

# Clean Times

July/August 2013

[www.tampa-na.org](http://www.tampa-na.org)

## WHAT?!?! ANOTHER MIRACLE.....

There were many times in active addiction where I could have easily died. As I continue to stay clean, I see that the same God of my understanding that was watching over me back then continues to watch over me today. For those of you who only heard bits and pieces of the story, here's what happened:

I had not felt good for at least the last month, but the days approaching August 19th last year were extremely difficult. I definitely had the flu, but the normal aches and pains that accompanied it were somehow amplified tenfold. I didn't know what was wrong and I was frightened at the sight of cola-colored urine that came out of

me. I was admitted to the emergency room. After the doctors discovered that I was also bleeding internally, I would be moved to the ICU. The next week I don't remember. Over the next 2 or 3 days I would lose a good amount of muscle tissue to a complication from the flu called rhabdomyolysis. I suffered acute renal failure, which in turn, caused me to bleed internally. My extremely rapid muscle deterioration also caused all my extremities to swell with fluid and I began blistering with golf-ball-sized blisters on my hands and feet. The collection of white lab coats that came into my room finally figured this out and began treating me and told me I shouldn't be alive due to the severity of my condition.

While I lay unconscious, I only later heard reports of a massive amount of recovering addicts who tried to visit the hospital while I was in the ICU.

*continued on pg. 4 ...*

***"The reality is that we are all miracles..."***

### From Behind A Wall



Hi. My name is Amanda and I am an addict. I've been clean for four years. I was in and out of the rooms for years and it landed me with a 4 1/2 year sentence.

I was sent to prison and I had no plans of staying clean until I went to an NA meeting hosted by Behind The Walls. I heard someone share their story and right then, I knew that's what I wanted. I work my steps via mail until I was released. From there, I went straight to a meeting and got involved in H&I. I got a sponsor and I am now working my steps with her. This program has truly changed my thinking and my way of life. I will always be grateful for the Behind The Walls meetings. It saved my life.

-Thanks, Amanda

### Inside...

***Father Figures p.2***

***The Best of Me p.2***

***Poetry p.3***

***The Meow is Gone p. 5***

***Anniversaries p. 6***

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## Father Figures

Prior to recovery, my experience with a father or father figures was very limited. During my time in recovery, my experience has changed. My Higher Power has placed a few good men in my life. Men who set godly examples for me and teach me how to live by the lives they live.

My Pastor is my spiritual father. He guides me spiritually. He brings correction in areas of my life that helps me to mature in my faith. He is always available for prayer or to help me understand the spiritual application of a passage into my life. My Dad is a man of few words. Yet, in those few words he assures me I am loved. He helps me to handle situations. By giving me his name, he gave me identity.

My grandpa, man, is he my hero! If I could only be half the man he is, I would be grateful. We've

spent many hours in his garden reading the Bible and praying. As he prays, I know he speaks into the very ear of God. He sets an example that teaches me the importance of God and family. In my struggles, he has been there loving me through it all.

Then, there is my sponsor. My sponsor is a man that teaches me how to recover from a hopeless state. He helps me to see that my value is not based upon the type of car I drive, designer clothes, or by my phone provider's company name, but in how I choose to live spiritually. These and others are father figures for me. My Higher Power uses each of them to give me what I was not given as a little boy. Happy Father's Day to all men; in some way, you are a father figure for others.

-Ira B.

## The Best Of Me:

Reaching toward my face with those stubby little digits, while cooing in my ear,  
I'll never forget my prayers, as I released my deepest fears,  
That one day you would walk my path and make mistakes I've made,  
But you're better than that, and with every breath I'll do my best to remedy that,  
As you mature into my beautiful gift, the best of me, I'll cherish all the moments we share along the way,  
All the while holding your hand, wiping your tears, and mending your broken heart,  
Assuring you that you deserve and will have more,  
The best is yet to come,  
And when you finally venture out to be on your own,  
Never forget you're the best of me, I love you and my heart is your home....

