

Families in Recovery



August 2009

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2009 Potluck Schedule

Join us for delicious food and company! Bring a dish...your choice.

Held at 7:30 on the Friday nights listed below, in the 4H building (#501) at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe.

- August 14 BBQ

(Held at VGH behind the old treatment center)

- September 18
- October 2
- November 6
- December 11

Potluck

NEXT POTLUCK
is the BBQ,
Friday August
14th 7:00 at Valley

Dear Friend,

BBQ!

This Friday, 7:00

Valley General Hospital Courtyard
(Behind the old Treatment Center)

[Map and directions at the end of the Newsletter](#)

Come join in the good old-fashioned fun of a potluck BBQ. FIR will supply Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, buns, condiments and beverages.

Things to bring:

- Yourself
- Your Family
- Your friends
- A side dish (your choice!)
- Cooler of ice, if you can
- Chairs

We will start at 7:00. Come a little early to help set-up, or stay a little after to help break-down. We will be out of the courtyard by 9:00.

For more on the BBQ, read the Board Meeting Minutes.

 [Forward to a Friend](#)

President's Message

It's summer, and haying time! Will report next month.

Jerry S. 360-794-4367 jstack1@verizon.net

Board Meeting Minutes

Next F.I.R. Board meeting is August 15th
6:00 at the VGH Recovery Center. Please
Come!

MINUTES, August 4, 2009

General Hospital

Jo volunteered to bring the *Birthday Cake* to the Picnic

July Potluck Recap
Congratulations to July Birthday Celebrants! *Wade B.*

Winners

Everyone was a winner at the last potluck!

Joan S. won \$142 in the 50/50.

Annette S. won a badminton set and tent, Randy T. won a waterslide, Margaret S. won a deli knife and a beautiful deer photograph.

Patients Casandra and Daniel each won a leatherbound Big Book in the patient drawing.

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The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by President Jerry. Members in attendance: Dianne, Greg, Jerry, Jo, Mary and Wade

MINUTES: May and June's minutes were both distributed. Both sets were accepted. Jerry motioned and Dianne seconded. A special thanks to Annette for the June minutes!!

KITCHEN REPORT: We have a surplus of plates and there are no needs at this time.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT: There were a lot of items to be brought back from the July picnic. It was suggested in the future that we perhaps cut back.

RAFFLE REPORT: A quick "kudos" to Elaine and Jo for their help with the raffle at the July picnic!

TREASURERS REPORT: The 50/50 brought in \$284 at the picnic with a \$142 pay out as well as the raffle brought in \$142 as well. See monthly activity report for disbursements. Cheryl will bring receipts from her picnic purchases to the next meeting. Diane turned in her receipts today. Rent will be due next month.

NEWSLETTER REPORT: Last month 41 newsletters were sent by mail. 109 newsletter were sent by email and 20 were printed for the hospital. A total of \$52 was used for printing and postage through Staples. It was discussed that no matter how close we try to cut costs and become paperless there will probably always be newsletters printed. We are still only sending the newsletter three times for free via mail. FIR's online email newsletter service is up for renewal, and it was decided to purchase six months at \$72 rather than 12 months for \$126.

OLD BUSINESS: After some discussion it was apparent that we will need to buy a book a month (\$37) for the patients to be given at the potluck.

The July picnic went well even though it wasn't as well attended. Having it at the Sultan park really made a big difference with the size for everyone to mingle, the shade was nice and it kept the non affiliated general public from eating the food. The only complaint was that the coffee could have been warmer but the generator that heated it was too loud. Next year we need to make sure that the running water for toilets, etc. is turned on before the event begins.

NEW BUSINESS: There will be an August picnic at 7pm on Friday, the 14th!! Set up starts at 6pm. It will be held behind the old treatment center.

The raffle will only consist of the 50/50, patient drawings and kids drawings. We have plenty of little kids toys but it was suggested to get older kids prizes such as itunes gift cards.

