



SPRING/SUMMER 2020

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Board of Advisors

We continue to build our Board of Advisors, who help get the word out about Awakening Recovery. This group advocates in fundraising, lending their names to our cause and participating in events. If you or someone you know wants to help in this capacity, please reach out to our Board Development Chair, Jonathon Aubry at jonathon.aubry@awakeningrecovery.org and we can set up a tour.

Anthony Agoglia

Peggy Albrecht (In Memoriam)

Linda Daly

Jennifer Perry

David Goldberg

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Dear Awakening Recovery Family,

"The Times They Are A Changin'" – Bob Dylan
This quote came to mind in thinking about the systemic need for change our society is facing this year with the COVID-19 pandemic, the righteous igniting of the Black Lives Matter movement as a result of the brutal and tragic murder of George Floyd, and the recent Supreme Court decision ensuring LGBTQ employees can no longer legally be discriminated against by employers based on sexual orientation or gender. That is a lot to process in the first half of 2020 for anyone, and that's leaving out politics. Here at Awakening Recovery we realize we still have a lot of soul searching to do on how we can do better to address these issues as an organization in preparing our residents to be an active part of the solution, not just simply inclusive, but rather anti-racist and taking care of and celebrating each other as equal.



My Story of Adversity, Gratitude and Being a Seeker

I grew up in Los Angeles no stranger to adversity being born an adopted only child, overcoming a life threatening kidney disease, and my parents getting divorced all by age 6. Being a grammar school child of Proposition 13 in the late 1970's, I was physically, financially and emotionally bullied in school bathrooms, and during PE by my new fellow students who were unfairly and suddenly forced to be mandatorily bussed daily to schools 2-3 hours away from where they lived with little school counseling or adequate plans for true and holistic desegregation of schools in CA. I was also an adolescent alcoholic and drug addict who came out as a gay man, and got sober in NYC in 1988 in the midst of the AIDS pandemic at age 19. I had a lot of work to do inside and out when I began my journey in recovery, including working on my own internalized racial bias from my childhood bullying trauma to heal my mind, body and spirit. This work, through consistent and sustained surrender, ego reduction and humility, allows me to maintain meaningful long-term recovery. I now can use my lived childhood adverse experiences to help others still suffering from similar trauma.



Black Lives Matter

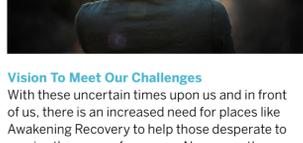
My heart breaks to see how far we have yet to go with racism in America. Racism is real, psychologically, emotionally and sometimes physically violent, and it has profound consequences. As we learn in recovery, trauma and drug addiction/alcoholism go hand in hand. We must value all lives, but frankly, at this place and time, that is not the point. The point is that black lives are specifically marginalized in America in a unique, demeaning, traumatizing, tragic and systemic manner. We need to be especially mindful of the suffering black people have and are experiencing, looking past personal pain, to truly be of service to the black men and women in our community. We remain hopeful that through the uncover, discover and discard process at the house, our graduates will go out into the world knowing that actions speak louder than words and being of service to others is an essential part of recovery, not just an obligation.

Success During Uncertain Times

We now have 23 graduates with several more on the way this Summer in less than 4 years of operation. Over half of our graduates are two or three years sober now, with 90% of our graduates remaining sober to give back to their recovery community. Length of stay in the house, quality of a profound change in behavior and diligence in engaging in the 12-Step process with their sponsors are key barometers of our success. Each year 30-35 new residents walk through our doors hopeless, helpless and dying of alcoholism and drug addiction. Our life-saving year-long process in the house provides hope, faith and courage to our graduates to thrive in the world through peer mentoring, confronting maladaptive behaviors and honestly engaging in the 12-Steps to bring about a spiritual awakening. Again, our constant touchstones in recovery are surrender, ego reduction and humility. **None of this is possible without your generous and sustained support of our mission. We received over 260 donations in 2019 to meet our budget, a new record. THANK YOU!**

Helping Those That Need It The Most

Despite these challenging times, and thanks to your help, Awakening Recovery continues to provide the most transformative long-term way to address the drug addiction and alcoholism crisis in America that has only worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic and now civil unrest. **Awakening Recovery is proud through your donations to be able to provide scholarships to our recovery home solution to those who would otherwise be homeless, incarcerated, and not have access to for-profit recovery programs due to financial hardship or insufficient insurance coverage.**