Sincerely, Your Daddy

A daughters first love and a sons first hero

-Gary M.

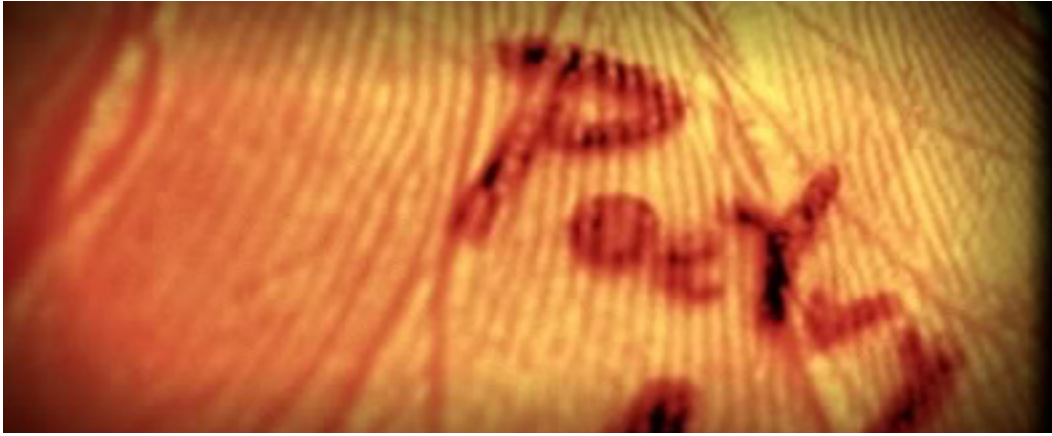


Whether you are an NA member, a professional who works with recovering addicts, an incarcerated member or a member who provides Hospital and Institution service, this NA World Services newsletter may be a resource for you. Reaching

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>





## Free To Be Me

Sitting.  
 Waiting.  
 Anticipating.  
 What will it be like?  
 What will I see? When I am free to be me?  
 Will I participate in life?  
 Or continue to let it pass by?  
 Will I allow responsibility to set in?  
 Or remain a child?  
 Will I accept the will of God?  
 Or take the wheel?  
 Will I show up and be a part of?  
 Or remain in my shell?  
 Return to that awful hell?  
 I have the choice, win or lose...  
 It's better than what some people choose.  
 I no longer lie, cheat, or steal.  
 I gave myself a chance to heal.  
 A day I thought I would never see.  
 Today I am free,  
 Free to be me!!!

-Shanna B.

## Learning To Live Life Today

I'll tell you that you are no good and no one wants you around  
 And because of the things you did to get high you should not make a sound  
 I will keep your feelings bottled up inside.  
 I will make you believe you are on such an awesome ride  
 Where was I going, what was I gonna do  
 I really was not sure but I was not doing it for any of you  
 Today all those thoughts are gone  
 I know I lived my life so wrong

Step by step day by day I'm living life today

My higher power will never leave and go away

I'm learning to live life today. -Lorrie Anne N.

Talent untapped.  
 Intelligence wasted.  
 Rationale released.

The pain is abundant.  
 The hurt is so real.  
 The past is but a blink  
 away from the present.

Self-sabotage is all I know.  
 Self-destruction is soothing.  
 Self-deception is second nature.

The breaking of the habit is just the first step.  
 Belief systems challenged and destroyed.  
 Restoration. Renovation. Renewal.  
 Reaching out.  
 Listening.  
 Feeling.....  
 Feeling.....  
 Feeling.....  
 For the first time... Feeling without reservation.  
 Feeling with focus.  
 Feeling with intent.  
 Reborn. Rebuilding. Revitalized.

-Deborah N.



## Beatnik Recovery



# What?!?! Another Miracle...

...continued from Page 1

My parents were turning people away because they simply didn't know if I was going to live or die; it was all overwhelming. I have to thank God, once again, for giving me such a wonderful mother.

