as a mother.*

*To Davida, I have never met somebody so tough and so compassionate at the same time. I don't know how you do it. To David, thank you for bluntly exposing me and my anger. I needed to face it*

*To all of you, you have a special place in my heart*

- Lorenza

Dear Jen,

*As I told Davida, you both choosing this profession is such a blessing for every family and patient who walks through Caron Renaissance's doors. We finally heard in our son's own words how sick he is (and I know it's only half a story we heard) but it's a start. I see how the group interaction and everyone being held accountable for anything they say or do helps them to grow and finally take charge for their actions. I know he has a very long, hard road ahead of him, as do I, but now more than ever I know he is in the right place with the greatest of help, and now it is up to him.*

*I also realize more than ever that I have a tremendous amount of work to do and that if I don't change he will die. He must navigate his own journey with the help of Caron Renaissance, his peers and support groups, not MOMMY AND DADDY rescuing him.*

- Deb L.

### Caron Renaissance Remembers Dr. Stanley Evans, Former Caron Renaissance Medical Director and Member of Caron's Board of Directors



Staff and alumni of Caron Renaissance are remembering Dr. Stanley Evans, former Caron Renaissance Medical Director. Dr. Evans passed away on February 15, 2014. He was instrumental in bringing innovative technologies such as telemedicine to Caron Renaissance.

For more than 40 years, Stanley J. Evans, MD, FASAM, PA conceptualized, developed and operationalized systems of care based on the evolving understanding of addiction and co-occurring disorders. He was at the forefront of this specialized field of medicine, challenging both the healthcare industry and the public sector in regard to addiction as a chronic illness. He has pioneered programming locally that is affecting results globally – touching thousands of lives in the process. To that end, he served

as a powerful advocate for treatment of patients and their families.

Dr. Evans' began a long and distinguished career as a pioneer in the field of chemical dependency, treatment and recovery in Maine. At the Eastern Maine Medical Center's Alcohol Institute, he created the state's first comprehensive detoxification and treatment facility. He also oversaw the transformation of Mercy Hospital's treatment program into a comprehensive Recovery Center; founded Smith House, a non-residential facility in Portland; directed the chemical dependency program at St. Mary's Hospital; and spent several years as Primary Care Director at the Jackson Brook Institute (now Spring Harbor).

Dr. Evans served as the Caron Renaissance Medical Director and was a member of Caron's Board of Directors and Professional Advisory Council. In 2001, Dr. Evans was certified as a Fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). He has been board certified by ASAM since 1986 in Addiction Medicine. At Caron Renaissance, he continued his vision of providing cutting edge treatment for patients and families struggling with addiction.

An early proponent of telemedicine with a vision of how the technique could dramatically improve access to services and care for addicts and their families, Dr. Evans was a member of the American Telemedicine Association and introduced this program at Caron. His tireless pursuit of this revolutionary technology has put Caron Treatment Centers at the forefront of this innovative practice providing ever expanding services to patients and their families. Dr. Evans continued to maintain his practice in Maine – still the only practice in the state devoted solely to the care of addiction – seeing patients daily, conferring with his staff of two physicians, meeting with families and managing the day-to-day operations of this unique practice, all via teleconferencing.

Dr. Evans' clarity and commitment to his profession has been extraordinary, and his tremendous impact on the field of addiction medicine, patients and colleagues have been immeasurable. He is a hero in medicine, and he will be greatly missed.



## Caron Renaissance Family Support Groups

Caron Renaissance Family Support Groups are designed to encourage and provide a place for ongoing support for families who participate in a loved one's treatment at Caron Renaissance.

The Caron Renaissance Family Support Groups are led by Caron Renaissance family members and serve local families as needed. More detailed information about each group is listed online at [www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group/caron-renaissance-family-support-group](http://www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group/caron-renaissance-family-support-group).

<b>Palm Beach County, FL</b> <i>Every Tuesday and open on the last Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Morris County, NJ</b> <i>2nd and last Thursday of each month</i>	<b>Bergen County, NJ</b> <i>2nd and last Wednesday of each month</i>	<b>New York, NY</b> <i>2nd and 4th Thursday of each month</i>	<b>South Jersey/ Philadelphia</b> <i>1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month</i>
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## Caron Fellowship Groups

Caron Fellowship Groups are similar to 12-Step meetings in that Caron alumni and families meet to support their ongoing recovery using an agreed-upon meeting format. Below are lists of ongoing Fellowship Groups. More detailed information about each group is listed online at [www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group/caron-fellowship-groups](http://www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group/caron-fellowship-groups).

<b>Berks County, PA</b> <i>2nd Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Dallas, TX Area</b> <i>2nd and 3rd Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Philadelphia, PA</b> <i>3rd Wednesday of each month</i>
<b>Boca Raton, FL (Students in Recovery)</b> <i>Every Tuesday</i>	<b>Long Island, NY</b> <i>4th Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Washington, D.C.</b> <i>1st Thursday of each month</i>
<b>Boston, MA Area</b> <i>2nd Thursday of each month</i>	<b>New York, NY</b> <i>3rd Wednesday of each month</i>	<b>Westchester, NY</b> <i>Quarterly</i>
<b>Central NJ Area</b> <i>1st Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Northern VA Area</b> <i>4th Thursday of each month</i>	<b>Westport, CT</b> <i>3rd Tuesday of each month</i>



## Caron Parent Support Groups

Parent Support Groups are designed to give parents, whose children have been impacted by addiction, a place to find support and encouragement. Below is a list of ongoing Parent Support Groups. More detailed information about each group is listed online at [www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group-parent-support-groups](http://www.caronrenaissance.org/alumni/support-group-parent-support-groups).

<b>Atlanta, GA</b> <i>Beginning February 2014</i>	<b>Limerick, PA</b> <i>Every Wednesday</i>	<b>Philadelphia, PA</b> <i>2nd and 4th Thursday of each month</i>	<b>Washington, D.C.</b> <i>1st and 3rd Thursday of each month</i>
<b>Bergen County, NJ</b> <i>Every Tuesday</i>	<b>Nassau County, NY</b> <i>Every Thursday</i>	<b>Plymouth Meeting, PA</b> <i>Every Monday</i>	<b>West Chester, PA</b> <i>Every Tuesday (Newcomers every Monday)</i>
<b>Boston, MA</b> <i>1st Thursday of each month</i>	<b>New York, NY</b> <i>Adult Sibling Group 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Reading, PA</b> <i>2nd and 4th Sunday of each month</i>	<b>Westport, CT</b> <i>3rd Tuesday of each month</i>
<b>Central NJ</b> <i>1st Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>Northern Virginia</b> <i>4th Thursday of each month</i>	<b>Southern NJ</b> <i>2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month</i>	<b>West Palm Beach, FL</b> <i>Every Monday</i>
<b>Lehigh Valley, PA</b> <i>Every Thursday</i>		<b>Suffolk County, NY</b> <i>Every Monday</i>	

If you need support and would like to talk to alumni of Caron Renaissance, please contact Yasmin Dovas at [ydovas@caron.org](mailto:ydovas@caron.org).