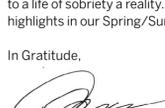


Vision To Meet Our Challenges

With these uncertain times upon us and in front of us, there is an increased need for places like Awakening Recovery to help those desperate to receive the grace of recovery. Now more than ever, it is urgent we continue to take deliberate steps forward to expand our reach and scope. Women are disproportionately affected by alcoholism and drug addiction and typically have the most sexual trauma entering into recovery, while at the same time having the least access to a long-term recovery solution that works. Now is the time for us to open a women's house to address the desperate need in Los Angeles. **We have received seed funding for a women's house and are actively engaging additional potential donors and advocates in the community to create the momentum to open our women's house by the end of 2020.** We welcome your support to make this a reality. If you are interested in joining this effort or know someone that would, please contact Olympia Ammon at olympia.ammon@awakeningrecovery.org or myself.

It takes a village; thank you for being a part of our recovery support team, providing the urgent support needed to all who want to make awakening to a life of sobriety a reality. Read on for exciting highlights in our Spring/Summer 2020 Newsletter.

In Gratitude,


David van der Velde
Executive Director
David.vandervelde@awakeningrecovery.org
Mobile: 310-990-2235

Our Model Works: Meet Our Recent Graduates

Since our last newsletter, we have graduated 6 more residents. Congrats are in order for Christopher "CC" C, John G., Jerry H., Marlin P., Marlin P., and Chris T. I we are proud of you and excited to have you as part of the alumni support community to help guide future residents through the Awakening Recovery process.



"When I came to the house I was completely lost and had no hope that I would ever find any purpose in my life. Going through the house has taught me how to live life in a respectful and responsible way. With the help of my support group and the program I live by in AA I now have a life full of hope and purpose. I am eternally grateful for the love and support that Awakening has given me. Thank you for saving my life." -**Marlin P.**



"Before coming to Awakening Recovery I was in and out of treatment. I could not stay sober. Awakening Recovery helped me see that I am the problem and along with AA and the 12-Steps helped me to cultivate a relationship with a higher power. Today, I am able to live sober one day at a time." -**Jerry H.**



"Before coming to Awakening Recovery my life was in shambles. I was homeless, in and out of jail constantly, and hopelessly stuck in the throws of my addiction. Days before coming into Awakening Recovery I was released from doing 6 months in jail. Within hours I was back to using. As if those 6 months had never happened. I had given up on myself, but something out there had other plans for my life. Awakening Recovery took me in when I had nothing and helped me to build the life I have today. A life in which I am financially and emotionally responsible. I am so lucky to have been given this opportunity and to have found myself a part of such an amazing community." -**Chris T.**



"I was constantly making poor decisions and causing wreckage in my life. However, thanks to Awakening Recovery, I have been given the tools to deal with life, learned to have relationships, and have my daughter back in my life. I'm truly grateful." -**John G.**



"The 9 years before coming to Awakening Recovery, I had been to 40 rehabs, in and out of psych wards, dozens of arrests, and had resigned to the idea that "this is what life would be for me" as an active heroin addict. The thoughts and feelings I had about myself and this life is, matched that story I kept re-creating, stuck in darkness. The house changed all that for me. A process I feel is divinely inspired, everything I knew about life and how I saw life has changed. It inspired me to the real world, the one of beauty and love and hope, and most of all brotherhood, where I know that if I'm honest with the ones in my life, I never have to return to the darkness and on the contrary can sustain living in the light. I experienced countless miracles and shifts in perception have changed my life and undid a lifetime of wrong information, and I'm forever grateful." -**Christopher "CC"**



"Before I came to Awakening I was full of fear, doubt and ego and I could not stop using and running my life into the ground. The community of Awakening Recovery welcomed me with open arms... with only one objective: To help me stay sober and gain freedom from the life threatening illness of addiction that I was so used to suffering from. For the last 10 years I was in and out of sobriety with no real solution. I was lost and hurting inside. The Awakening Recovery community took their time to help me develop tools to use in my daily life along with the 12 Steps of AA to battle my addiction. I now live happy, joyous and free. I am eternally grateful for the Awakening community for their big hearts and patience as they helped me over the last 13 months. This house saved my life. Life is now way better than I could have ever imagined. Thank God for Awakening Recovery." -**Griffin P.**



Resident Activities

The pathway to recovery from addiction/alcoholism is a mind-body-soul healing experience and we work to give the men who pass through the doors of Awakening Recovery the coping tools needed to address all three. Despite the current pandemic our men have found ways to remain active and connected with the community, while practicing safe social distancing.



