

Oxford House – What If?



Commemorative Program

9th Oxford House World Convention

Hyatt Regency Washington – On Capitol Hill

August 30 – September 2, 2007

Oxford House World Convention

Convention Schedule

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 AM – 8:30 AM	Continental Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder – World Council Nominations Due by Noon 	Continental Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting until Noon for World Council By Houses Attending Convention 	Continental Breakfast 7AM – 8:15 AM [General Session Begins at 8:15AM – Closes at 9:45AM]
8:15AM – 9:30AM	First General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invocation Welcome Dr. Wesley Clark, CSAT Election Process 	Third Breakout Panels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Efficacy in Oxford Drug Courts & Recovery Treatment & Oxford 	Closing General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembrance of Members Who Have Died Tradition Renewal – Alumni and Current Members Conference Summary Closing Remarks
9:30AM – 10:45AM	First Breakout Panels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reentry from Jail Oxford House and the Law Extent of Substance Abuse 	Fourth Breakout Panels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching Veterans DePaul Study Update Women’s Conference Review 	
11:00AM – 12:15PM	Second Breakout Panels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford and State Agencies Importance of Research Understanding Mediation 	Fifth Breakout Panels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Faces & Voices Landlord Tenant Reaching Minorities 	
12:15PM – 2:00PM	Luncheon on Your Own [Petitions for Oxford House World Council election to be turned in by 12:45 PM.]	Luncheon on Your Own [AA/NA meetings at hotel] Alumni Lunch; Get Tickets	
2:00 PM – 4:15 PM	Second General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Walters, ONDCP Eligible Nominees give 3 minute speeches Veterans Outreach 	Third General Session [2:15] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize New World Council Members The New Oxford House Website Vote on Resolutions 	
Evening	RECEPTION AND FOOD (6 –9 PM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invocation ➤ Board Member Remarks ➤ Awards ➤ Food and Show ➤ Night Bus Tours 	Banquet at Convention Hotel (6:00 – 8:30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invocation ➤ Dinner ➤ AA/NA Speaker ➤ Awards ➤ Dance; 9:30PM – Midnight 	

Meeting Rooms: General Sessions: Regency A Ballroom
Panels #1 Columbia A; #2 Columbia B; #3 Ticonderoga

Oxford House – What If?

AA and NA Meetings Throughout Convention
AA - Congressional A
NA - Congressional B

Candidates for World Council: *Get Petitions In On Time*

Oxford House World Services
1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 400
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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Welcome to the 9th Annual Oxford House World Convention. Oxford House has come a long way since the first self-run, self-supported Oxford House started in 1975. Today there are more than 1,250 houses. Last year we gathered in Wichita, Kansas to celebrate Oxford Houses “Coming of Age.” This year we gather in Washington, DC to motivate ourselves – and our Nation – to redouble efforts to alleviate alcoholism and drug addiction by thinking about ways to achieve what many believe is an impossible dream – elimination of the demand for illegal drugs and recidivism for the recovering alcoholic and drug addict. We have come to believe that Oxford House is a sure path to recovery without relapse. We also know that the cost-effective nature of Oxford House means it can be scaled up at minimal cost to enable every addict in the country to get clean and sober and stay that way.

We know that for alcoholics and drug addicts in recovery to stay clean and sober, it takes behavior change, peer support and time. Oxford Houses provide the discipline to change behavior, and the peer support and time necessary for the recovering alcoholic and drug addict to become comfortable enough in sobriety to stay clean and sober forever. What if we figured out how to establish as many Oxford Houses as needed to serve all the alcoholics and drug addicts in our nation? First, the bad guys profiting from the supplying of illegal drugs would have to look for a new job. Second, 25 million Americans afflicted with alcoholism and drug addiction would stop hurting themselves, their families and their communities. Third, the efficiency of every treatment provider in the country would increase five-fold as individuals went through treatment but once rather than two, three, four, five or more than ten times through treatment. Fourth, easy money for terrorists, thugs and other bad guys would dry up. Fifth, all Americans could take pride in extending freedom abroad by enabling freedom to so many at home.

How we get from here to the there is at the heart of this year’s convention theme. Start with “What if every existing Oxford House started an additional house once each year?” At the end of five years there would be 40,000 Oxford Houses. The very next year there would be 80,000 houses with more than 640,000 recovery beds – enough to serve more than 60 percent of those who went through formal treatment this year.

Continuing the “What If?” scenario, what if the federal government provided state alcohol and drug agencies a small incentive to employ Oxford House outreach workers to help recovering individuals in their states to establish new Oxford Houses? What if Oxford House was formally identified as providing a best practice method for assuring recovery without relapse? What if the federal government deemed groups of six to twelve residents in an Oxford House a family for purposes of zoning and landlord/tenant laws?

As we gather in Washington, DC for our 9th Annual World Convention, it is a good time to look back at our organization’s success, to affirm the aspirations we have for our organization and to honestly measure where we are at this point in our history. Like AA and NA, we can sum up many Oxford House milestones with slogans that have meaning because of progress. The first Oxford House World Convention eight years ago in Washington, D.C. asked the simple question: “*If Not Us, Who?*” The next year in Kansas City, Missouri we emphasized “*Recovery Without Relapse.*” In 2001, back in D.C., the theme was “*If Not Now, When?*” Then to Seattle in 2002 where the convention theme was “*Changing the Culture of Recovery.*” Back in DC the

next year our group summed up our mission: “*Recovery, Responsibility, Replication.*” In 2004 San Antonio hosted our convention and our focus was “*Back to Basics.*” The year before last in Alexandria the theme was “*Family, Fellowship, Freedom.*” Finally, last year in Wichita it was time to recognize that Oxford House had “*Come of Age.*” This year the residents and alumni of Oxford House face the challenge of expanding Oxford House enough to provide all recovering alcoholics and drug addicts a realistic opportunity to avoid relapse.

In Wichita, in 2006, the men and women of Oxford House celebrated “Oxford House Comes of Age.” We have gained the experience to forcefully act with wisdom and common sense to enlist the support of all Americans to solve the problem of addiction to alcohol and illegal drugs. This 2007 Convention in Washington, DC provides the forum to ask “What If” the Nation had enough Oxford Houses to help every recovering alcoholic and drug addict to become comfortable enough in recovery to avoid relapse. Let’s us proceed with the knowledge that this convention is the beginning of development of Oxford House on a scale sufficient to really reduce demand for illegal drugs and to replace hopelessness with realistic hope for every alcoholic and drug addict who wants to get clean and sober and stay that way – forever.

Paul Molloy, CEO

Michael D. – Alcoholic

By Paul Molloy



Mike spoke at the banquet five years ago at the 6th World Convention held in Washington, DC at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. Mike died last week. All of us in recovery and particularly those of us in Oxford House will miss him.

Michael Deaver became an inspiration for thousands of recovering alcoholics by his own example. Mike maintained his humility, his perceptive public relations skill and his sobriety by living every day of his life filled with gratitude and willingness to go the extra mile to help others afflicted by addiction. Long after he had regained his good name and professional success, he continued to share his strength, experience and hope with anonymous newcomers in recovery.

For those attending 12-step meetings at Clean and Sober Streets – located around the corner at 4th and D Streets, NW – the man sitting quietly with the suit and tie was Mike D. For sixteen years he was a member of their board but never a big shot; always just another recovering drunk.

In reporting his death, the New York Times noted:

“Tributes came in from co-workers and from the White House. But a singular message came from Henry Pierce, executive director of Clean and Sober Streets. Every Christmas Eve without fail, Mike would show up, serve dinner to the residents and their families, play the piano and lead the Christmas carol singing, Mr. Pierce said. “ He would be on hand for every graduation ceremony, and helped place many of them in their first real jobs. He saw potential in each one of us, and gave his heart to the individual as well as the program.”

He always showed his gratitude for sobriety gained from the grace of God and the effective education gained at Father Martin’s Ashley. At 69, Mike died too soon. But he died sober and touched all of us with his open embrace of recovery and humble assistance to all who believe that recovery without relapse is a norm not an exception. Thank you, Mike, and may God bless you as you blessed us.

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9th Annual Oxford House Convention

Hyatt Regency Washington
On Capitol Hill
Washington, DC

August 30 - September 2, 2007

Thursday, August 30

Annual Oxford House Golf Tournament

8:45 AM Shotgun Start

This is the Ninth Annual Oxford House Golf Tournament. It is held in conjunction with the annual world convention both for the enjoyment of the participants and to underscore the fact that recovery without relapse enables all recovering individuals to enjoy all aspects of life. This year's four-man best ball format tournament is held at Marlborough Golf Club.

Registration

1:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Regency Foyer

Women's Pre-convention Conference

3:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Columbia A

World Council Meeting

9:30 PM - 10:00 PM

Olympia

AA Meeting

9:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Congressional A

NA Meeting

9:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Congressional B

Candidates for World Council should pick up nominating petitions at Registration Desk. **Nominating petitions must be turned in by noon on Friday.** Resident member candidates need signatures from residents representing five different houses. Alumni candidates need signatures from five alumni members.

