

Summer 2019  
Volume 1, Issue 2



## Our Mission

Lasting Change Alumni is a membership organization formed to supply positive influences, a strong support system, and encourage each individual to give back to sustain and strengthen their recovery. We are built on a platform of connection and community and want to continue to stay motivated to be successful with life and recovery goals.

Staying involved gives a sense of purpose. We supply the opportunity for successful clients to demonstrate that treatment works, recovery is possible, and serve as mentors to those starting their road to recovery on their journey through Lasting Change. We highly encourage all our clients to participate in the activities we have to offer for continued growth and development in recovery from addiction. For more information visit our website [www.thewhouse.org](http://www.thewhouse.org), and click on Lasting Change Alumni.

## The Alumni

Welcome!

Those of us at Lasting Change, who have graduated successfully have come together as Alumni Members. This is our second of four quarterly newsletters to present you with happenings at our organization, informative readings, and entertaining incite provided by the woman. All input is appreciated. If you wish to not receive future newsletters, feel free to contact the Alumni Coordinator at [cremines@thewhouse.org](mailto:cremines@thewhouse.org). Any and all submission are welcome. If you wish to be heard, email the newsletter committee at [alumninewsletterlc@gmail.com](mailto:alumninewsletterlc@gmail.com).

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### Special points of interest

- A message from our Alumni members
- The move to Transitional housing; how to overcome the struggle
- A clean and sober summer holiday experience
- Clinical Interview
- Clients' artistic expression

## A Panel Reflection: -Bridgette Davidson: Lasting Change Alumni '16

Back in June I had the privilege of being one of the speakers at the Alumni Panel Discussion, put on for the women at Lasting Change. I myself went through Lasting Change (then, The W House,) in 2016 and can honestly say that I don't believe I would be where I am today were it not for this program.

For me, the time at the house was one of very mixed emotions. Being newly sober my emotions were far from stable, and this was one of the scariest, loneliest, and hardest times of my life. But I was able to experience all the ups and downs in a healthy and safe environment, which in turn helped me grow and make lasting relationships with women



who are still vital within my support network. Most importantly, however, this program helped build the foundation of my recovery.

My hope is that with the Alumni program, the women who are currently in the house, and possibly experiencing hardships that might feel impossible to overcome, will be able to see actual real life testimonies from those of us who have been exactly where they are now. These women will be able to see that there is hope and a light at the end of the tunnel. Most importantly, I hope for

the women to see that they don't have to do this journey alone and that we are here for them!

*"We get together, laugh and smile, lift each other up, and share our experience, strength and hope so that we can help other struggling women."*



### **-Bettyjo Justice: Lasting Change Alumni '19**

I never imagined that I could find true happiness or that my life would be where it is today. When I look back to where I was last summer and how far I have come this year, I get an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I was able to rebuild my life. I began going to meetings and have a sponsor. I put 110% into doing the right thing and rebuilding my relationship with my children and my family. I am a responsible adult today. My children have forgiven me, and we are rebuilding together. I have completed the program at Lasting Change and am now an Alumni member with an awesome group of ladies that are now part of my network. I know I can count on them when I need someone to help me because we have all been through the same thing. Even though our stories are different we all found a new way of life and can help each other through difficult situations. We get together, laugh and smile, lift each other up, and share our experience, strength, and hope so that we can help other struggling women. I am so thankful my Alumni ladies are in my life. July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 marked one year clean and sober for me and with one day at a time I hope to have many more. Today I love to live and that's because I love and am proud of the woman I am.

### **Overcoming the Struggle: -Deb A.: Current Resident; Lasting Change**

Moving to transitional is a big change I have experienced in recovery. Moving from the Lasting Change house with around the clock supervision to the transition house with no on-site staff is scary, yet exciting. I am one step closer to being fully self-supporting.

One of the challenges I have experienced and seen is staying connected. This could be detrimental to one's recovery. Having to make my own decisions to stay involved without being obligated can be challenging. Making a conscience effort to continue reaching out to members of the NA fellowship, as well as going to meetings after working all day is sometimes a challenge.

I have seen women, including myself, begin to slack off on doing the things that got us this far. I knew I couldn't afford to put my recovery on the back burner, but transition-

ing was a big step. I started to withdraw from the fellowship and I began to have an unsettling feeling.

I reached out to my sponsor and got myself more organized. I, then, made a conscience effort to work my program daily. After all, fully investing in my recovery is my responsibility.

I began working in my step working guide, started reaching out and picked back up on my meeting attendance. Immediately, the unsettled feeling I was getting went away.



I say all of this to say; We get what we put in. Life is always going on, but we must live our lives through recovery. It's very easy to get off track, and that's when my disease can take me out. Reaching out, staying connected to the fellowship and staying involved is what keeps me clean today.