Kings game



A training run



Googlers Give



Yoga

Kings and Dodgers Games

Our generous alumni and Board members were able to take our residents and alumni to LA Kings and Dodgers games to bond with them and encourage a hopeful future.

Meals on wheels

Our residents volunteered to pack lunches for Meals on Wheels to learn what it means to be of service to their LA community.

Santa Monica - Venice Christmas Run

Our residents trained with Strides In Recovery to run in the Santa Monica - Venice Christmas 5k Run and have continue to do training runs with proper social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Googlers Give

Through the generosity of Google's Los Angeles office, we were able to participate in a fundraising event during their staff lunch on their LA campus.

Wellness Activities

Susan Ahdoot and Maryam Askari teach weekend Yoga to our residents (currently via zoom) and our Board member Bill Resnick teaches our residents mindful meditation weekly.

Movie Nights

Our generous donors provide funding to movie nights for our residents for Holidays to help keep them safe during these days that can be triggers for them.

These wellness activities that are universally helpful are interwoven into our rigorous recovery home process and help to promote balance for our residents.

Philanthropy Fuels Recovery

Donors and Partners Step up, and We Continue our Next Pursuit: a Women's House

Our Partners Step up early in 2020



The David Geffen Foundation

Our first foundation gift came in Q1 of 2020 thanks to the generosity of The David Geffen Foundation. This second generous gift from the Foundation elevates their total giving to an impressive \$100,000 toward the Awakening Recovery mission. Gifts of this size have a significant impact on our ability to continue to deliver our recovery home process to our residents.



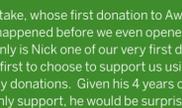
McMillen Family Foundation

The McMillen Family Foundation has proven to be a valuable and loyal partner to Awakening Recovery and continues to humble us with its continued support during the crisis. In April 2020, we were granted a \$42,000 COVID-19 relief grant to help support our lost revenue from resident rent, our weekly resident food/beverage costs, and our mortgage payment so that we can continue to operate at full capacity in the midst of the pandemic.



City of West Hollywood

We continue to be grateful for the generous fee-for-service grant from WeHo that funds West Hollywood constituents to be residents at Awakening Recovery. As the first city grant we have received it has set a great precedent for us to pursue other government funding.



Meet Nick Hamatake

An Awakening Recovery Donor Hero

Meet Nick Hamatake, whose first donation to Awakening Recovery happened before we even opened our doors. Not only is Nick one of our very first donors, he was the first to choose to support us using recurring monthly donations. Given his 4 years of consistent monthly support, he would be surprised to know that these gifts now place Nick in our top 10 individual donors in terms of lifetime giving. Even further, he makes sure his employer matches his generous donations. He is an Awakening Recovery donor hero!

Nick has a strong personal connection to our mission. He met his husband 10 years ago who was already celebrating 8 years of sobriety. "My husband attributes his successful life today 100% to his structured sober living recovery experience over 15 years ago."

Due to his and his husband's (Ken Mariash, Jr. / AR Board member's) friendships in the sober community, in 2016, Nick was introduced to Awakening Recovery's soon to be Executive Director, David Van der Velde, when the house was just an idea. "David told me about his vision. I remember thinking, it's such a good idea. It's the right time, it's the right location, and it's the right house with the right leadership," he recalls. "I was sold." Nick gave his first donation that May.

"I am able to see the families stay engaged as much as their children do after graduation. Many return after graduation and thank us for giving them their sons back." "Houses like Awakening Recovery are creating graduates who can now be freed from the prison of addiction, be productive members of society, and pursue healthy relationships that support their new lives. Without them, I would not have found the love of my life and been able to celebrate his 18th sobriety birthday with him. With my humble monthly gift, I can express that I am grateful."

Thank you Nick, for your early and sustained confidence. Your generosity has created a self-sustaining prophecy for over 100 men who have engaged with our mission. This is priceless.

- Awakening Recovery Board, Staff, Alumni and Residents

2019 Donor Honor Roll

Awakening Recovery is deeply grateful to each of our donors who supported our work with a donation of any size in 2019. These individuals, foundations and organizations made lasting change possible with their generosity. Thank you!