My first memory was of another recovering addict feeding me a cupcake (I think I said something funny to her?!?). Thank you for that.

I have never had to practice humility as much as in that 40-day hospital stay. I could not move my arms to feed myself, I could not sit myself up, and I couldn't even remove my hospital booties when I wanted them off. You can only imagine what else I couldn't do for myself.

During my recovery in the hospital, I had many visitors of friends and family. Once again, without fail, members of Narcotics Anonymous showed up for me, and once again my trust in the fellowship was reaffirmed and my faith in a Higher Power was renewed. A few recovering addicts also brought a meeting to me. They gathered around my hospital bed, read our readings, and shared their experience, strength, and hope. It was the best meeting I have ever had.

Leaving the hospital, I had lost so much muscle that I couldn't lift myself to stand. I pushed and pushed myself to get stronger every day. Now, only 6 months later, I am practically back to normal. I was in awe at the kind of reception I was given at the October ASC meeting and in the past few months I was able to celebrate another anniversary and another birthday.

I have had many people tell me that I am a miracle. The reality is that we are all miracles; every day that we are allowed to live another day clean, every time a newcomer finds Narcotics Anonymous, and every instance that another recovering addict practices a spiritual principle in their lives. I have never felt such gratitude for anything in my life. Thank you, God. Thank you, Narcotics Anonymous.

With sincere and eternal gratitude,

Rick S.

***"..every day that we are allowed to live another clean, every time a newcomer finds Narcotics Anonymous, and every instance that another recovering addict practices a spiritual principle in their lives."***

## Behind the Walls

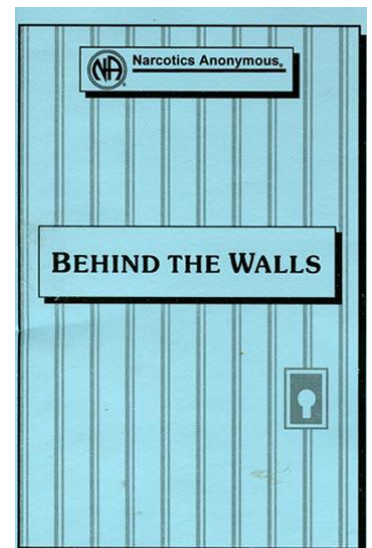
Our vision is to carry the message that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life.

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**



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# The Meow Is Gone....

Three years ago, two friends gave me a cat to which I was introduced to at The Meeting Place. Inside an orange crate I saw this black animal. I was not what you would call a “cat person” at the time. During the meeting it meowed randomly. I took him home and upon being released from the crate he immediately ran to underneath a chair and I ran to my bed. And so it would be that way for three days, he and I would keep our distance from one another. One morning we would finally meet; he hissed and I yelled.

I had no idea how to care for a cat. It was not until a month later that my best friend made me aware that the cat was male. Soon, we became friends and I named him Ferrell. It was nice to come home to him and he would join me for devotional time.

Often, my Higher Power used this feline to illustrate life’s meanings.

For three years, Ferrell and I were a family and to my pleasant surprise, I became one of those “cat people”. I brought him a toy every week, would give to him his favorite snacks and bathed him often. Hell, he even got me a temporary job.

