

Clean Times

May/June 2013

www.tampa-na.org

How the Funcoast Area Came To Be

In August of 1984 I was led by an anonymous angel to my first NA meeting and found hope. My clean date is September 1st, 1984 and the formation of our Area Service Committee of the Tampa Funcoast was in October of 1984. I have had the amazing experience of growing up with our Area. My very first structured service position was Activities Chair (Entertainment back then) at 90 days clean because my sponsor went on to serve as the RCM. We had some mac-daddy dances back then. The 80's were so much fun for dancing. The name Tampa Funcoast was suggested because most of the Areas in the Florida Region at that time had a "Coast" at the end of their name. Gold Coast, Gulf Coast, Sun Coast,

"We wanted a coast but didn't have one ... so Funcoast was born; we definitely were having fun in recovery!"

Applying Steps and Principles in My Daily Life

My name is Jennifer and I am an addict. I have found freedom from active addiction and the desire to use drugs in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous and for this I am extremely grateful.

With five years clean, freedom from active addiction has taken on a new meaning for me. When I first came into the rooms, I had many doubts this program would help me get clean and stay clean. I had no idea the miracles my Higher Power had in store for me. Not only was I able to get clean and stay clean, just for today; I've been able to find freedom from some long entrenched char-

acter defects and bad habits that I had come to believe were simply a part of who I was.

I had very low self-esteem as a child and I carried that into adulthood. The dereliction and degradation of active addiction threw more fuel on the fire. I couldn't control my feelings or actions. I was a binge eater and overweight most of my life. I was needy and insecure and sought out unhealthy relationships in a desperate attempt to feel loved. I was irresponsible, impulsive, and completely self-centered.

After staying clean for

etc. We wanted a coast but didn't have one so Funcoast was born; we definitely were having fun in recovery!

The reason Tampa Funcoast ASC formed was to serve our groups. After
continued on pg. 2 ...



Inside...

Anniversaries p. #7

Letters to Moms p. #2

Service Ops p.#2,4

Poetry p. #8

A Mother's Love

To my Mother,

When all this started I was just a child, even though I thought I was grown. I remember the second time I ever got high, which was the first time things got scary. I cried and cried for you and eventually that's where my "friends" took me. I told you that I had gotten high, I was scared and sorry, I told you I would never do it again. You sat up with me, comforted me, and forgave me. The next weekend I got high again. You watched me go out with those "friends" and had to pretend to believe me when I said we were being good. You watched me suffer. I remember the trips to the emergency room where you sat by my bed without ever even hearing an "I love you". You endured my blaming you for the problems that I was creating. You fought for me to get help, even when you were told it was I who had to want it. I never told you how much it meant to me when you said, "whenever you need me, just tell me. I'll be there." Then that time I woke you at 3 AM and said "I just can't do it anymore, please don't leave me alone with myself", I'll never forget how you dragged yourself out of bed on a work night and made cookies with me until I felt safe.

I can't imagine what it was like for you, to fight with Dad and always go to bat for me. Or to watch me OD on purpose, and listen to me tell you why. Most of all, I can't imagine what it was like to say "I'm sorry, I love you but I don't love your disease. I just can't help you anymore." Do you remember when I told you to leave Dad, your other children, and your home to come save me? Do you remember when I told you that I would kill myself when you didn't? I do. I also remember that you still took my calls the next day, that you never stopped loving me.

I can't imagine what it was like for you. I put you through hell. Sometimes I wonder about those times towards the end, when I was in the hospital and you didn't come, or when I was in trouble and you said no to bailing me out. I used to tell people I hated you. Now I understand. There is only so much a mother's heart can take. Only so much pain you can endure. Sometimes I try to imagine what it was like to let go. I can't imagine there is a harder thing for a mother to do.

Now I want to say thank you. You made me
continued on pg. 4 ...

Dear Mom, Thanks.