Fourth of July Fun; Left to right: Linda, Amber, Holly, Carly, Tierney, Olivia, Amy, Felicia, Catherine, Alisha, Courtney, Erin

## A Fourth of July Experience: -Erin D.: Current Resident; Lasting Change

It's been so long, way to long since I've sat out on a beautiful 4th of July night sitting under the stars sharing in the most simple and glorious of Americanism, explosions in the sky. No matter how old you get fireworks just take you over with a childlike sense of awe. Sitting in a strange place with strange people I could be feeling a lot of things, but oddly enough it's love and appreciation for those strangers in this strange place. Surrounded like family we all gathered around with heads tilted back and sharing this experience of 4th of July, a little teary over the many that I have missed, but thrilled when realizing I never have to miss another. Notorious B.I.G. playing in the background and another star burst goes off.

Realizing in Hagerstown now that the same feelings are sweeping through me now as I sit here in my new home and new friends laughing, dancing and discussing recipes for tomorrow's potluck. Many of us thought we might never get to enjoy something as simple as fireworks again.

Yet the next day gave us a chance to continue on with our wholesome and normal like festivities with a potluck and trip to the park. The spread reflected the hard work and even though many of us still only have a little, the amount of food was vast and plentiful. Everyone stepped up to the smorgasbord of desserts, dips and snacky goodness. One of our fearless leaders, Brandy who had put together the party made us Red, White and Blue chocolate covered strawberries that were fabulous. For most people a trip to the park is an easy and "whatever" experience, but most of us hadn't made a deliberate trip to a park in quite a bit. I know for me it had been a year or two and as we marched to the park we weren't quite sure what to expect. Yet once we were there and in line to play water games that Brandy had set up for us, all cynicism faded. Families were invited to the park and so we were joined by some of the women's kids as they also got to enjoy throwing water bal-

loons and flip cup with us.

It's pretty hard to get some hardened, jaded folks such as ourselves to let our guard down and just enjoy being silly yet somehow it happened and so amazing to tap into that side of ourselves again. It was hard not to think of friends who won't get another chance like we are getting to watch fireworks and throw water balloons. It's one of the hardest parts of this disease to face. Which is why I have to take in the experiences we shared in those couple of days deeply and as much as possible for them. I desperately want to do well for them, for my family, but most of all for myself. Trying not to project and have too many expectations for myself for what the future holds. Also to see and share in an experience that can be very arduous sometimes. It's a real achievement that Lasting Change is helping us to see what the other side of a recovery program can look like and if we continue to make good choices can have all year, every year.

## A Story of *hope*

Laurel N.  
Current Resident

"In the beginning of my life, I was not accepted by my parents. I could not meet up to their expectations. After I graduated high school, I moved away. The drugs of the 70's, acid and Quaaludes, I did on occasion. I stopped when my marriage, having children, and purchasing a home became priority. In spite of these joys in my life, I battled with depression.

It was not until after my divorce, at the age of 47, did I have a problem with alcohol. I was on a quest to find myself but instead I lost myself. I entered my first rehab but did not grasp the 12 steps. I was not aware that I was the problem. After 16 years of experimentation with drugs and alcohol, I arrived at Lasting Change.

At Lasting Change, with the help of my counselor, together we have uncovered the source of my anxiety. I am practicing daily to live in the moment without fear of my past or future. I am learning that I am enough.

Lasting Change has revealed to me that my alcoholism must be treated as a chronic disease, and the importance of AA meetings. I have heard in meetings the wonderful testimonies of other women who have been through this program. They gave me strength and hope. Thank you Lasting Change for giving me a new life."



## Special Thank You to Our Recent Donors and Grantors!

### Food Items:

The Wells House  
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 Mary Bowman



## Words from Stephanie Little, LGPC:

### **-Counselor; Lasting Change— Interviewed by Fury G.: Current Resident**

◆ **What does Lasting Change offer clients through its program of recovery?**

Lasting Change offers clients Intensive Outpatient groups, Outpatient groups, and weekly individual counseling sessions. Lasting Change also has other organizations come in to teach the women about NARCAN training, HIV testing, yoga, and other life skills classes. Lasting Change offers their clients a chance to learn about themselves and their disease, and grow in a safe and structured environment.



◆ **What lasting changes have you seen the most in your successful clients?**

My most successful clients have shown a willingness to change their behaviors and a determination to want to succeed. They have self-awareness, a strong network, have successfully found and maintained employment, and have learned to be independent. They understand that recovery is not just something they do while they are here, but a new way of life needs to be maintained in order to stay clean.

◆ **How do clients benefit from the structure of this program?**

The majority of the clients that come into the program have no structure in their lives and are used to doing what they want, when they want. The structure in the program provides clients with a foundation for making healthier decisions. The women have their day scheduled and there are rules for them to follow. A really important lesson the women learn by being here is

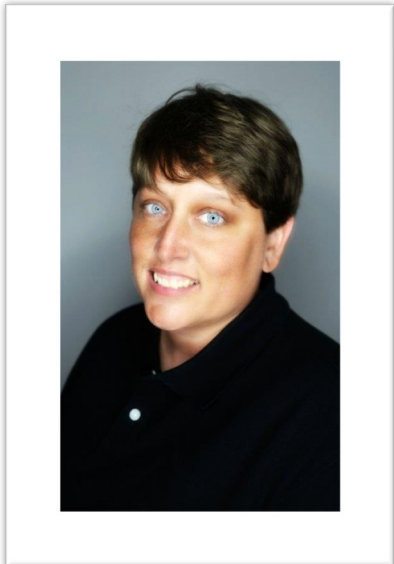
there are rules in life that need to be followed, even if they don't completely understand or agree with them.

