

Commencement Connection

Fall 2005

WE HAVE MOVED

By: Jim Hinzman, MAC, CCS, Administrator
Administrator, Athens Area Commencement Center

So...here we are in our new building. God has been gracious to Athens Area Commencement Center. As of July 14, we moved into our new building at 1175 Mitchell Bridge Road, Athens, Georgia. We had out grown our Hawthorne Avenue space, so being in a bigger building is wonderful. Athens Area Commencement Center has been blessed that we are no longer renting and were able to purchase our new building. Therefore, we have secured a permanent location in Athens for years to come. Treatment in Athens is viable and continues to serve individuals wanting to get well from addiction.

I just came back from a conference on Relapse. I listened to many treatment professionals at the conference talking about the lack of treatment options in the communities where they live. It is my belief, that in the field of addiction, addicts and alcoholics had more treatment options twenty-five years ago than today. I can become very negative about this or accept our blessings that Athens Area Commencement Center is available and doing well. We intend to work more aggressively and search out creative means in which our services can be more available and affordable to individuals seeking treatment to get well.

My vision for Athens Area Commencement Center is to be here forever. I believe that the disease of addiction is treatable and that addicts and alcoholics can get well. However, the disease of addiction is chronic, meaning that it must be treated for the duration of life. Life does go on after treatment.

Athens Area Commencement Center will be having an Open House soon. We are still in the process of getting our new facility completed. However, please feel free to drop in and visit us.

TREATMENT WORKS

By: Joe Preston, L.C.S.W., NCACII

Gnats

I met a fellow named C.D. C. from Statesboro several years ago. He told me "Joe, THE PROGRAM works under all conditions". By this he meant that the 12 Steps can keep us clean and sober regardless of what life throws at us. I am amazed almost daily at what people are able to survive by using the tools. Another friend, named Roland, says that we are more likely to survive the real tragedies: death of loved ones, loss of home or job but to get eaten alive by the gnats of life. We know others are there to help and are watching us when the big stuff happens. When the gnats are biting we hesitate to reach out and those small bites seem overwhelming. We must learn to use the support available: sponsors, Aftercare, meetings and our Higher Power even when we believe we "should" be able to handle the situation alone. Don't let the gnats get ya!

Hogs

A couple of new friends were talking about growing up in the country with hunting and fishing as primary sources of recreation. We talked about hunting various critters and about dogs specially trained for different types of game. One shared about going to a trial of dogs trained to hunt wild boar. It seems that a boar hog was placed in a pit and the dogs would be released to attack it. (Sounds barbaric, huh) The hog would throw the dogs out of the pit using its superior strength and size. Some dogs would then run away. Others went into the pit over and over only to be thrown into the air again and again. One of the fellows remarked "Sounds like addiction doesn't it". So what's the moral of this? If we remember what it feels like to get thrown into the air, we don't have to keep going into the pit for the hogs to get us either.

Treatment Works

In the old days, we believed that only a "28 day" stay in a hospital could help an alcoholic or other addict. We thought that going in with the biggest guns first was the only way to ensure recovery and to avoid relapse. What was overlooked was the reality shock that was experienced when it was time to go home. I remember being used to having people around me for support "24x7". I was used to going to meetings in the city where I went to

treatment. I was not used to dealing with the daily realities of life with my family. Boy was I in for a surprise that first morning! My wife left for work and left me at home. I felt lost. I wanted to use and didn't want to use. Mostly I missed all the support.

In many ways, Outpatient treatment is superior to Inpatient. People have the opportunity to go to meetings in their community, to go to work or otherwise deal with their "life on life's terms". This reduces that reality shock and better equips our patients to deal with on-going recovery. Outpatient treatment works!

NEW STAFF

By: Robert Hinzman

My turn. I am the newest edition to the Athens Area Commencement Center or the new guy. My job title is Senior Tech I. So what do I do here? I do it all. I give drug screens, help facilitate group therapy, transport clients to and from AA/NA meetings, help out facilitating Aftercare, being the on-call counselor, and most recently I have started doing individual sessions with clients.

I have also begun my training to become a Certified Addiction Counselor. Many people ask me, "Why do you want to be a counselor?" All I can say is that I remember how my counselor changed my life. I have never known what I wanted to be when I grew up until now. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work at Athens Area Commencement Center. I am very comfortable here and I believe that it's God's plan for me to help other people. The staff here has been great to me. I have learned so much from everyone, especially Joe. Joe is my supervisor and is very patient with me. I feel privileged to be able to learn from one of the best counselors in this field. Our staff knows how to have fun as well as get down to work.

What do I have to offer the Athens Area Commencement Center? I believe that I am bringing in a new spirit. A spirit that I found in California almost three years ago. Being the Administrator's son has brought us closer as father and son and as co-workers. Who knows? Maybe the next generation of Athens Area Commencement Center.

(Mon., Wed., Thurs.) and -
6:30pm – 9:00pm and Saturday 9:45am – 11:30am.
AFTERCARE/CONTINUUM CARE:
Tuesday thru Thursday – Attendance recommended
once per week for two continuous years.
Outpatient services providing nine or more hours
weekly are considered by

The American Society of Addictive Medicine as INTENSIVE.

An Aftercare Testimonial

It's Tuesday evening at 6:00 p.m. and I walk into Aftercare at Athens Area Commencement Center. No matter what else is going on in my life this hour is set aside for the most important part of my recovery.

When I first came to the Commencement Center, deep down inside, I thought that treatment would be like any other trip to the doctor; I would present myself and they would fix me. I soon learned otherwise. Sobriety, I found, would become a lifelong pursuit with me doing most of the work. After six weeks I was released from treatment and life so many others leaving treatment, I was filled with a certain fear. No longer would I have the security of counselors and group to catch me when the insane thoughts common to addicts filled my head.

However, I was not left to navigate the shoals of early sobriety alone. Of course there were always AA meetings but Aftercare provides an additional essential resource to my recovery. In Aftercare, other recovering addicts and alcoholics meet, discuss common problems, share a sympathetic ear, get support, and most importantly gently hear when their thoughts, words, and deeds are out of line with their recovery. We share laughs, tears, struggles, setbacks, fears and all of the myriad emotions of recovery. My Aftercare group is like my family and for this very special hour, I am at home and able to be reminded that the path of recovery is not one I traveled alone and I will always have friends along with me for the journey.

- Ken P