Dear Mom,

You were my first connection to God. I feared God would not hear my prayers, yet I knew Him and you were right. I would call crying and ask you to pray. Hearing your words would soothe the storm in my day. As you prayed for me on Sundays was the first I heard of blessings upon my life. The times you met me at the altar, I shed tears of remorse for the choices I made the previous week. You cried with me. During my struggles, you told me to hold on and sometimes to "man-up". As I walk my journey in recovery you are there. Beside me. Not ahead or behind but you are by my side. You encouraged me to go for my dreams and when they fell through you directed me back to God.

I saw you cry for me when I relapsed. It broke my heart to see that I had brought sadness into your life. Two weeks later, I was about to get high and I recalled your tears. I stayed clean for you. I had a reason to stay clean. I have often endured the challenges of my life for you. I couldn't do it for myself. It was your love that provided me strength. I remember learning

continued on pg. 5 ...



Whether you are an NA member, a professional who works with recovering addicts, an incarcerated member or a member who provides Hospital and Institution service, this NA World Services newsletter may be a resource for you. Reaching

Out in its design helps incarcerated addicts connect to the NA program of recovery, enhances H&I efforts and offers experience from members who successfully transitioned from the 'inside' to be productive members of society. All are invited to share their experience, strength, and hope in the Reaching Out newsletter.

Contact **Gilbert O.** at **813.245.5399** or visit <http://www.na.org/?ID=reaching-out-index>

Applying Logic Day-To-Day

I am a recovering addict and a member of Narcotics Anonymous. I use logical thinking daily to keep my disease of addiction arrested and live a new way of life, free from active addiction. I believe if I do the things my predecessors did in the program to stay clean, then I too shall stay clean. If it worked for them, it can work for me.

There is a saying in NA, "meeting makers make it". Staying in contact with other recovering addicts in our meetings reminds me of where I came from and where I'm trying to go. It gives me a chance to gain experience, strength, and hope from my fellow addicts as we share openly with one another. Many addicts who have relapsed after a substantial amount of clean time will tell you they stopped making regular meetings and became disconnected and finally relapsed. I make meetings on a regular basis and stay connected so this doesn't happen to me.

NA is a 12 step program. The 12 steps help us admit our powerlessness over the disease of addiction, introduce us to a power greater than ourselves (a loving God of our own understanding), give us hope that this higher power can restore us to sanity if we allow it, clear the wreckage of our past, make amends to those

we have harmed, maintain our recovery through daily inventories, and help the still sick and suffering addict. This is done by learning to apply spiritual principles. Some of those principles include: honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness; being practiced in our daily lives. I understand if I apply these principles to the best of my ability, my life will change. I replace lying and stealing with honesty and integrity, self-centeredness with open-mindedness, and denial with willingness. By doing this, I don't find myself repeating those past mistakes over and over expecting different results. If nothing changes; nothing changes. If I want something different, I have to do something different.

Logically doing what others before me have done, I can get what they got. By applying spiritual principles in my life, I am able to live differently and not act out on old behaviors. Asking for help and following the suggestions of my predecessors, I am able to stay clean and live a new way of life one day at a time. I will never be cured, but continuing to do the things that have kept me clean, I can stay in recovery. I retain the freedom I have gained, and will continue to grow in this process.

- Donald C.

Steps and Principles

...continued from Page 1

a while, and working the steps, I became painfully aware that my behavior was unacceptable. It hurt me, my recovery, and people around me. On my three year anniversary, I was 50 pounds overweight, smoking a pack a day, and wondering how I'd pay my electric bill because I spent my money elsewhere. I remember hitting a number of spiritual bottoms. Calling my sponsor in shame and despair because I had "done it again." She reminded me to practice the steps and principles in my life and to give myself a break. When the pain got great enough, I'd be willing to change. How long would that take?

I went back to the basics. I picked up some tools and used them. I prayed for willingness, perseverance, and courage. I read the literature and found answers. I admitted my powerlessness by not keeping ice cream in the house and steering clear of Burger King. I put action behind my prayers by calling the Florida Quitline and taking their suggestions, as well as going to the gym regularly. I sought experience, strength, and hope from other members on my relationship issues and tried to do things differently. I wrote dozens of mini inventories on the things I was struggling

with and turned them over to the care of my higher power, sometimes every hour.