Donors listed gave between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.

- Shayna Abraham
- Anthony Agoglia
- Julie Anderson
- Mark Anderson
- Claudine Andrews
- Jonathon Aubry & Abdi Nazemian
- Danielle Aya Nepus
- Cindy Bailey Anderson
- Richard Bartram
- Dustin Bennett
- Sasha Bennett
- Jacqueline Bennett Phillips
- Bob's Discount Furniture
- Hannah Brett
- Nic Britton
- Tarri Buboltz
- Carole & Robert Daly Charitable Foundation
- City of West Hollywood
- Cheri Clark
- Elaine Marie Clark
- Greg Clark
- Ritch Colbert
- Taylor Conlon
- Laura Cooper-Berman
- Debbie Costerisan Raupp
- Ann Cox
- Florence Daisy Rae Rudoff
- Bobby & Krishna Daly
- Carole & Bob Daly
- Ted Dawson
- Cazzie De La Paz
- Marco de Longville
- Sam Dekin
- Jay Dempsey
- Dorrit & Sig Diamond
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- Benjamin Dougharty
- Mattie Evangeline
- Paul Footit
- Chris Frank
- Josh Frank
- David Friedman
- Austin Gibbons
- Kim Gibbons
- Tyler Gibbons
- John Gile
- David Goldberg
- Tina Goldberg
- Ken Goldman
- Arthur & Debbie Goldstein
- Google's Giving Week Campaign
- Beth & Russ Gould
- Don Grant
- Noelle Grant

- Gratitude Retreat Foundation
- Heather Gritton
- Hrubesky
- Felicia Hain
- Jan Hamatake
- Drew Hart
- Matt Hass
- Chris Hawkins
- Lynette Heary
- Mary Herman
- Michelle Heymann
- Tara Higgins
- Greg Holden
- Chavin Houser
- Chris Howard
- Pam Howard
- Steve Howard
- Ruaraidh Hunter
- Alexander Kadish
- Jill Kolstedt & Bernard Karp
- Justin Kelly
- Lermond Khodaverdy
- Carine Kim Nguyen
- Joelene Knight
- Jens Kohler
- Norm Konigsberg
- Mark Freund & Trice Koopman
- Brian Larson
- Jason Schneiderman
- Blake Levy
- Benny Liebs
- Stephens Lind
- Eli Lindsay
- Robin Lindsay
- Raul Lopez
- Erin Lotz
- Ken Mariash, Jr & Nick Hamatake
- Bob Marier
- Stuart Michael Marino
- Riley Martin
- Alice Matzkin
- McMillen Family Foundation
- William McNeeley
- Richard & Diane Melton
- Carrie Mertens
- Sandra Milton
- Steve Morris
- Bob Morrison
- Sean Mullen
- Oriana & Patrick Murphy
- Brent Parks
- Joey Parks
- Deborah Peters
- Ashlee Petersen

- Amanda Piercey Shumow
- Rachel Pollack
- Joe & Sandy Pomerantz
- Larry & Lillian Postaeer
- Ann Premazon
- Tricia Price
- Bennett Ramberg
- Ben Ramsden
- Liana Reid
- Roderick Renfrew
- Bill Resnick
- Stewart Resnick
- Noelle Rodriguez
- Massimo Romero
- Joe Sammadi
- Miles Sauvageau
- John Schutt III
- Alex Shartsis
- Silver Birches
- Scott Singer
- David Slack
- Adam Smith
- Heidi Sorkin
- Josh Spector
- Shawn Sparduti
- Louise Stanger
- Erica Stenta Willis
- Julius Stephenson
- Hunter Strutz
- Susan Weingarten
- Strutz
- Deborah Sweet
- The David Geffen Foundation
- The Oliver S. and Jennie R. Donaldson Charitable Trust
- Rebecca M. Udell
- Carol Vandervele
- Diana Varco
- Steve Vaynberg
- Victor Hugo Vazquez
- Sumen Virdee
- Steven Ward
- David Weber
- Jody Weinberg
- Christopher Williamson
- Leslie & Craig Woods
- Marilyn Woods
- Nico Wright
- Kelly Wu
- John Yakopich
- Mandy Yuhara
- Yukaholics
- ...and those who wish to remain anonymous

Every effort was made to provide accurate donor information; if you notice anything in error, please email olympia.ammon@awakeningrecovery.org and we will correct it as soon as possible.

We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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