Friday, August 31st

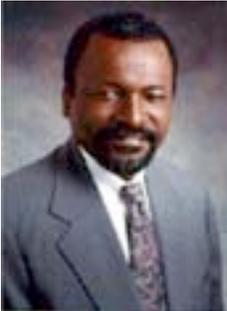
Continental Breakfast
Regency Foyer

7:00 AM - 8:15 AM

Opening General Session
Regency Ballroom

8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

Invocation by Monsignor Eddie Tolentino, Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church in Silver Spring, Maryland will officially open the 9th Oxford House World Convention. Welcome from Mayor Anthony Fenty, Washington, DC. Paul Molloy will provide an overview of the convention and set the convention theme: "Oxford House - What If?". James McClain welcomes the delegates on behalf of the Oxford House, Inc. Board of Directors and describes the process for the election of World Council Members.



- ◆ Keynote Speaker: Westley Clark, M.D., JD, M.P.H., CAS, FASAM
 - Director Center on Substance Abuse Treatment

Dr. Clark, Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment [CSAT] is making his fifth presentation to an Oxford House World Convention. He has held his job in both the Clinton and Bush Administrations and is the nationally recognized leader in treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction.

First Breakout Panels

9:35 AM - 10:50 AM

Re-Entry from Jail
Columbia A
Oxford Houses and The Law
Columbia B
The Extent of Substance Abuse
Ticonderoga

Second Breakout Panels

Oxford and State Agencies
Columbia A
Importance of Research
Columbia B
Understanding Medication
Ticonderoga

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Lunch and AA/NA Meetings

Lunches available for purchase in Lobby
AA in Congressional A NA Congressional B

12:15 PM - 1:45 PM

Second General Session
Regency Ballroom

2:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Keynote by John Walters, Director of ONDCP

John Walters has honored Oxford House by participating in four World Conventions including three in Washington, DC and once in Seattle, Washington.

Demand reduction is the best tool for winning the war on drugs and Director Walters recognizes that Oxford House helps recovering individuals to stay clean and sober without relapse. In his letter to the group, the Director sums up his appreciation of Oxford House in the following sentence:

I applaud your goal of establishing enough Oxford Houses to provide every recovering individual the opportunity to live in its supportive, alcohol and drug-free setting for as long as needed to master total abstinence.



Friday Evening Reception, Awards and Entertainment

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Invocation Major Paul McFarland, Salvation Army

Presentation of Awards Jerry Conlon, Chairman of Board of Directors

Food • Entertainment

Preview of Latest SAMHSA film on Treatment in Corrections

After Hours: 9:15 PM - Until

More entertainment or bus tours of Washington, DC at night

Hints on Getting the Most out of the Convention

1. Attend as many sessions as you can.
2. Participate in election of World Council officers.
3. Individuals from same houses or chapters split up to learn as much as possible to bring home.
4. Get to know folks from other states to extend your Oxford House family.
5. Enjoy your sobriety. Learn and have fun.

Remember workshops (in Congressional A and Congressional B) concurrent with Panel Breakout Sessions to cover officer duties, chapter activity, state association formation and to learn about the new duties for house secretaries that will be required to keep the new website up-to-date.

2007 Washington, DC - Oxford House - What If?

Saturday September 1st

Continental Breakfast Regency Ballroom Foyer	7:00 AM - 8:15 AM
Third Breakout Panels Self-Efficacy in Oxford House Columbia A Room Drug Courts and Recovery Columbia B Room Treatment Provider Utilization of Oxford House Ticonderoga Room	8:15 AM - 9:30 AM
Fourth Breakout Panels Reaching Veterans Columbia A Room DePaul Study Update Columbia B Room Review of Women's Conference Ticonderoga Room	9:30 AM - 10:45 AM
Fifth Breakout Panels Reaching Out With Faces and Voices of Recovery Columbia A Room Landlord Tenant Columbia B Room Reaching Minorities Ticonderoga Room	11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Lunch AA in Congressional A NA in Congressional B Alumni Luncheon in the Capitol Room B [Tickets at Registration Desk: \$30 per person]	12:15 PM - 1:45 PM
Third General Session Regency Ballroom Report of World Council Introduction of New World Council Members Presentation on Steps for Enlisting the Nation to Multiply Oxford Houses Vote on Convention Resolutions Veterans Committee Meeting immediately following General Session	2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Workshop Sessions Concurrent with Breakout Panels (in Congressional A and B) covering new Website, Officer Duties, Chapter Organization and State Association Establishment

Saturday Evening

Banquet

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

- ◆ Invocation
- ◆ Tom Fellows Award
- ◆ Founder's Awards
- ◆ AA Speaker: Riley R.

Dance

9:00 PM to 12:00 PM

Sunday Morning

Continental Breakfast

7:00 AM - 8:15 AM

Closing Session

8:15 AM - 9:45 AM

Plaza Ballroom West

Remembering Oxford House family members who died during the last year
 Lessons learned at the Convention for Oxford House
 Group recitation of Oxford House Traditions

A more detailed summary of the fifteen breakout panels follows.

In the later pages of this program, residents and alumni of Oxford Houses around the country share their stories. The stories describe the terrible price that addiction extracts from the individual, their families and the community. As Oxford House has come of age and we examine "What If?", it is important that all of us share our stories to demonstrate the power of recovery and to motivate communities across the land to establish Oxford Houses so that many more recovering individuals are given an opportunity to master recovery without relapse.

We hope that these stories and the ones in last year's program will prompt everyone in Oxford House to share their story. Send the stories to Oxford House World Services and we will publish them. Please include your full name; however, in the AA/NA tradition we are publishing stories with only the first name and initial. Nevertheless, many of us will recognize each other because we are family.

Oxford House - What If?

Washington, DC 2007

Thanks to the participants in the pre-convention Oxford House Women's Conference held Thursday, August 30th. The women will review the excellent presentations by featured speakers and the issues discussed that arise in houses for recovering women more often than in houses for men in the Fourth Session Breakout Panel on Saturday - Ticonderoga Room. Oxford Houses work for everyone because it is an Oxford House tradition to make sure that solutions to group living problems are analyzed and resolved.

Summary of Breakout Sessions

Friday Breakouts: First Breakout

Re-entry from Jail

Columbia A

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists:	Wendell Howell	Executive Director Delaware Addictions Coalition
	Kurtis Taylor	OHI Prison Outreach in North Carolina
	Kari McFarland	Oxford House –Drummond, Dallas, Texas
	Gary Chaney	Oxford House Alumnus PG County, MD
	Akiva Liberman, PhD	National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA]

Wendell Howell is Executive Director of the Delaware Addictions Coalition and is a national leader in providing ways and means for addicted incarcerated individuals to achieve and maintain sobriety. Kurtis Taylor and Antonio Russell specialize in convincing and helping those in recovery getting out of prison to get into an Oxford House. Kari McFarland got initial treatment in Texas prison system after about eleven and half years in and out of prison. She has about six years clean and is a leader of the Texas Oxford House Association. Gary Chaney is a successful alumnus of Oxford House and the PG County prison system. Akiva Liberman, Ph. D. is a Health Science Administrator at NIDA focused on addiction treatment and incarceration. Three themes will highlight this panel: [1] the great need for post-incarceration recovery opportunity; [2] the value of Oxford House as a transitional residence; [3] practical ways to motivate returning prisoners to get into Oxford House and [4] practical ways to integrate post-incarceration and Oxford House admission practices.

Oxford House and the Law

Columbia B

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists:	Steve Polin	Attorney, Maryland and DC
	Michael Maurer	US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
	Riley Regan	Expert Witness and Former State Director MD, NJ, NH

Steve Polin is a nationally recognized attorney when it comes to defending civil rights of handicapped individuals under the Federal Fair Housing Act. He was closely involved in all of the early Oxford House cases defending its right to rent good houses in good neighborhoods. Michael Maurer is a lawyer in the Civil Rights Division, Section on Housing and Civil Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Justice. Riley Regan has been an expert witness in a number of cases under both the Federal Fair Housing Act [FFHA] and the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]. The panel will discuss legal problems that confront Oxford Houses. Both the outcomes of cases and the steps recovering individuals establishing Oxford House should take to avoid litigation will be discussed.

The Extent of Substance Abuse

Ticonderoga

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists:	Anita Gadzuk, Ph.D.,	Office of Applied Statistics, SAMSHA
	Johnny W. Allem,	President/CEO Johnson Institute, Washington, DC
	Kenneth Hoffman, MD, MPH,	SAMHSA/CSAT Division of Pharmacologic Therapies
	Kevin Shipman	DC Addiction Prevention Recovery Administration APRA

The panel will focus on the extent of alcoholism and drug addiction in the country. Dr. Gadzuk works on the TEDS data – the most comprehensive data set about treatment and addiction in the country – in the Office of Applied Statistics at SAMSHA. Johnny W. Allem is not only the President and CEO of the Johnson Institute – with forty years leadership in the field of addiction treatment and recovery – but has mobilized the recovery community and studied recovery for more than twenty years. Dr. Ken Hoffman is retired United States Army and has dealt with addiction in both the public and private sector. Among other duties he has at SAMHSA and CSAT is tracking problems caused by heroin tainted by poisons that cause death on an unprecedented scale. While in the military Dr. Hoffman was principle investigator for the Department of Defense on the application of the Oxford House model to recovery within the military. Kevin Shipman is a clinical specialist with APRA.