Gradually, things began to change. I don't know when, but I looked back and found that I hadn't needed to smoke a cigarette, eat french fries, or go hook up with someone because I didn't like the way I felt. The feelings passed anyway, all by themselves!

I can learn to love myself by treating myself and others well. I began to do that by not using drugs one day at a time. Today, in addition to staying clean, I can be responsible, healthy, and kind to others. I can participate in loving, healthy relationships and bring something to the table instead of sucking everyone around me dry.

My mind often tells me I am still not good enough. Thank God for the literature and the people in N.A. who remind me that we often find we've been doing better than we've been feeling. I'm not perfect and I'm not where I want to be on many days. I'm so grateful that I'm not where I used to be on any day! I'm going to keep coming back. Thank you NA.

-Jennifer S

Losing a Loved One, Staying Clean

I have to start off by saying thank you to God for leading me to NA. I lost my dad on April 8, 2013. My dad was my hero and if I become half the man he was; lookout world. I remember my dad telling me if I kept drinking and drugging that a lot of bad things would happen. Well, of course he was right. I surrendered to NA in August of 2007 and my

dad got to see me clean for almost 6 years.

The last year has been tough, my dad was in and out of the hospital. But thanks to NA and the people who came before me who had also lost loved ones and shared about it, I heard "that I didn't have to use over it" and saw people who did just that. I shared about it so much I would go to different meetings so people wouldn't get tired of hearing about it. Its funny - I was one of those guys who would hear people share the same thing over and over and I would say to myself "Wow, they need to get a sponsor". But they told me keep coming back and my turn would come. The more I talked about it, the more love I got from people in the rooms. So many people walked thru this with me. And because of NA I was there with my mom when that call came in the middle of the night. Because of the love and support I had gotten, I made it thru without using. I also faced some fears thru all this and gained a better relationship with my brothers. NA showed me that the 12 steps can work in all areas of my life. Well, they were right. During this process of my loss, I worked the

first three steps. I can't, He can, and I think I will let Him. I also had some step four in this. I wasn't as bad a person as I thought I was. I was there for my family and they could count on me. The little boy was growing up some. And now I get to work the twelfth step

and share with another suffering addict, that no matter what you never have to use again; even when losing a loved one. Thanks so much to NA and all those people who helped me thru a tough time.

- Jason L.

A Mother's Love

...from page 3

take responsibility and through that, you saved me. I have gained a new freedom and a new happiness. Now we get to share it. You went from being my enabler, to being distant, to being my friend. I look forward to our daily talks. I can't believe how far we've come. There is so much I want to say, so much I want to express, but words cannot do justice to how much I love and appreciate you. You are my biggest cheerleader, my pillar of support, and my dearest friend.

If I ever have a child who puts me through this, I just hope I can be as strong as you were.

Love Always,
Your Daughter.

Behind the Walls

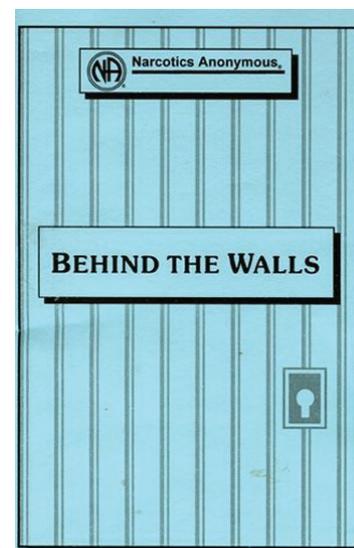
Our vision is to carry the message that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life.

The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous has helped introduce 15 self-sufficient NA meetings in state and federal prisons within Florida. The process began 6 years ago with the 'Pen Pal' project and developed into free-standing meetings; for inmates and by inmates. Many of these men and women are eager to work the steps and become involved in Narcotics Anonymous prior to release. The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous is working to realize our primary purpose by implementing the "Writing Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" initiative.

