



SAVING LIVES, 12 STEPS AT A TIME™

FALL/WINTER 2021

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## Dear Awakening Recovery Family,

**This past year has been a challenge for everyone in the recovery community with isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic bringing to us associated increases in relapse and overdose deaths.**

In fact estimated deaths from **drug overdoses spiked to over 93,000 in 2020, a 30% increase from 2019 according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.** California saw an increase in fatalities of 45.9% from December 2019 to December 2020, according to the new data. Additionally, overdose deaths involving opioids reached 69,710 in 2020 in California, up from 50,963 in 2019. Deaths from methamphetamine and cocaine also rose.

As research shows, and as Awakening Recovery has uniquely demonstrated, the longer someone seeking recovery stays in the same recovery solution location, doing the same thing with the same people, the better their chances to avoid relapse and overdose.

Our residents and alumni are now able to go to in-person 12-Step meetings and other activities, but the Delta variant has brought about revived requirements for masking again in some locations and we continue to ensure our COVID protocols remain in line with LA County Health Department guidelines to keep our community safe.

Throughout the pandemic, **we have been fortunate to have 7 residents graduate in 2020 and 2 more so far in 2021**, with 3 more on track to graduate by the end of this year or early 2022. As a result, we are proud to report that **74% of our graduates have stayed sober continuously, and 81% are sober at least a year** as a result of our highly structured, long-term, 12-step based peer mentoring model.

Awakening residents go through an intensive year+ long process focused on instilling the 12-Step principles into everything we do and much of our structure revolves around peer mentoring house meetings where individuals receive feedback from the community—including from our graduates, who now average 3.2 years of sobriety each.

## Supporting Mental Wellness

As is no surprise, the need for wellness activities for our residents were even more needed during the pandemic to help keep our residents' minds, bodies and spirits on a healing path—we are grateful to our dedicated volunteer experts for providing **weekly mindful meditation, stretching and yoga via zoom, and much more.** Our annual Big Bear trip, gave over 30 of our residents, alumni and staff a desperately needed opportunity to reconnect during our weekend of fellowship, group peer-mentoring and fun!



## Our 5th Anniversary Party

On July 1 we celebrated our 5th Anniversary and had a heartwarming community event at the house on July 31 where over 60 supporters came to commemorate this important milestone. Additionally, the **City of West Hollywood** (who provides AR resident scholarship grants to WeHo constituents) gave us a 5 year recognition certificate! We also created **testimonial videos** featuring our graduates **Austin, Tyler, RJ and Stuart**, each of whom are celebrating 5 years sober this year.



## Our Values and Mission Redefined

**Our 4-year strategic plan is now complete and reflects new goals and strategies to achieve our mission and vision, which include:**

- **Expand locations to serve more people**—including our future women's house, slated to open by the end of 2021 or the beginning of 2022.
- **Engage alumni** to bolster our successes and impact.
- **Grow our resources.**
- **Ensure our capacity** to achieve strategic priorities.

**We also developed the following Community Values to guide our decision making and daily behavior:**

**INTEGRITY** We believe rigorous honesty and accountability are essential to all we do.

**LEARNING** While our guiding principles are universal and based on the spiritual principles of the 12-Steps, we believe in evolving and adapting our methods as we learn.

**COMMON PURPOSE** Because we have a common problem with alcoholism and drug addiction, we believe our community is connected by a common solution in recovery.

**ACTION-DRIVEN** We believe successful recovery requires consistent action to change our behavior, which signals willingness to transform our lives.

**SERVICE** We believe in giving back to the community that saved our lives and seek to be a multiplying force for good in the world.

It truly has been a community effort to meet our fundraising goals over the last 5 years and every dollar enables us to help our residents learn to live sober lives on a daily basis. Since the beginning of Awakening Recovery's journey, we have been blessed to have consistent, generous support from donors including the **Daly Family, Resnick Family and Semel Family.**

As we've grown, so too has our need to increase funding. We now raise over \$100,000 per year from foundation grants such as **The McMillen Family Foundation, The David Geffen Foundation, Slave2Nothing, The George Hoag Family Foundation, The Donaldson Charitable Trust**, and many others. We currently have **over 200 active donors** for 2020/2021, 13 of which are monthly donors, and we are so humbled to have the support of our community to continue our mission.

Advocacy in the community has been a big push for us in the last year, which is why I have become a contributor to Thrive Global and help get the word out about long-term abstinence based recovery solutions. We have also increased our presence in the media to highlight our unique approach to recovery and have been featured in **The Pride, The Hollywood Reporter** and **Authority Magazine**, among others.

We are celebrating our 5 year anniversary thanks to community members like you! We are committed to providing access to our peer-mentoring recovery home with no financial barriers and your gift ensures we do not have to turn anyone away, regardless of their ability to pay.

**On behalf of the Awakening Recovery Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support of our mission and work.**

Celebrate 5 successful years with us by becoming a **monthly donor!** Your monthly contribution will directly support the men who are seeking a structured, life-changing path to sustainable recovery. \$100 per month can feed our residents for a day; \$50 per month can ensure our video meeting capability continues. Every donation makes a difference to our residents.

Change a life with us today!

In Gratitude,

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



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CONSIDER A MONTHLY DONATION

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