Friday Breakouts: Second Session

Oxford House and State Agencies

Columbia A

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists: Tori Fernandez Whitney Director, DC Addiction Prevention Recovery Administration APRA
 Quinetta Womack Oxford House Contract Manager, Louisiana Alcohol and Drug Agency
 Janice Jordan Oxford House Contract Manager, Virginia Alcohol and Drug Agency
 Gino Pugliese OHI State Coordinator for Washington

This panel will discuss the ways that a close working relationship between Oxford House World Services and a state's alcohol and drug agency can help to develop a meaningful network of Oxford Houses within a state. The benefits and barriers of working with a state agency will be examined. Specific focus will be on ways and means to encourage more states to foster development of Oxford Houses. Louisiana has had a contract with OHI for seven years; Virginia for 17 years and the contract with the District of Columbia is new this year. Janice Jordan and Quinetta Womack manage the contract in their respective states. Tori Whitney is Director of APRA and formerly worked on the staff of Council Member David Catania – a longtime advocate of treatment in DC. Gino Pugliese is an OHI outreach worker under a contract between OHI and Washington State. The panel will discuss how Oxford Houses and state agencies can work together to improve treatment outcome.

Importance of Research

Columbia B

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists: Leonard Jason, PhD Profession DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois
 John Majer, PhD Faculty, Richard Daley College, and Chicago, Illinois
 Akiva Liberman, PhD National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA]
 Leon Venable Alumnus, Oxford House Research Project DePaul

This panel takes a look at the value of research as a tool to better understand recovery from addiction to alcohol and drugs and to better understand the dynamics of self-help. Ever since the late William Spillaine, PhD tracked down about 1,200 residents during the first ten years of Oxford House existence, the empirical evidence suggested that Oxford House living made a big difference in treatment outcome for alcoholics and drug addicts. Dr. Spillaine had found that about 80% of those who had moved into one of the first 13 Oxford Houses had managed to stay clean and sober. The NIDA and NIAAA studies took place more than a decade later and within a much larger universe. When Spillaine studied Oxford House there were only 13 houses and all were in the DC area. The NIAAA DePaul Study tracked 897 recovering individuals living in 219 Oxford Houses across the county. The NIDA DePaul study randomly selected 150 individual getting out of formal treatment and randomly selected half to go to Oxford Houses and half to go to where they would normally go following treatment. At the end of two years, the Oxford House group did about twice as well as the control group in staying clean and sober without relapse. What do these studies mean and what other research is needed to help Oxford House improve and help society to integrate Oxford House into the best practice treatment protocols? Dr. Akiva Liberman is a researcher at NIDA having interest in addiction including those addicted and in the criminal justice system.

Oxford House and Medication

Ticonderoga

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists: Kenneth Hoffman, MD, MPH, SAMHSA/CSAT Division of Pharmacologic Therapies
 Kirstin Hallburg, CAC Counselor and outreach Omaha, Nebraska
 Norman Saunders Oxford House World Council
 Paula Harrington UNC Human Resources and Oxford House Outreach

Recovering alcoholics and drug addicts enter Oxford House with a clean understanding that a condition of residence is to stay clean and sober. However, about half of the residents of Oxford House may also have mental health disorders that require medication to control. Medication for some maladies is not only consistent with the clean and sober bedrock of Oxford House but are also essential to maintain the health of the resident. Other medication has many of the characteristics of alcohol or mood altering drugs that can trigger relapse either for the user or others in the house. This panel will sort through the medications that fit within an Oxford House environment and those that undermine the alcohol and drug free foundation for Oxford House living. Dr. Hoffman, as a medical doctor and psychiatrist, who is retired as a medical officer with the U.S. Army and currently is an expert in pharmacologic therapies at SAMHSA. Kirstin Hallburg is a counselor and outreach specialist from Nebraska and Norman Saunders, a member of the Oxford House World Council, is a nurse practitioner with first hand experience of living in an Oxford House in North Carolina. Paula Harrington works on special projects with Oxford Houses in North Carolina.

Saturday Breakouts: Third Session

Self-Efficacy in Oxford House

Columbia A

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Panelists: John Majer, PhD Faculty, Richard Daley College, Chicago, IL
 Leonard Jason, PhD DePaul University, Chicago, IL
 Makeba Casey Research on DePaul University Project
 Paul Stevens OHI Outreach Virginia

This panel will look behind the overall outcomes of both the NIDA and NIAAA DePaul studies and examine specific findings related to self-efficacy, women in Oxford House, ex-offenders in Oxford House and how length of time in an Oxford House relates to sobriety without relapse. In addition, the panel will discuss co-morbidity among Oxford House residents and how different problems affect successful Oxford House residency.

Drug Courts and Recovery

Columbia B

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Panelists: Hon. Nelson Rupp Drug Court Judge Montgomery County, Maryland
 Carolyn Hardin Director NDCI, National Association of Drug Court Professionals
 Joe Chavez Oxford House Outreach, Hawaii
 Antonio Russell Oxford House Outreach, West Virginia

This panel will look at how drug courts and Oxford Houses can work together to promote recovery without relapse for individuals who participate in a drug court program. Judge Rupp head the Drug Court in Montgomery County, Maryland. Carolyn Hardin heads the National Drug Court Institute. Joe Chavez in Hawaii and Antonio Russell in West Virginia have both worked with drug courts to facilitate utilization of Oxford Houses. Specific emphasis will be on ways to improve utilization of Oxford Houses for drug court participants.

Treatment Provider Utilization of Oxford House to Improve Outcomes

Ticonderoga

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Panelists: Riley Regan Therapist and Former State Director
 Kirstin Hallberg Counselor and Outreach, Omaha, NE
 Terri Martin Volunteers of America, Houston, TX
 Gary Baker Pines Treatment Center, Louisiana Dept. of Health and Hospitals

About 47% of Oxford House residents attend weekly counseling in addition to AA/NA meetings. It appears that a number of treatment facilities realize that Oxford Houses provide an opportunity to gain sobriety without relapse. This panel will explore the benefits of using Oxford House following detoxification and formal treatment. The panel will also discuss the barriers that keep more treatment facilities from actively encouraging the establishment of Oxford House and the difficulties counselors have in getting clients into an Oxford House on a timely basis.

Saturday Breakouts: Fourth Session**Reaching Veterans****Columbia A**

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists: Mary Rooney Homeless Coordinator, Department of Veteran's Affairs
 Antonio Russell Oxford House Outreach West Virginia
 Robert Kershaw Oxford House Outreach District of Columbia
 Stan Timberlake Oxford House Outreach Oklahoma

Approximately 20 percent of the nearly 10,000 residents in the national network of Oxford Houses at any one time are veterans. In several states the initial establishment of Oxford Houses has taken place because veterans getting out of treatment at a VA Hospital have started the first house. As men and women come home from serving in defense of their country some find that addiction stands in the way of adjusting back into society. Some estimates project that more than half the homeless in the country are vets and like other alcoholics and drug addicts veterans often recycle in and out of treatment for a long time. Oxford Houses benefit from the discipline, organization and maturity that many vets bring to the new or existing house. This panel will focus on how the linkages between recovering veterans and Oxford House can be strengthened. Mary Rooney specializes in helping homeless veterans from the perspective of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

DePaul Study Update**Columbia B**

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists: Leonard Jason, PhD Director Center of Community Research, DePaul University, Chicago, IL
 John Majer, PhD Faculty, Richard Daley College, Chicago, IL
 Darrin Aase Graduate Student DePaul University, Chicago, IL

This panel will look at the basic findings from 14 years of study of Oxford House by DePaul University researchers. What are the outcomes and what differences seem to account for successful mastering of behavior that results in sobriety without relapse? The DePaul research community has studied Oxford House more extensively than any other group and its findings have resulted in a number of scholarly papers and reports. In addition, to an overview of past research, this panel will explore the types and topics of research envision for the future.

Review of Women's Conference**Ticonderoga**

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Panelists: Robin Breckenridge RAP Director and Alumnus, Oregon
 Terri Martin Oxford House, Houston, Texas
 Judy Maxwell Outreach, Washington State
 Paula Harrington Alumnus, Outreach, North Carolina
 Kathleen Gibson Program Director Oxford House

On Thursday, just prior to the opening of the Oxford House convention, women held a conference from 3 PM to 9 PM and worked on a number of problems, opportunities and challenges unique to Oxford Houses for women and for women and children. A copy of the agenda for the Women's Conference is included in this program immediately following the summary of panel breakouts. This panel will share the contents of the Oxford Women's Conference with the attendees of the convention. This overview will cover both the similarities and differences between Oxford Houses for men and Oxford Houses for women.