We need to bring garbage cans. We have leftover bags and

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Quick Links

[Families In Recovery Website](#)
[Everett Area AA](#)
[Everett Area NA](#)
[Everett Area AlAnon](#)
[VGH Recovery Center](#)
[Nar-anon](#)

Treasurer's Report

View the Treasurer's Report at our website, at <http://www.FIR-Monroe.org/id11.html> .

can use the dumpster there on site. We also need everybody to bring chairs and coolers with ice as we do not have the boat to use anymore.

Tables will be brought over from the recovery center as well as Greg and Dianne will be supplementing with more tables. Jerry will be bringing the PA system.

Jerry and Mary will be bringing cheese, relish, ketchup and mustard as well as the hospital furnishing beans and some condiments. Motioned by Greg and Seconded by Wade it was decided to purchase 75 hamburgers and 75 regular size hot dogs. Dianne will ask Cheryl to buy buns. Dianne will be purchasing a tub of vanilla ice cream and toppings. It was suggested to get dry ice from Albertsons to keep things cool. Wade and Jo will be bringing the birthday cake for the month. Water and pop will be brought over from the leftover items at the recovery center from the July picnic.

Smoking will need to be outside the fence on the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm motioned by Jerry and 2nd by Dianne.

Submitted by Jo

Remember, you can also access our website at <http://www.FIR-Monroe.org> for information, or to sign up for an email subscription.

Write to us!!!

Tell us what you feel. Send us ideas for articles, or write one. Tell a good story. The email address is familiesinrecovery@verizon.net.

Recovery

One addict helping another

Walking down the hallway, I'm full of anxiety. I have no idea what I'm going to find in Room 321. The doctors and nurses pass me without a glance. I hear the television as I pass Room 312: the opening theme song for some TV show that I can't place. I hope I'm not too late.

Entering the room, I see him in bed, eyes closed, breathing shallow and labored. He seems to be asleep. There are a few of "us" sitting around the bed. I'm thankful for the familiar faces. His wife stands to hug me, trying to smile. I can see the pain on her face, which only increases my anxiety.

She explains to me what the doctors have said: "He'll be going at any time."

I pull up a chair next to the bed. He is covered by a New York Yankees blanket. I have to smile. He loved to give us s#i* when his team beat our Cleveland Indians. He was a true New Yorker in every way. As I sit and watch his breaths grow slower, I listen to the other people in the room talk about their personal experiences with him and how he touched their lives. The atmosphere in the room is a happy one. I think back to the night I met him.

I was filled with gut-wrenching fear as I walked into my very first meeting. After twenty-one years of using and spending fifteen days in detox, I had no idea what I was going to do with the rest of my life. The drugs and all that went with them were gone. I felt alone and isolated in my thoughts. All I knew was that I wanted to stop using. The social worker at the hospital detox told me to go to that church at 7:30 pm for a meeting. As I entered the room that night I smelled coffee and I heard people laughing. I looked around the room, seeing people who appeared to be happy. I was surprised. I didn't know what I expected, but that was not it.

My fear was out of control. My body still rebelled from the lack of drugs. My insides were on fire. My outsides trembled. My skin burned to the touch. I could feel every muscle in my body ache with each step I took. My mind ran at top speed, not able to stay with one thing for more than a few seconds. The withdrawal was still on me.

At the time I just wanted to run and hide. Instead, I made my way to the corner of the room without making eye contact with anyone, found a chair, and sat. I hadn't been sitting long when a large man approached me. He had a smile on his face, a little sparkle in his eye. He reminded me of Santa Claus, Santa Claus with a receding hairline. I stood to get a cup of coffee, trying to avoid having to make eye contact, or having to speak to him. He stepped in front of me and said, "Hi. I'm ____ and I'm an addict." Then he proceeded to hug me. The shock must have registered on my face, because he said, "Oh, I'm sorry; at our meetings we hug each other." I was speechless. In the world I came from, hugging, or any sign of weakness, was dangerous. It was funny, though, because the hug felt good. I felt the defenses I worked so hard building over the years start to come down. This only added to my confusion. I felt extremely vulnerable and weak.