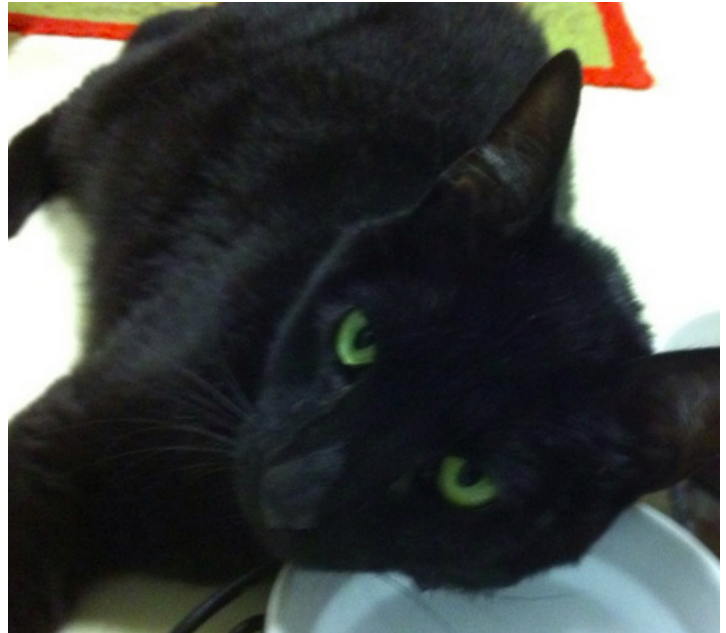
I came home from work one night and Ferrell was not there to greet me. I started searching for him and eventually found him laying limp in his waste. I carried him to bed and cuddled him while I prayed. Throughout the night, I kept vigil and by morning there was no improvement. I called people and received suggestions. The next night I, again, stayed up with him, I cannot shake the memory of how feeble he was and how my heart ached as I felt so powerless.

At 6:05 am he began to struggle for breath. Our eyes locked and we both were aware the end was near.

The next day he was placed to rest in our family pet cemetery. I miss him. Something precious has left my life. A friend has departed from this world leaving a void in my heart. I will never hear him meow again and I am sad. In recovery I have learned its okay to be sad. I do not need to change my feelings.

The Meow is Gone, but not forgotten.

-Ira B.



## Our Promise

Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise.. Freedom from active addiction.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship or society of men and women for whom Drugs had become a major problem.

...We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connection were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.



## Our Primary Purpose

to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Am I an addict? You will have to answer this question for yourself.

Many of us have found the answers we are looking for.

# Anniversaries - July & August

## A New Way

Gary M	7/3/2008	5
Ross L	8/28/2008	5
Shannen H	8/24/2008	5

## Arc Of Hope

Steve L	8/2/2011	2
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## Brandon At Noon

Anthony D	7/4/2010	3
Jean B	8/27/2010	3

## Breakfast Club

Doug C	7/27/2011	2
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## Choices

Emily C	8/22/2010	3
Amanda B	8/25/2012	1

## Daily Recovery

Beth P	8/3/2007	6
Billy E	8/19/2009	4
Janice B	7/7/2005	8
Lisa J	7/1/2007	6
Melissa M	7/11/2009	4

## Emergency Room

Chris M	7/18/2010	3
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## Freedom From Pain

Bob M	7/6/1987	26
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## Grow or Go

Kimmiee S	7/15/2012	1
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## Happy Hour

Harry C	7/16/2012	1
Steven F	7/13/2012	1

## High Lie

Bryan T	7/3/2006	7
Craig C	7/23/2003	10
Jackie M	7/10/2010	3
John Y	8/8/1988	25
Julia W	7/28/2011	2
Leslie M	7/4/2005	8
Mary S	7/30/2008	5
Jill B	8/14/2010	3

## Hope In Lutz

Eric O	8/18/1984	29
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## Hope In Recovery

Lisa J	7/1/2007	6
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## How It Works

Nikki T	7/23/2008	5
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## Hyde Park NA

Anita O	7/27/2010	3
Heather B	8/14/2009	4

## In The Middle

Mike G	7/23/2009	4
Deborah N	8/23/2010	3

## Living The Program

Claude H	7/6/2008	5
Barron B	8/18/2008	5

## Monday Meditation

Dee Dee T	8/24/2011	2
Heather Q	8/16/2010	3
Josie C	7/10/2010	3

## More Hope I & II

Alfred M	8/10/2000	13
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## NA 180

Channing L	8/31/2011	2
Chris M	7/2/1987	26
Garrett B	8/3/1990	23

## NA At The Apex

Bruce	8/23/2010	3
Julie S	7/10/1993	20

## New Bite Of Serenity

Cassandra H	8/4/1992	21
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## New Life