Saturday Breakouts Fifth Session

Reaching Out With Faces and Voices of Recovery

Columbia A

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists:	Ivette Torres Pat Taylor Robin Breckenridge Marty Walker	Leader of Recovery Month SAMHSA/CSAT Executive Director, Faces and Voices of Recovery RAP “Hands Across the Bridge”- Oregon/Washington Outreach Louisiana “Oxford Open Houses”
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The purpose of Faces and Voices of Recovery is to encourage ways and means for individuals in recovery to share their strength, experience and hope with their communities in order to foster more opportunities and understanding by the community-at-large of treatment and recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction. Every September is Recovery Month and across the United States folks in recovery stand up to be counted. The stigma of alcoholism and drug addiction should not exist for those addicted who make the decision to regain personal freedom and choice by learning how to enjoy comfortable sobriety without relapse. Some suggest that “anonymity” of 12-Step groups may increase stigma and enough more openness by those in recovery. Others believe that public education about the nature of alcoholism and drug addiction will reduce stigma. This panel has government and private sector representation by the leaders in educating the public that addiction is treatable and recovery works.

Landlord Tenant

Columbia B

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists:	Frank Wall Michael Allen Herbert Breckenridge	Portland, Oregon Attorney DC Law Firm Relman & Dane, PLLC Oregon Oxford House Alumnus
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Frank Wall is a Portland, Oregon lawyer who represented Oxford House in the *Kyra Burke Case* and is this year’s recipient of the Tom Fellows Award from Oxford House for his successful work in getting the Oregon legislature and Governor to change the landlord tenant law. Michael Allen specializes in housing and civil rights issues, and has more than 20 years experience in working with grassroots organizations to influence public policy. Prior to joining Relman & Dane in June 2006, he was senior staff attorney and director of the fair housing program at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health. Herbert [Bill] Breckenridge is an alumnus of Oxford House and state Oxford House leader who organized support for the law change.

Reaching Minority Populations

Ticonderoga

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panelists:	Wendell Howell Joe Chavez Troy Mann Victor Fitz	Executive Director Delaware Addictions Coalition Oxford House Outreach Hawaii Outreach North Carolina Alumnus – Wichita Chapter
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Many alcoholics and drug addicts are not in the mainstream of society. They may be homeless, incarcerated or in another group that is a minority in society – race, creed, sexual orientation, or disability. These individuals are often the most in need of the support and sobriety available in an Oxford House. This panel will examine ways and means for those in the community and in Oxford House to help match those in need with the Oxford House resource – even if the individual is not in the mainstream of society. Whether incarcerated, homeless, Hispanic, African American, American Native, physically disabled, gay or straight an effort should be made to spread the word that Oxford House provides the time, peer support and discipline to provide a realistic opportunity to stay clean and sober without relapse.

Oxford House Stories

This segment of the program contains a selection of autobiographical sketches by current and former residents of Oxford Houses. These recovering individuals are sharing their stories in order to help others afflicted by alcoholism and drug addiction to understand the hope afforded by Oxford House. Many readers will be struck by the devastating damage associated with alcoholism and drug addiction. There is no pill or magic bullet that can produce a cure for addiction. The only path to recovery is total abstinence from alcohol and addictive drugs. Few are able to master such behavior change alone. Together with the 12-Step programs, Oxford House offers its residents the opportunity and time to use peer support, a safe living environment and a disciplined system of operation to achieve the behavior changes necessary to avoid a return to the use of alcohol and addictive drugs.

The thousands of individuals who have found a path to recovery by living in an Oxford House know that Oxford House has come of age. All members of the Oxford House family hope that by sharing these personal stories of hard-won recovery, they will contribute to the growth of the Oxford House network, guide those not yet in recovery toward an effective program, and foster the understanding and support of the broader community.

Barbara's Story

I was born during the summer of '64; my parents were both students at Oregon State University. My mother was the daughter of an Oregon State Senator studying teaching and my father dropped out to later become a major success in the lumber business. My father was your "rags to riches" back to "rags" story, due to his own alcoholism, and by the time I was twelve, I was sneaking his cigarettes and booze.

By the age of fourteen, I was a runaway and by sixteen I was pregnant and married to a pot dealer. The marriage was over at nineteen and my aunt and uncle adopted our daughter. I went off to Beauty College and to explore my musical ambitions. By the time I was twenty-five, I was in my first successful musical group and well into cocaine. I became addicted quickly. I used more coke so that I could drink more, and visa versa. At twenty-six I started to use heroin. Although I had a career as a Hair Stylist, I became more and more involved with music and I eventually met up with a known Rock Celebrity and moved to Seattle, Washington where we lived together. My downhill spiral was in progress but it was hard to see because I was doing quite well musically and I was sheltered by the fame that was all around me. By the time I was thirty-two, I was on Methadone, Methamphetamine, Ritalin, heroin, and crack cocaine on a daily basis. My hairdressing career was long gone, and I had lost my musical ambitions after three independent recordings and a regional tour; by this time I had been declared mentally incompetent and placed on Social Security (SSI).

After losing my apartment and being on the Seattle streets for a couple of weeks, I took the train back to Portland, and moved into my mother's basement. Within a month I got kicked off the methadone program, out of my mom's, and back onto the streets where

I soon met up with a character who ran a recycle center, which was a hub for local homeless drug addicts, and criminals. For the next two and a half years I drifted between mental wards jails, hospitals, the recycle center, the streets, and motel rooms. I finally bought a crappy car off a tow lot for \$200.00 and lived in it for a couple of weeks until one day, Thanksgiving Day, 1999 to be exact, I was doing the last of my dope when the police came upon me and arrested me for the last time. After a thirty-day sentence, I was released and I entered a six-month treatment program for women offenders. I applied myself and completed the program.

I was then accepted into the Ankeny Oxford House in Portland Oregon where I lived for the next two years. I got a job and got off Social Security, I got a sponsor and a home group and I started to work the 12 steps. I served as House Secretary and President along with serving my chapter as Secretary, Co-chair and Chair. I went to the Oxford World Convention in 2002 where I was inspired when I heard Paul Molloy speak. I felt the exhilaration and excitement as I met other Oxford House family members from all over the country and the world. I cast my vote in

the elections of the Oxford House World Council and two years later I was elected to the Oxford House World Council. In 2005 I became the second female in Oxford House history to hold the office of World Council Chairperson. After seven wonderful years in sobriety, I continue to serve my fellows in Oxford House as a current alumni member of the World Council.

I am married to an incredible man who is also an alumnus of Oxford House. We have two beautiful children and we both feel that we owe much of our success to Oxford House. Thank you, Paul, for having the vision to open the first Oxford House. I truly do not know where I would be today if Oxford House hadn't been there for me.

Dan L's Story

I was a total nerd in school. I really didn't have any friends. I had a neighbor Matt who occasionally acknowledged my existence, if no other kids were around. Matt showed up on my 18th birthday. He'd snuck a 12-pack of Miller from his uncle. I'd never even thought about drinking. He handed me a bottle and I nearly chugged it. I've heard lots say how lousy alcohol tasted at first. Not for me. It was love at first swallow.

I was a klutzy kid. Two left feet, last chosen for baseball, dreaded gym. Everything a kid wanted to be good at, I stunk. Not just sports. At 13 I had my first crush. Her name was Kate. I idolized her and believed she was of a higher species. My cousin had me sit me next to Kate at his birthday party. She smiled and asked me a question. I looked at her and forgot the English language. I was too paralyzed to be embarrassed. It was like my first blackout, before my first drink. I resolved never to be seen in public again.

The only thing I was good at was video games. My talent was perfect for an anti-social life. At first, it was just Mario, Luigi and me. My universe expanded, but no more people, just more and more video games.

But that bottle of Miller changed my life. I drained it and had another, then a third. Matt said, "Wow, you can really put that stuff away." It was my first compliment.

Matt drank one bottle, so there were eight left. I instinctively knew to monitor my supply. Matt said, "let's go share it with my brother." "Like Hell," I said. I was a selfish drunk in my first forty minutes. I'd found something other than Nintendo I was good at. I was an absolute natural alcoholic.

I suddenly took a liking to Matt's Uncle Frank because he had oceans of alcohol. He was a good, friendly and kind man too. He was divorced, his wife had the kids, but he had every luxury imaginable and he didn't work. His station in life was based on two words: "Trust Fund".

Frank was about 35. I was 18 but we totally hit it off. Frank was always drinking and hated drinking alone. I didn't know any other way to get beer. In reality, we were both starved for human companionship. I essentially moved into his house. My father had left when I was three and my mother was a somewhat functioning alcoholic-addict. I don't think my mother noticed I'd moved. She was immersed in her 'Double-V Unreality' – vodka and Valium – always. I guess she thought I was still living my usual life, up in my room, endlessly playing video games.

Matt's older brother said he knew why Uncle Frank and I hit it off so well. He told me I was a 'sycophant'. I was mad as hell; I didn't have a clue what it meant, but it sounded disgusting.

I looked it up and all was OK. The dictionary defined 'sycophant', as a 'self-seeking, servile flatterer; fawning parasite.' Sounded like an OK job description to me. And, that was my entire drinking career. I moved in with Frank at 18 and we drank. We were both alcoholics and that's what drunks do.