I made it to the coffeepot with this guy following by my side. He had some papers and a book in his hand by then. He was explaining to me what they were, and, as much as I wanted to, I couldn't focus on what he was saying. All I could do was try to focus on keeping the coffee in the cup. I was shaking so badly that I was not sure I'd be able to make it back to my chair without spilling it all. He took the cup from me and handed me the papers he was holding. "I'll trade ya," he said. "Come on, let's go sit."

Sitting next to him, I looked around the room. Everyone in the room was talking, laughing, and joking. I felt out of place. I remember thinking, "How can these people be so happy?" Even the idea of a smile hurt me. And to laugh...? I couldn't even remember the last time I had laughed. A month, six months, a year? I didn't know.

He was explaining to me what each piece of literature was. I heard him, but nothing was registering. I couldn't slow my mind down enough to comprehend anything. The meeting started and I was thankful. I was free to be distracted again.

Before I knew it, everyone was standing at their chairs around the table, arm-in-arm, and I followed suit, my arm around his big shoulder, my other arm around a young kid, a smile on his face, who whispered, "Don't worry. It gets better." Then I heard the guy who chaired the meeting say, "Can we have a moment of silence for the addict who still suffers, who may just be in this room, the addict who will pick up for the first time tonight, and the addict who will die tonight, followed by the Serenity Prayer." After a few seconds everyone started to say the prayer. I moved my mouth, pretending to know the words.

As I was grabbing my coat, my new "friend" was right there. He handed me a small book. He said, "This is a meeting schedule for our area, and here in the back are the phone numbers of all the men who were here tonight. If you want to use, call someone first." I looked down at the small book in my hands and saw the words "Call Before, Not After" printed on one side. I leafed through the book and saw that there really were names and phone numbers written in the back. The

thought of calling anyone terrified me, but I knew it had to happen. I wouldn't be able to do it alone. God knew I had tried many times.

As I looked up, there were a few people standing in front of me. One by one, they all hugged me. I was stunned and speechless. A woman introduced herself and said to me, "Don't use no matter what, and everything else will fall into place." I nodded with false understanding. I didn't think she knew the pain and fear I was feeling at the time. The guy to my left asked, "How long you been clean?" I explained that I was fifteen days without dope, and it had been that long since I slept, that all I wanted to do was use and make all this insanity in my head, and the pain in my body, go away. He told me, "I didn't sleep for a week coming off the dope." Then he went on to say that he was clean for thirty-nine days and things were getting better. He said he was able to sleep a few hours each night now. At that point I realized for the first time that maybe I wasn't so different from all of them after all. Maybe I was in the right place. Most of all, I was starting to feel like I was not alone anymore. With each hug, each kind face, I began to feel that maybe there was another way to live after all. I had no clue what that little bit of hope would turn into in the next few months. It was 25 March, and I felt some relief. I smiled as I pushed open the door to leave that night.

His breathing is very slow now. I count almost eight seconds between each breath. It won't be long now. I wish I had the chance to tell him how much his goodwill affected me that night at my first meeting. I wish I could tell him that he and the addicts in the room that night changed my life forever. That night I realized for the first time that I was not alone in my struggle with addiction.

As he takes his last breaths, I'm thinking about how important it is to welcome the newcomer at our meetings. I make a promise to myself that I will do my best to welcome every newcomer I see. I hope I can be a part of the process for someone else-the process that saved my life.

I hope that when the time comes for me to die, I will die as a recovering addict, surrounded by my friends and family, like this. I'd like to think he heard our stories tonight. I'd like to think that he knew how much he was loved. I'd like to think we helped him in some way.

Jason F, Ohio, USA

Reprinted from The NA Way August 2009

From Our Readers

Letters from our readership are encouraged! We will publish those that may have interest for our members. Email your comments to familiesinrecovery@verizon.net.

BBQ location Map