How can I help? Join the "Writing The Steps

for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" project. This can be your next step in further carrying the message. Through "Writing The Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)", you have another opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope; give back to an addict seeking recovery what NA has given to you.

For more information and guidelines, contact Gilbert O. at 813.245.5399



Funcoast Basketball

We all know that the NA Literature, the meetings, and working the program is what it takes to recover from our addiction. There are other ways and other things that we can do to help us in our recovery and we have lots of fun while doing it! We caught up with Shawn B., who plays on the Tampa Funcoast Basketball team, at a recent tournament and speaker jam and asked him a few questions:

Clean Times: How long has the Funcoast basketball team been playing together?

Shawn B: The core group of guys that are on the team started playing together about five years ago at the American Legion Playground; which is, on the corner of West Florida and Sligh Ave. A few of us heard about softball being played there. Then, someone mentioned that there was a basketball court. Smiles....We have heart for sports it seems.

CT: Does the team have a Coach and who is the Team Captain?

SB: Coach; hmmm, we have a few coaches.. James W., Richard W., and Eric B.

CT: What is the team's main goal?

SB: For everyone to have fun, players and the

fans of the game. Just to have clean fun.

CT: What do you think the team can improve on to be better?

SB: We have a strong team. Continuing to build each other up is always an important key. Some of us have not played organize basketball in years.

CT: What are the team's strengths on the court?

SB: A never die attitude.

CT: What do you feel is the team's biggest accomplishment?

SB: We help each other, on and off the court.

CT: What one or two things does the team currently do in your training that are keys to your success?

SB: We try to meet at least once a week through out the year. We also play in different types of tournaments.

CT: What would be the team's ultimate achievement?

SB: LOL..to keep winning tournaments in the FUNCOAST!!!!

CT: What is your biggest challenge and what do you do to manage this challenge?

SB: Getting an old body to play! Have to remember that I'm not that young...

CT: How does someone go about becoming a member of the team?

SB: Commitment and dedication would be a nice start.

- Penny J.



Tampa Funcoast Basketball Team

Dear Mom, Thanks.

...from page 3

to shop and how I would have panic attacks at

the register. You did not judge me, but allowed me to have my process and tenderly walked me through it. You did not let me stay broken. In many areas you have done this. You have firmly encouraged me to get past my issues and to walk in victory. Your belief in me has helped me to believe in myself.

Recently, we have seen some of the fruits of our labors. As we go into the unknown I carry with me our memories. These memories assure me it's okay to grow up. I have begun to grow and to mature; to become a man in my own right. You reached out to me, taught me, and sent me places to help others mend. It is how I honor all your teachings: to be of service to God, family, and others. Thank you for giving me a reason to try. Thank you for believing in me and walking with me. Most importantly, thank you for being a bridge for me to reach God. I love you, Mom. Happy Mother's Day.

Your son, Ira

How Funcoast Came To Be

...continued from Page 1

Tampa NA grew to over four meetings, the members found that sharing an Area Service Committee with the St. Pete/Clearwater area was no longer the ideal way to serve the Tampa groups because communication was an issue, the last straw being the location of softball practice was changed and we were not notified. We decided to form an ASC of our own, went to the next Bay Area Service Committee Meeting to let them know of our decision and the Bay Area voted to provide the new Tampa Area with funds and good wishes.

So, Tampa Funcoast was born and consisted of all the Groups and four subcommittees. Public Relations—to let the community know of NA and how we can help; Hospitals and Institutions—to take our NA message into facilities where a meeting cannot be held or the residents cannot go to outside meetings; Activities—for our coming together in play, and Helpline—to answer those calls for help. Also, a Chairperson to facilitate the ASC Committee; a Vice Chair to facilitate when the Chair is not there (hopefully to become the next Chair); a Secretary to record all that was said at the meeting; the Policy Chair for helping the meeting follow

the policy written by the groups; a Treasurer to record all the monies received from groups/paid events along with bills paid, and finally, the Regional Service Committee Members who take The Tampa Funcoast voice to the RSC. Our groups buy their literature and key tags from the Area and



the Literature Distribution Officer purchases it from the Florida Region, counts and distributes the literature to the groups. When we first started, the groups had to wait a month for their literature because we could not afford to have an inventory. We have grown. A Literature Committee was also formed because so much literature was being written

for us and sent out for review. The Area voted to disband that Committee years ago.