One day I opened mail and it was a 21st birthday card from my dentist. Three years had gone by? Two months later, I got up one day and Frank didn't. I called 911 and cops and EMTs flooded the place. That was my longest day. I was crying and talking to cops and I ended the day in a detox. I was furious with Frank. He went away forever. And, he didn't take me with him.

I landed at Connecticut Valley Hospital in a ward that was a combo rehab- nuthouse-jail. I figured I'd be there forever. But I was 2, the state was gutting human services and I hadn't committed any crime, so 28 days later I'd be

out. My counselor told me about Oxford Houses, said they'd drive me to an interview and pay initial costs. He also said he loved coffee, had been to a zillion Dunkin' Doughnuts and saw 'Help Wanted' signs there daily.

I moved into Oxford House Hamden and they told me, "go to meetings, pay rent, do my chore and the rest was just life." Amazingly, I thrived.

I knew I loved Frank. Always will. He was my true father. I was his surrogate son. Yes, Frank gave alcohol to an 18-year-old alcoholic. Illegal, but in the scheme of things, not really bad. I knew I was alcoholic from my first drink and would have been drinking no matter what.

Everything else Frank gave me was positive. I'd just done what he did. He read mountains of books, watched about every fine film made, loved all kinds of music, and regularly went to art museums from Boston to New York. And he loved baseball. We went lots to Yankee Stadium and Fenway and to lots of college basketball games. Me, the all time nerd, became a big baseball, basketball fan. Amazing! Frank's money cushioned both of us from some consequences of alcohol. There was always someone to drive and someone to get us home safely and make certain our cigarettes were out.

Just sober, I still felt incredibly shy. In my first talk with my sponsor, he laid down the rules and emphasized no relationships my first year. Relationship! I wasn't planning on a conversation.

Oxford House was no less than a miracle for me. I was totally alone in the world and I moved into a true family. That's just not supposed to happen. Seven-eight guys, 21 to 60, most all had very little money, but we were living in a great town, in a terrific old house and were bonded by our addictions.

We were immersed in a double fraternity, the program (AA/NA) and Oxford House. One complemented the other, beginning with the absolute bedrock of our existence; living free of alcohol and drugs. Then honesty, personal responsibility, concern for and consideration of others. And tolerance, empathy and gratitude.

Oxford House was an unexpected, virtually inconceivable gift and blessing in my life. And, as I continue along the road of sobriety, I am amazed to meet so many others for whom Oxford House was, and is, a miracle of sober community.

Christy D's Story

I started drinking in high school-your typical party-on-the-weekend stuff. I am the oldest of 4 children and felt entitled to blow off steam. I was a straight A student and obedient child – I was too afraid of my mother to disobey her. I received an academic scholarship to Spring Hill College in Mobile, AL. Being a native of New Orleans meant automatic friends because the drinking age here was still 18. I felt that I didn't fit in any crowd in high school and I became a chameleon. I didn't feel that I was good enough for the Spring Hill kids either as my family did not have anywhere near the financial resources most of the others had. I withdrew from my second semester at Spring Hill, using my father's recent diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease as an excuse to come home and party more. I told everyone I was going to help my mother financially, but in truth I came home to party with my friends.

I met my future husband during this time. He was extremely good looking and cool and wild – everything I wanted to be. I felt that I could fix the things I didn't like about him – if someone just loved him enough, he would change. I saw a lot of potential in him. I got pregnant very quickly and 1 year later married. We had another child two years later. I started using pills at around the age of 25. Everything about our life was pretentious – what we looked like in public; what people thought of us. There was a lot of abuse on every level and a lot of secrets. He ended up going to prison when I was 28 and my disease progressed rapidly. I gave custody of my children to my mother and my family disowned me. He came home 3 years later and we continued to use together and things deteriorated fast. We eventually became homeless and he had 9 criminal charges and a lot of child support to pay. He decided we should go to treatment.

He went to Detox and then the Clearview Oxford House. He continued to use in that house and overdosed and died.

I stayed out another 5 months and knew I either had to give getting sober a try or I would be dead. I went to

treatment and then to a halfway house in Baton Rouge. I went to work for his uncle who opened an office for me to work out of in Baton Rouge (considering I overdosed in his warehouse while previously working for him, this was a definite miracle). At the close of my 7 months at this house, my boss asked if I knew anyone who didn't use who I could live with. I reminded him of Oxford House and told him there was one in Kenner for women and I would look into it.

I moved into the Kenner House 3 weeks before Hurricane Katrina hit. I was very grateful to get back home. My boss then helped me get a vehicle. I have had a very unique experience at my house. Another woman moved in 2 months after me who was a widow due to her husband overdosing. To say we are as different as night and day is the understatement of the year. We have become the best of friends – we found similarities when at times it seemed there were none. We have learned how to trust and enjoy other women. I have also learned how to not tear other women down and how to confront people in a constructive manner. As for Tiffany and me, I have learned to stand up for myself and she has learned to show the kind heart she really has.

My life has been enriched beyond my wildest imagination and I have true friends today who are not afraid to tell me the truth. I now have relationships with my family and we actually enjoy being around each other. I had the privilege of going to my boss's 25th Anniversary Party recently and I faced all of my in-laws for the first time in 3 years. I felt great being able to be proud of who I am and not having to be embarrassed of who I was – and they actually enjoyed the real Christy. My 14-year-old daughter recently had to write a speech for Speech Class about who she admires most in the world and she chose me. Most "normal" parents dream of something like this – I was astounded.

I now have a successful career and professional life I am very happy with. I feel that this would not have been possible without God and the opportunities provided by the Oxford House. I have been provided a safe and clean haven. I feel that the sky is the limit in my life and I can't wait to see what tomorrow brings and for that I am forever grateful!

Gary C's Story

My name is Gary C. On July 23, 2000, I was lucky enough to be arrested in Prince George's County, Maryland. This was the beginning of the end of a twenty-five year run at drug usage and addiction. The judge took 30 years of possible time, had me plead guilty to a 10 year charge, and gave me the option of 18 months in the HIDTA Program and 18 months probation and also advised me this was my LAST CHANCE for freedom.

I did Phase One, 90 days in the jail drug unit, then on Feb. 21, 2001 I was released to Day Reporting for Phase Two, but to go to Phase Two, I needed a place to stay for 90 days before I could move on to Phase Three (probation). As most of us had done, I had badly burned the bridge to home and had very few options. My cellmate rented me a room at his house but, with his stepson smoking and selling pot in the basement, I was worried that I would go back to jail over their actions.

A co-worker also in recovery suggested that I talk to Jesse Short who does liaison between the Salvation Army and Oxford house. I said okay I would do it soon but he called Jesse that day and Jesse took me right up to the Howard Ave. house for an interview.

I was surprised to see another former inmate I knew living in the house. On the 91st day, when I was allowed to move, I quickly moved to the Howard Ave. Oxford House and spent the next two and a half years living there. During this time I was voted onto the Oxford House World Council where I served for four years. During this time I started my own plumbing and drain cleaning business on Capitol Hill and I have been making a new life clean and sober.

I just had my seven-year anniversary and my life is looking better each day! I have obtained many memories in life, lots of material things, and I am looking forward to a lifelong commitment of marriage and starting a family with a very beautiful lady who has seen both the good and bad sides of me over the last ten years and still loves me today!

This would not have been possible without the HIDTA Program laying the foundation, Oxford House for the chance to grow in a safe and sober environment, and the N.A. & A.A. programs to maintain my focus on the future! Anyone who puts their mind and heart into a new life can do it, just look at me. I DID IT!!!!

Gordon N's Story

My story of recovery, and Oxford House, began well before I became a resident of Oxford House in Chesapeake, Virginia in late 2002. I was living in California with my wife and son, where I had carved out a good life during what was at that time nearly 20 years of sobriety. I was active in Alcoholics Anonymous, had a sponsor and was sponsoring others. I worked hard on my program and did my best to practice its principles in all of my affairs.

My wife, however, yearned to be closer to her family, most of them were located in the Tidewater area of southern Virginia. Although my family was in California and I initially didn't want to leave, I eventually gave in to the idea of a new beginning. In retrospect, those really were exciting times. We stayed with her parents while searching for that "perfect" home we could call our own, which we found in less than a month. Arrangements were made for school, my wife pursued her dream of a career in cosmetology and my professional success was immediate. The future looked bright indeed.

There was just one problem; I failed to bring my entire program with me from California. I did initially attend AA meetings, but these became fewer and farther between as I allowed the demands of the move and getting established with a new home and a new job take priority over my recovery. I rationalized that I'd be ok, that I would step up my program once my life was back on track; after all, by this time I had over 20 years sober. I was soon to learn what I had so quickly lost sight of during this process: my disease attacks on a daily basis, and if I fail to fight it daily as well, it will win.

Over the course of that year my sobriety began to erode. I didn't recognize it then, but I was a relapse waiting to happen. About this time, I was diagnosed with chronic arthritis in my right hip; the intense pain I was feeling would only get worse unless I had a hip replacement. Reluctantly, I agreed, not aware of the chain of events that was about to take place. The first surgery – of what would eventually be 5 more surgeries and 25 dislocations – did not go well. To keep a long story short, the next 2 years became an odyssey of hospital visits, pain and more erosion of my sobriety. I was freely prescribed narcotic pain meds; morphine, Demerol, Oxycotin to name a few. I thought I could handle these drugs; after all, I was an alcoholic, not an *addict*.