◆ **What are the patterns of behavior necessary for accomplishing lifelong sobriety?**

I believe that constant awareness and focus on their recovery is what is most necessary to maintain sobriety. Sometimes people get comfortable or complacent after they have been sober for some length of time and that complacency is what will eventually revert them back to old behaviors. Staying invested in meetings, their sponsor and their network will help them maintain the focus on their sobriety.

◆ **What support does Lasting Change need from the community?**

Lasting Change is open to any support. We love to try to partner with different organizations in order to help our clients with resources for finding employment, teaching life skills, and becoming more independent. The women also really appreciate support in the way of donations whether it is food, clothing, or even household item or furniture that we may be able to give them as they move out on their own. As a non-profit organization, we look to the community to help us grow and provide a safe and supportive environment for our clients.



Stephanie Little, LGPC: Counselor; Lasting Change

### {wish list}

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body Wash
- Twin Sheets
- Pillows
- Comforters
- Dressers
- Towels

**Just For Today:  
-Fury G.: Current Resident; Lasting Change**



As many times as I hear this in the Rooms,  
sometimes I still worry about tomorrow.

What if.

This has become the most dangerous sen-  
tence in my recovery.

What if.

The trap that keeps me confined to a pris-  
on of fear and self-doubt.

Essentially; pondering over situations that  
do not yet exist—is madness in its purest  
form.

Such is the destructive nature of the addic-  
tion disease.

Often, I forget that I even have a disease,  
and I start to believe that I am just a bad  
person with no discipline.

This is how I found out that (for me)  
meetings can only bring me to the surface  
of recovery, and without studying recovery  
literature, inner self-work, and lifelong  
sobriety is impossible.

It is like recovery is a college course and  
the meetings are the lectures.

How can you pass a class without reading  
the textbooks?

In this class, your test results are life and  
death...

So just for today, I will focus on today.

Somehow, (just like the literature says)  
everything meant for me falls into place,  
everything else just falls away.



Submission from Lindsey W: Current Resident; Lasting Change

**I am a Calming Spirit:  
-Ashley S.: Current Resident; Lasting Change**

*“Everything  
meant for me  
falls into place,  
everything else  
just falls away.”*

I am a calming spirit  
I wonder about my future beyond Lasting  
Change  
I hear the wings of a Pegasus flying  
I seethe coat of a Pegasus black and silky  
I want to drive again feeling the wind in my  
hair  
I am a calming spirit  
I pretend I am a goddess  
I feel a unicorn riding me around in the clouds  
I touch the star called Venus

I worry about being able to produce life  
I cry about my broken family  
I am a calming spirit  
I understand my time has not run out on my  
life  
I say I will survive  
I dream of peace in my mind and spirit  
I try to wake up and just try a little harder  
each day  
I hope for the rebuild of my family  
I am a calming spirit

Submission by Kayla C.: Current Resident;  
Lasting Change



**Lasting Change:  
-Olivia G: Current Resident; Lasting Change**

Three solid years, I’ve lived in pain. I’ve learned to know peace in the lasting change; I lived to use, even used my mother; I didn’t believe them, they said “We DO recover”. Only four months clean, life feels restored. No where near pristine, there is so much in store

When I think about it, I can win it , if I will it.. How I have realized that the sky is the limit. Recovery is long, I’m ready for the battle; I’m ready to ride, I’ve got my saddle. They never lied, in my ears they sang: “Are you ready to make the lasting change?”

**Lasting Change**

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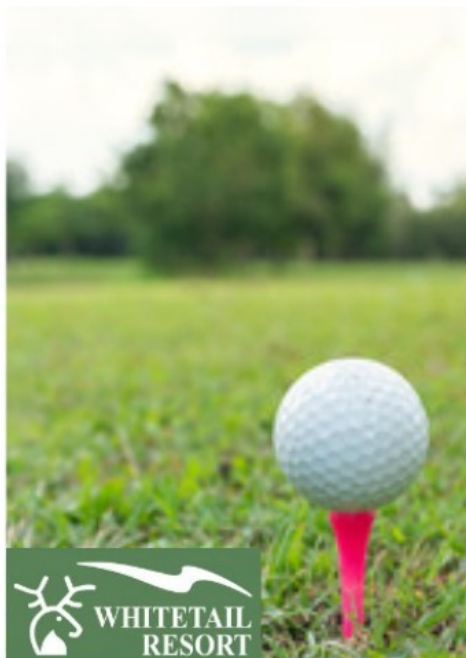
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*save the date*



Friday  
June 19, 2020