Since this first ASC we have grown and added a Convention Subcommittee, FRCNA Representative Subcommittee, Newsletter Subcommittee, Alternate Secretary, Alternate Treasurer, and Alternate LDO to perform the duties of the Secretary, Treasurer, and LDO

when they can't be there (and, again to learn and hopefully fill the respective positions the next term).

I was taught, while young in recovery, to give back as freely as I receive. I received the gift of an incredible life beyond, as our literature says, my wildest dreams. On top of that I get to go to ASC once a month and

hug members I don't get to see during the week because, due to the work of hundreds of NA service workers over the years, we have over 90 meetings in Hillsborough County. The Helpline told them where the meetings were and then they started more meetings, the H&I told them they could recover on the outside and they started more meetings, PR told the Hillsborough Community that we can help and they trusted to direct them to meetings and Activities showed them they can have fun without using. And then... with the Steps, taught in the meetings, beyond their wildest dreams.

I am in awe of these wonderful service workers, the incredible work they do to carry the NA message, and I have been honored to be a part of this Area Service for years; serving as the Chairperson at this time. Not as often, as in the past, I will hear someone call Area Service "Area Circus" and as an amazing woman said to me, "ASC is still fighting an old reputation and it has matured like its members". Yes, we have, and for me, I have never seen it as a "circus", but as a group of men and women helping each other and the ones that are still out there, get and stay clean.

- Deb C.

Anniversaries - May & June

A New Way

Art B. 5/12/1997 16

Brandon At Noon

Annie F. 5/2/2004 9
Ben B. 5/21/2011 2
Charlene D. 6/2/2011 2
Kyle C. 6/12/2012 1
Renee T. 6/18/2012 1
Lisa S. 6/24/2012 1

Breakfast Club

Joe P. 5/29/1996 17

Daily Recovery

Joan W. 6/27/2004 9
Lisa I. 5/1/2007 6
Kurt W. 5/22/2009 4
Roy T. 6/3/2010 3

Emergency Room

Russ N. 6/23/2003 10
John P. 5/10/2006 7

Free To Be Me

Adam S. 5/2/1998 15
Brian D. 6/29/2002 11
Jorge R. 5/2/2005 8
Dean R. 6/6/2005 8
David S. 6/15/2005 8
Terry D. 6/20/2011 2

Freedom Friday

Mark P. 6/15/2011 2

Freedom From Pain

Bill H. 5/4/2012 1
Joel B. 5/8/1998 15
Tres S. 6/1/1981 32

Grow Or Go

Andy C. 6/25/2012 1
Happy Hour
Angel G. 6/29/2010 3

High Lie

Pete M. 5/2/1995 18
Carl C. 5/22/2011 2

Hope In Lutz

Jay W. 5/1/2006 7

How It Works

Diane B. 5/1/1981 32

In The Middle

Andy S. 5/22/2008 5

Tom W. 6/21/2011 2

Keep The Faith

Roger A. 5/6/2006 7
Toby C. 6/12/2006 7

Life On Life's Terms

Doug Z. 5/10/1998 15
Waylon M. 5/23/1998 15

More Hope

John W. 6/20/1989 24

More Will Be Revealed

Steve G. 5/2/2010 3

NA 180

Carol K. 5/20/1985 28
Ira M. 5/3/2010 3

NA At The Apex

Pascal P. 5/14/2009 4
Mark P. 5/26/2009 4

NA Speaker Meeting

Steve C. 6/10/1995 18
Cliff C. 6/19/1996 17

Never Too Young To Recover

Shawn B. 6/6/2006 7
Clinton W. 5/1/2010 3

New Beginnings

Ellen M. 6/9/2001 12

New Bite Of Serenity

Joe F. 5/5/1992 21
Wade W. 6/21/2010 3
Jennifer M. 6/24/2011 2
Valencia N. 6/24/2012 1
Romano W. 5/3/2012 1
Kathy M. 6/29/2012 1