Flashing forward, I became dependent – addicted – to these drugs. In a very short time, I was drinking again and eventually lost my home and family. I wondered at the time why I didn't fight for my wife and son, but my disease was in control and somehow made these events acceptable. Still employed, I moved out and was soon introduced to crack cocaine, a drug that quickly took away what little I had left. My hip continued to "pop out," and I was told that it was likely I would become wheelchair-bound. This was a huge wake-up call; I searched for a specialist and eventually flew to Detroit for "hip-saving" surgery. Although the operation was a success, the patient was going to die unless something changed. I believe my Higher Power placed me in one of the only out of state facilities my insurance would cover; it was a dismal, lock-down ward where I had nothing but time, and nowhere to run. I was filled with despair, hopelessness and fear and could no longer convince myself that I was in control. It was there that I was, once again, forced to confront my disease.

My job and my home were gone, but I still had several months of unemployment left in Virginia. But where was I going to go? I knew by then that I couldn't trust myself to be on my own and I'd worn out my welcome everywhere else. My mother – truly one of God's messengers – told me she found out about a place called Oxford House that seemed to have what I was looking for.

I contacted Oxford House – Chesapeake, was able to schedule an interview shortly after my discharge and moved in in early January 2004. My initial plan was to stay about 90 days. I got involved with Oxford almost immediately and was elected as the State Association's Public Relations Chairman after just 75 days. I put out Oxford's first state newsletter in Virginia, began promoting Oxford to various referring agencies and even pursued some grants. I was attending meetings every day per the house's "90 in 90" policy. I was elected as president of the house and became active on the chapter level. I reestablished contact with my 14 year old son and began making amends to

my family. In retrospect, I was trying to set a Guinness record in getting back everything I had lost. The problem with all of this frantic activity is that I failed to really “work” the program. I didn’t get a sponsor, didn’t work the steps and my meeting attendance fell off sharply. One day, I was driving around in a bad area I knew well and, almost on autopilot, drove to the house of one of my old dealers. In less than a week I was evicted, wondering what the hell had happened.

However, my previous sobriety and my time with Oxford convinced me that I could make it work, provided I made a commitment to *take action* in my program. I was staying with friends when I got a call from Paul Stevens, Oxford Houses of Virginia’s State Coordinator. Paul and I had developed a good relationship while I was at Oxford, and thankfully he still believed in me and valued what I could offer Oxford. He asked if I would help him by moving into Oxford’s first house in Williamsburg. This was not a hard decision; I had no money, soon would have no place to stay and my family would only assist me if I returned to Oxford. I moved in on July 29, 2005 and have been clean and sober since.

This time I got a sponsor, a home group and began working the steps. I also took things more slowly, relying on my renewed faith in a Higher Power that, if I did the footwork, everything would fall into place. Eventually, the Williamsburg house stabilized, although we had some anxious moments along the way. Towards the end of my first year, I was elected as Housing Service Chairman for Chapter 7. The very next day embezzlement was discovered, a theft so significant it threatened the survival of 2 houses. Beyond the financial challenges, there was an overall atmosphere of apathy and lack of direction within the chapter. Most of the houses were in disarray relative to functioning according to the Oxford system of operations. Pro-activity in keeping beds filled was the exception, not the rule. There was also no leadership from the chapter level, and promotion of Oxford – with the exception of Williamsburg – was non-existent. The perception of Oxford in this region was at an all-time low. Today, the chapter enjoys the lowest vacancy rates since its inception. We normally have 1 or 2 beds open throughout the *chapter*, instead of per house. I am proud to report that I was only a small part of this turnaround. We have been blessed to have some very determined and committed individuals who continue to work hard to ensure that we maintain higher standards.

My life is good today, and I credit no small part of this to the principles of Oxford House. I have regained the trust and respect of my family, my ex-wife and many others. I am currently searching for a home that I will be moving into with my son, who still says he wants to be just like me when he grows up. I am still very involved with Oxford House, assisting Outreach in opening new houses, training and supervision of houses and on the chapter level. I am part of the Williamsburg Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous and edit their local newsletter. I also regularly share my experience, strength and hope about recovery and Oxford House in presentations to jails, probation and corrections officials, attorneys, rehabilitation facilities and other institutions.

I did not achieve all of this by myself. It was a *process*, through which I developed the capacity to be honest and the willingness to change. Living in an Oxford House, where I was immersed in recovery 24/7 was a major key, as was getting out of my own head and helping others. Resigning from my position as *General Manager of the Universe* allowed me to minimize self-seeking and develop some measure of humility. Working the Steps with a sponsor I trusted enabled me to make some real progress towards the “psychic change” I believe is necessary if we are to be successful in living life on life’s terms and practice the principles of recovery “in all our affairs.”

The biggest gift of all has nothing to do with *money, property or prestige*. I can look in the mirror today and love what I see. I no longer live in fear of the past, present or future. I am, once again, comfortable in my own skin. I have a relationship with a Higher Power – whom I call God – that has made all of this, and so much more, possible. I will always be grateful to Oxford House for its important role in helping me to continue to strive for progress in recovery and in life on a daily basis.

In closing, I need you to know that my life is far from perfect; I have problems like everyone else, and I don’t always see them as “opportunities for growth.” I also realize that, although I have come a long way, I am still new in recovery and must remain teachable, humble and willing. However, I *can* say that I am able to stay in the present – often in the moment – a great deal more than I could in the past. Every day is a new adventure, a chance to grow and learn, and – despite the challenges that come my way – I’m embracing life. I truly understand what a very wise man meant when he said: “The journey’s the thing . . . “ What a ride!

Jerry N.

I was born August 15th, 1953. I started getting high when I was fifteen years old. My Father says I was sniffing glue at thirteen. Who knows? His memory was better than mine, so it's probably true. I grew up in the late 60's and 70's. I took the drugs that were popular at that time. I never had a moral issue with getting high, only a legal one. Early on I found out that needles were the way to go. I didn't vary from that, even though, years later, to find a usable vein was one of my biggest challenges.

I could tell my story as a "drugalog" and it would be about going from drug to drug and combinations of drugs to change the way I feel. Finally, I found the one that was for me. Heroin. It put rose-colored glasses over my eyes and made the world seem like an okay place. The Twelve Step program I belong to today tells me that my drug use will take me to: "Jails, Institutions and Death." So true. By the time I was 19 (1972), I was in Texas Department of Corrections for selling and possessing drugs. It really taught me a valuable lesson: Don't sell to people you don't know. I got out when I was 21 and the drug use continued, but I managed to keep jobs and stay out of trouble.

In 1980 I started to have problems with my drug use to the point I started to try to control it. That didn't work. I tried a shrink, but he wanted as much as my weekly habit cost and I didn't want to give my money to him. Around 1984 I found the solution. I got on Methadone so at least I won't have to get dope sick. That was a real upwind wiz. I ended up with two habits instead of one. Finally, after four years I got off Methadone by shooting lots of Heroin. Kind of ironic that it's supposed to be the other way around, huh?

From 1984 to 1994, it was a bad time for me. In that time period I had been to three treatment centers. By 1990, I was going to jail a lot for boosting out of stores to support my habit. I hit bottom over and over and was taking it to the point I was becoming homeless. What I see today is that I would get out of a treatment center or jail and go right back to using. I was going right back to the environment I came from. I would manage to stay clean enough to become employable and get some money in my pocket and then go back to using. And I was losing everything in the process.

In 1994 I hit a bottom that even I could not believe. Out of jail (again), with no vehicle and no money. I was homeless. I felt that I had taken it way too far down the wire to be able to come back as I had done in the past. I felt that I had "broken" myself beyond repair. So I did what I had done in the past – find somebody or something to bail me out. What I wanted was a cushy place in a treatment center with a bed and food. What I found was a place on Ross Avenue in Dallas, Texas called the 24 Hour Club. It was for people like me, off the streets. I could live there but I had to stay clean and pay rent. If I was hungry I better find work because there you had to stand on your own. I had nothing or anybody left to use. For the first time I was solely responsible for my actions. I would like to tell you that I wound up there and stayed clean, but I can't. I found a job and as soon as I had money I used. But man, the guilt was killing me. I was using knowing that it was killing me and I could not stop.

I managed to stay clean for a week or two (I had no money or a job) when I heard about Oxford House. I had found a job as a security guard (kind of like putting the fox in the hen house) so I went and interviewed at the Richardson House and was accepted. For the first time I was in an environment that was safe. There was no drug use. If we used drugs (alcohol is a drug) or used jailhouse methods to resolve conflicts we were boosted. I started to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings. We talked recovery in the house and encouraged each other in our recovery.