Pam S	8/5/2010	3
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## New Tampa NA

Adam W	8/20/2007	6
Aloha B	7/5/2005	8
Carol F	8/9/1987	26
Chris C	8/25/2007	6
Jason L	8/7/2007	6
Krissy J	8/3/2008	5

## Old-Timers

Anthony R	8/10/2009	4
Lisa E	8/2/1996	17
Milli O	8/26/1988	25
Millie D	8/26/1998	15

## Our Primary Purpose

Enrique	8/13/1999	14
Michelle M	7/21/2003	10

## Quest For Serenity

Carmela H	7/19/2007	6
Cheryl H	7/13/2006	7
Jessica G	8/1/2006	7
John G	8/10/2009	4

## Radical Recovery

Rick B	7/7/2008	5
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## Recovery Central

Christina G	7/24/2012	1
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## Recovery In The Hood

Richard W	6/16/1997	16
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## Recovery In Riverview

Cheryl C	8/10/1990	23
Estelle S	7/1/2009	4

## Renegade Recovery

Charles T	8/5/2003	10
Enrique R	8/8/1999	14
Pat W	8/26/2010	3

## Rise For Recovery

David M	7/5/2011	2
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## Squeaky Clean

Dave C	7/27/2000	13
Eric J	7/10/1974	39
Mark A	7/16/2006	7
Tom C	7/26/1986	27

## Stepping Up

Gerald W	7/14/2005	8
Larry W	7/13/1992	21
Mildred M	7/8/2007	6
Valerie A	7/2/2000	13
Willie W	8/10/2011	2
Melissa B	8/1/2011	2

## Sunset Solutions

Marnie H	8/15/1990	23
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## The Clean Perspective

Emily C	8/22/2010	3
Josie C	7/10/2010	3

## The Message

Doug C	7/27/2011	2
Spencer	7/6/2004	9

## The Sanctuary

George B	7/5/1997	16
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## The Ties That Bind Us

Michael L	8/11/2007	6
Ricky	8/14/2010	3

## The War Is Over

Russell G	7/10/2003	10
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## The Women's Recovery Room

Heather H	8/22/2011	2
Kim H	8/22/2011	2
Siran G	8/24/2009	4

## Together We Can

Jason L	8/28/2008	5
Marie R	7/18/1989	24

## TTNA

Bob M	7/6/1987	26
Pete E	7/14/2009	4

## Uptown Tue & Fri

Augie G	7/4/1996	17
Chris D	7/10/2002	11
Dave R	7/11/2006	7
Janice B	7/7/2005	8
Marie A	7/16/2006	7

## Welcome Home

Casey R	7/18/2010	3
Casey G	7/16/2010	3
George R	7/16/1998	15

## Women Do Recover

Elvieta K	8/2/2007	6
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## Women's Hope

Anna M	7/20/2005	8
Nancy W	7/13/2005	8

## CORRECTIONS:

Doreen B	7/28/1989	24
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## Breakfast Club

Luis R	6/3/2011	2
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## High Lie

Joe C	6/13/2007	6
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## Hope In Recovery

Valencia B	6/24/2012	1
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## In The Middle

Randy M	6/17/2004	9
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## Stepping Up

Robert I	6/8/2011	2
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## The War Is Over

Matt P	5/25/2005	8
Lee C	5/25/2005	8
Kurt W	5/22/2009	4
Matt S	6/10/2010	3
James H	6/14/2012	1
Angel C	6/21/2009	4

## Together We Can

Renee C	5/5/1988	25
Lenora M	6/10/2002	11

The Tampa Funcoast Area of Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter Committee welcomes your comments, ideas, announcements, and articles. Your submissions must adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and cannot be copyrighted material from 3rd party persons or publications. Submissions may be subject to editing in order to adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and/or the space constraints or the group's conscience of the Clean Times Newsletter.