Oldtimers

Jen M. 11/23/2011 1 ½

Quest For Serenity

Aida S. 5/7/1995 18
Darwin S. 5/23/2007 6
Michele S. 5/2/2012 1
Rich V. 6/10/2012 1

Recovery Central

Deborah L. 5/2/2006 7

Recovery In Riverview

Anne D. 6/17/2010 3

Recovery In The Hood

Richard W. 6/18/1997 16
Lenora M. 6/10/2002 11

Squeaky Clean

Ben S. 6/19/1990 23
Robert A. 6/8/2004 9

Stepping Up

Michael J. 5/1/1999 14

Sunset Solutions

Craig K. 6/14/1989 24

The Women's Recovery Room

Shannon W. 5/2/2010 3

Triple M

Frederick Boe L. 6/3/2008 5

TTNA

William C. 5/26/1987 26
Dorian A. 6/27/2003 10
Ray V. 6/22/1994 19

Uptown Tue & Fri

Peter W. 5/10/2002 11

Women Do Recover

Malinda T. 5/8/2005 8
Zyra Z. 6/18/2008 5

Women Of Serenity

Sheila P. 6/16/1999 14
Angela S. 5/26/2003 10
Tammy T. 6/30/2012 1

Women's Hope

Emily C. 5/14/1988 25
Jill M. 5/1/2007 6

CORRECTIONS:

A New Way

Maggie G. 3/18/2002 11
Gary M. 4/10/2012 1

How It Works

Danny M. 4/30/2002 11

Together We Can

Sheryl K. 4/12/1991 22

“MOTHERS” WRITTEN BY PENNY J.

There is a place- A haven a sweet safe refuge
It is the essence of beauty the epitome of Love
It is within my Mother's arms
Mothers we are more than just “MOM”
We've conquered the hurdles that we faced and slay dragons along the way
We've fought battles and won wars... We are WARRIORS
Mothers; We are more than we know
For we are nurturers healers teachers and leaders
Nurses and doctors with and without the degrees
We are risk takers and peacemakers and through our children we build great nations
Constantly laying foundations and through all of this we are still patient
Mothers-What a marvelous calling to be chosen as vessels to carry gifts from God
Placing diamonds in our gardens Cradles of Life we are
We are courageous Strong like Atlas carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders
As we ease the burdens of others
Becoming more beautiful as we grow golden
Mothers- We have the strength of a Hurricane with a sweet gentle breeze
Whirling and twirling and stirring up dreams our essence lingering
We are Elegant Intelligent Relentless and Eloquent
We are creative sharing in the creating of God's purest Creation
“OUR CHILDREN”
We teach them lullabies scriptures and verses and we heal and hurts AND
We are comforter's confidants companions AND COMPASSION
We are consistent as we go before you learning wisdom and returning to you life's lessons
AND WE ARE ANGELS
Watching over our family and our children while they are sleeping
We are BLESSINGS
Holding you close to our bosom while you are weeping
Often putting ourselves last never revealing the secrets and sorrows we are keeping
Love seeping from our being
WE ARE VIRTUOUS AND VICTORIOUS
WE ARE PURE-fashioned by God- WE are created to be in the image of HE-
- MOTHERS -
And for those like me whose Mother has passed on..
Sweet memories are left behind lingering on like a soft melody a smooth symphony
your fragrance Mother is still with me
And Mother I remember every little thing you taught me
And even though I'm not perfect because of you I'm still learning
Your fire Mother is still burning deep down inside of me
In my heart and in my soul
And when I lay me down to sleep I can see your Love flickering
Within the light of the stars
And I still hear your voice
“There is no idle time, for even when we sleep, we dream”
For there is only one sacrifice
That surpasses the sacrifice
of a Mother's Love
Cradles of Life we are
WE ARE MOTHERS