I saw that recovery (not just staying clean) was a good thing and that I wanted it. I stayed in Richardson House for two years that were the most important in my life. I learned to deal with people in an effective manner and was able to take what I learned to my N.A. Home Group and become an effective Trusted Servant there and also to society at large. I am still close with people I met in Oxford that are staying clean. On July 4, 2007 I celebrated 13 years of recovery. It might have happened without Oxford, but in my heart I don't know for sure. I want to stress that my recovery came from a combination of Oxford and a 12 Step Program. In my heart I don't think Oxford would have been enough. When I left Oxford my recovery would have stopped. I know you can stay in Oxford for as long as you like, but after two years I felt an obligation to turn my bed over to someone new. My ongoing recovery is through N.A.

Manuel P.

I had been a cocaine and heroin addict for the last 20 years, going in and out of jails and prisons, living in ritzy hotels and also under bridges. I was a well-known drug dealer and a troublemaker, someone to be avoided.

I was tired of going to prison, and not having a family to call my own. I didn't know a life without drugs, but I knew that things had to change or else I was going to end up dead or doing life in prison, just like most of my friends.

It was during the last time in prison that I decided to make a change. I got out and went into a treatment program, and applied myself fully to it; while in there, someone came in to give a presentation about Oxford Houses. I was very impressed and I hung on to the idea that there was a possibility that I could stay clean, and pursue a better life.

I went from treatment to an Oxford House. I found a job, and I continued going to outpatient treatment. I was also a secretary of an A.A. meeting. I stayed busy and slowly learned to be responsible, reliable, and to become a man of integrity.

I feel that I owe my new life to Oxford. Things are so much different today. I am married to a wonderful woman. I have two beautiful children, a boy and a girl, and I am graduating this year from a renowned university with a bachelor's degree. I have just bought my first house and I am finally a truly responsible member of society.

Jim R.'s Story

I'm Jim R. and I'm an alcoholic. I began drinking at sixteen and began getting into trouble at seventeen. Just minor troubles with the law, but a preview of things to come.

I was seventeen in 1971 when I joined the Army. I was proud to make the grade as a 'Special Forces, Army Ranger'. I served with the 82nd Airborne in Viet Nam. Sure, I drank some, but combat is literally, 'deadly serious'. Others were counting on me to stay alive, just as I counted on them. We always had each other's backs. War and the military was my reality. I was a Sergeant when discharged in 1974.

I came back to a different world. After the intensity of war, nothing seemed real or important. Nothing seemed real, except for the 'flashbacks' and the dreams of war. Vivid and haunting, they were nightmares of a nightmare. I know they affected my drinking. I was using alcohol in the present to combat nightmares of the past. I was drinking more and more.

I was married at 30 and we had a daughter. But, she was only a toddler when my marriage broke up and I hit the bricks. A wicked New England winter and I had no place to go, so I went down.....way down and fast. That first night it was below zero. With a guy I knew, we got some Vodka and tried to sleep on a wooden pallet on a loading dock under the Coliseum. It was below zero and we only had a sheet. I believe the frostbite began that night.

I was homeless on the streets of New Haven, panhandling part time...my only income to support my drinking, which had become fulltime. Vodka, Irish Rose, beer....anything, seven days a week. Strange. I didn't think much about misery when misery was all I had. My feet were dying, so I went to the hospital. Because of the Frostbite, two and one-half toes on my right foot were amputated. I was released in six weeks and was back on the streets that night, freezing and drinking.

I didn't like homeless shelters and rarely went. But, I sure gave the jails plenty of tries. I was in jail as much time as detoxes. I liked detoxes; they were a good break from the streets. I've been in detox over 150 times.

After four years on the street, a detox took. I went to rehab and from 1990 to 1996, I was clean and sober. I had a job and an apartment in Middletown. It was a second floor apartment and in 1996 I was on the porch arranging plants. I'm 6 foot, 220 pounds. I lost my balance, went through the screen and fell two stories, landing headfirst on the cement sidewalk.

I was in the hospital 6 weeks. They called it 'Traumatic Brain Injury' or 'TBI. Life seemed unreal, a dream. I lived in a cloud. Four years an Army Ranger, Viet Nam, combat, nightmarish missions. Four years homeless on the streets where anything can happen and usually does. And I almost kill myself arranging house plants.

I couldn't go back to work, but I did go back to the bottle. I was in and out of the program and detoxes for years. The detox people were great and we became friends. They were always talking-up rehabs and in 2005 I went to Merrit Hall as much to please them as anything. My counselor Roy had good experience with Oxford House. I didn't want to go back to New Haven, but he recommended an Oxford House there and I hadn't seen my daughter much and she lived in West Haven.

I didn't like the House right way. But, my roommate was John, a great guy who has become a close friend. I got to know others, settled into my meetings and Oxford House grew on me. It felt right. No one was trying to make a buck off my recovery. There were things about the house I thought could be improved. Because the house is run democratically, I voiced my opinions. There were people of like mind and we've made a ton of progress fixing-up and better caring for this big old house.

From the beginning, I was impressed that all bills were paid on time. Later I appreciated the prudent management, which maintains a healthy reserve, because it permitted us to repair, improve and upgrade the house.

I came for one year max and have been here 2 & ½ years. It doesn't feel at all like an institution, but like a home. There is a true sense of community and I feel free. For today, free from active alcoholism and free to live a quality life. I listen to my 60's music, follow my Bears and Broncos and feel I'm part of something unique and good. I've gotten bonuses I never envisioned. When I moved here I knew zero about computers, but housemates did and we have a fine house computer. Now, I have my own computer in my room. I'm on-line and truly enjoy it. An excellent Oxford House bonus.

And, my daughter is part of life my again. That and my sobriety are the greatest blessings of all. My daughter will soon make me a Grandfather. Her due date is September 13th, the very day that, with the grace of God, will be my second anniversary sober in AA. I am one grateful alcoholic.

Jason G.

As far back as I can remember, my life seemed different from others. I never quite felt as though I fit in with anyone, not my family, not the other kids at school, not anywhere. Something seemed to be missing. I tried everything that I could think of to make myself fit. Looking back on it today, it seems only natural that I would gravitate to using drugs. I remember that first high. I was twelve years old, smoking pot with some older kids. The feeling it gave me, I thought, was exactly what I had been missing all my life. Finally, everything fit. Then, suddenly, within just a little more than a year, it turned on me. By the time I was thirteen I was freebasing and running into the law. I was sentenced to a TC and spent two and a half years on a compound in Maine.

You'd think I'd learned my lesson, but so often with addicts that is not the case. After leaving the program at sixteen I stayed clean for six months but on my third anniversary of going away I sought that comfort in drugs that I had found those years before. Again the progression took off, now with more furor than before. Alienated, and isolated with nowhere to go, no place to call home, I called my dad and told him I had a little drug problem. He was in AA with years of sobriety and a specialist in addiction medicine. He helped me to get into rehab. It was shortly before my nineteenth birthday.

My dad told me that if I completed rehab I could come and live with him, but I guess after talking to people he realized that that might not be the best idea, so two weeks into rehab he told me I couldn't come home. Infuriated by this in my usual style when I didn't get what I wanted, I signed myself out. Being as stubborn as I was, I was determined to stay clean just to spite everyone who thought that I couldn't. My first dilemma was to find a place to live. My dad had suggested an Oxford House. I had no idea what this was, of course, but I had come to the conclusion that me making my own decisions was a sure fire way to end up using again, and so I took the suggestion and got myself an interview at two of the local houses and both accepted me. One house was more lackadaisical

than the other and people in the meetings told me I should go to the house that had more rules, so that's where I went.

I went to meetings, got a sponsor, started doing step work, got a job, paid my rent and took the suggestions that were being given to me by the people in NA and, lo and behold, something started happening that I thought was impossible for me. I began to fit. First I started fitting in with the guys that I lived with in my house because I was a member and I did what the other members did. Then, in NA, because I was a member and did what members did. Then, with my family because I was a member and did what members did. And as time progressed, I fit in with the rest of humanity because I am a member and I do what members do.

I got involved with the house that I lived in and at a chapter meeting met this girl. I followed her around from chapter meeting to chapter meeting and along the way picked up a little bit of what was going on. When the girl was gone, I continued to go to the chapter meetings and when it came time that they needed something done, somehow I was the most qualified. Being in service to the houses in the area became a way of giving back something that I had become eternally grateful for. I continued to be in service for the next few years that followed and was offered the sometimes frustrating but always rewarding, opportunity to work for Oxford House Inc and open houses in my home state of New Jersey.

I just celebrated nine years clean and this last year I came back to work for Oxford House. I have been on an incredible journey since finding recovery. Turbulent at times but so precious that words can not describe it. I came from a place where I felt so alienated from the world that I could no longer see myself as human to a full fledged member of society, human in all regards including flaws and talent. I owe a large part of that to my first Oxford House and the predecessors who made that house possible for me. My house gave me a place to call home, for the first time since I was sent away as a kid I had a place to call home, a place where I fit into the pattern of life. From there, all things became possible.

Troy M.

My name is Troy M. I was born on July 12, 1971 in a small mill town called Eden, North Carolina. My mother, Betty, worked in the local mill, and my father, Alonzo, worked in construction. I grew up with my two sisters and one brother. At an early age I always felt like I did not fit in with everyone else. I had a hard time in school and had very low self-esteem. I was compared to my brother a lot and I always felt less than him. We grew up poor and did not have things other kids had.

At the age of 12, I tried my first drug, marijuana. I remember that the drug made me feel good about myself. It made me feel I could talk to anyone at anytime. My addiction progressed throughout the years and by the age of 17 I was a full-blown addict. I graduated high school and began to work in the mills. I went to treatment in 1993 and stayed clean for a short time. My addiction progressed to the point of animalistic living. I lost the ability to live as a human being.

I went to treatment again in 2000 and found out I had a disease and I could stay clean if I treated it. I went to a halfway house for six months and from there I moved into an Oxford House, where I remained for three years. Oxford House gave me time to get my life together, taught me responsibility, and how to live with others. I opened a new house for Oxford House in 2003 and now I work for Oxford House full time. I know that if God had not blessed me to find Oxford House, I would not be here today.

Thank God for Paul and all the people who started Oxford House, Inc.!

Robert K. – I thought I knew something!

I was raised in a typical central Virginia home; we didn't have a lot but we always had enough. I had an alcoholic grandmother and three uncles, so it was a given that I would drink at some point in my life even though my mother barely touched alcohol and couldn't stand being around a drunk. My childhood was full of fun and laughter, coupled with plenty of mischief for I was a handful. I excelled in school throughout my elementary and junior high school years until the summer before my sophomore year in high school. It was that summer that I had my first toke on a joint and my life was never the same.

It started out being so much fun even though the evidence even then was that I should not, could not, do this without consequences. My grades started slipping and I lost interest in organized sports; all I wanted to do was get high and listen to music and go to house parties. I managed to get through high school barely and entered the United States Air Force. I did the same thing there that I did in high school, got high and partied for almost four years before I realized that I had not accomplished anything and my tour of duty was almost up. I reenlisted for another term with the intention of going to college and not wasting another term partying, but I continued to get high, with much of the same results.

I ended up being discharged (under Honorable Conditions) for failing a urinalysis test after having tried cocaine for the first time. This was the start of a love affair that lasted for another 20 years, fueled with a multitude of character defects, ending with me homeless and in despair for the turn my life had taken after the many successes I had achieved even under the influence. I had never seriously considered treatment in the past before that cold winter of 2003/04. It was in desperation that I sought help and with tears streaming down my face I was given a little hope in the statement that, "It's okay we will help you, if you really want it."

I spent two weeks in a shelter waiting for a bed in treatment and for the first time in years I chose not to use...until the day I walked to treatment. I used and lied about it to the nurse even though it was obvious that I was high. She said: "Are you sure you aren't high? At that moment I said, "No, I am high," and my life has never been the same. That surrender opened the door to a new way of life that is better than any I could have imagined before. I was accepted into an Oxford House after 35 days in treatment and my life really changed. I am not talking about financially, which it did, but I am talking about spiritually. I have been shown a new way of living in my Oxford family that has prepared me for life on life terms very well. All my life I have made choices which were based on desperation and I thought I was really sharp! The truth is, I now realize that I was selling myself cheap because of my addictive nature and I probably would have made quite a few different choices in my life were I not getting high.

I have resided in an Oxford House for the last 3 years, four months, and I have had ups and downs, good times and bad, but I have not found it necessary to go back to my old behavior. The support of my Oxford family has led me to understand that my Higher Power has allowed me the benefit of experiencing all that I have to prepare me for his purpose and, in the end, my best thinking got me where I am... still dependent on the Creators' guidance, mercy and grace. I thank the Creator for Oxford House, because without it I have no idea where I would be or what I would be doing and, given my history, so should you.

Jeff H.'s Story

From the mid-sixties until perhaps 1977 I was a heavy drinker and drug user. I guess you could say I was a child of my generation. I remember living in Colorado in 1971, unemployed, and stumbling upon the movie "Days of Wine and Roses" on a movie channel that played the same movie all day long for a week. I sat there all day long with a bottle of Scotch, thinking, "That's what I am" (meaning an alcoholic). I continued to drink and drug until about a year after I got married. My new wife was at wits end with me, and I had gotten to the point with alcohol where bad things were happening almost every time I drank. I was falling apart. We decided we would move away from all my friends; I would go to college on the GI bill; and I would try to live sober. It worked. I became a terrific student, went on to graduate school, got straight A's and scholarships. The sacrifice was any kind of a social life. Not only was there no time, but I knew I couldn't be around it without drinking. And while I had made the decision to quit freely, I resented my wife for pressuring me. I blamed her for the loss of my friends and closeness with other people.

For the next 20 years I was a dry drunk. Obsessive, angry, unhappy, isolated. I was also a successful business owner. I worked 7 days a week, no time off, no hobbies, no close friends, and no vacations. It began to crumble when my mother died. Her health had been deteriorating for years, and we had lived only 200 miles away, but I never took the time to visit. I was too busy and my business was too important. Right after the funeral I went back to work, no time to grieve. But I realized my life was empty. My wife and I had nothing in common, nothing to talk about. One year later I woke up to find a note on the kitchen table informing me she couldn't live like this any more and please vacate the premises by noon. I stayed sober 3 more days and then walked into the Longbranch Saloon in Overland Park, Kansas, and didn't leave for 5 years.

My business started going south, I made stupid decisions, pressure was mounting and my body stopped processing alcohol. My old friend made me deathly ill. I had a new wife (one of us), and I had the bright idea of picking up crack cocaine. There is not enough money on earth to support a crack cocaine habit. We eventually cold my business, smoked up all the money, and would up living on the streets of Kansas City and Tulsa for 2 years. No one knew where we were. In September 2003 we were rescued by the police in Tulsa. I went to treatment and my wife went to jail.

At treatment I had wonderful counselors, but I got sober on the front porch of the treatment center. That was where all the patients got together, told our stories, and smoked cigarettes. That was where, for the first time since I quit drinking in the 70's, that I wasn't alone anymore. And I realized I wasn't the only one who thought the way I did. I had a tribe. Funny looking group, but what the heck. My counselor at treatment told me if I wanted to stay sober and have any shot at a new life with my wife (whom I loved dearly), we had to separate for a year. Each of us had to work on ourselves separately. If you put the two of us together, we would work on each other until we killed each other. We were so tired and desperate we listened.

She got out of jail and stayed with family up in Kansas. I interviewed at an Oxford House in Tulsa and was accepted and moved there on October 5, 2003. After the shock wore off, I realized I really liked it. All I had done was take the front porch of the treatment center and move it to the front room of the Oxford House. I went to AA meetings every day, aftercare group, did presentations for the Tulsa chapter and worked. The same group of us in the house went through a full year together. Even though I missed my wife, I loved it. After a year apart, I moved up to Kansas City, reunited with my wife and we began our new life. I got a job, we started getting back on our feet financially, and most important, we had the kind of relationship I had always dreamed of.

Then, just 2 months shy of 2 years sober, I woke up one morning and my wife didn't. I was devastated, the walls were closing in, and I knew I would eventually relapse. So the morning after the funeral, I put whatever I could put in my car, gave away everything else, and moved back to an Oxford House in Tulsa. I stayed sober one day at a time. I had some money saved and decided to do service work for full time as long as it lasted. Two years later, the Outreach job in Oklahoma opened up and I took it.

I believe in Oxford House. It gives people a chance to learn how to get along with other people, resolve conflicts, witness behaviors preceding relapse, and learn to deal with life's problems without picking up a drink or a drug. I don't believe addiction is the primary disease, but rests upon the primary disease, which is isolation. The greatest gift of Oxford House is new friendships in sobriety.

Mark J.'s Story

"...Eeyeeew!" said I at 8 when booze first passed my lips. At twice that age, it wasn't so yucky. Thrice that age I was a moderate social drinker, earning my merit badges in drunken debauchery. Gone were my childhood ambitions of becoming a Catholic priest. My addiction could have been charted by a smooth-curved line, bending ever so quickly toward a dismal destiny. A functioning drunk by 30, my dreams of becoming a rock star had all but drowned in a sea of whiskey and vodka. Graduating college with honors only opened doors to jobs I couldn't keep, since alcohol had been promoted to the top of my priority list. Once again, dreams and aspirations had been swept into the proverbial gutter as I laid with my liquid lover, who raped me on a daily basis.

At 43, desperate to save their dying son, my parents hired a lawyer who convinced a judge to have me court ordered to a 30-day treatment program. Three cops telling me that they were taking me someplace to "get help" only begged the question, "And if I don't want to go?" Their response was, "Then we'll take you to jail." Not a difficult decision to make, but it marked my point of surrender. "OK, let's go get help," I replied. Lame as it may seem, since the choice was obvious, surrendered had I. Knowing that life as I knew it was over, that everything was going to be different, that something new was about to begin, surrendered had I.

The miracles that followed are too numerous to record. I do remember the long ride in the back of the cop car to the treatment center, no hand-cuffs or shackles; the look of despair on my mother's face as I spewed my resentment toward her for doing this to me; the professional idiots going on with some nonsense about a Higher Power; the fear of the unknown; the sense of abandonment; the stench of failure and incompetence. Yet somewhere within me there

had been birthed a tiny glimmer of hope. In the handful of days to follow came moments of clarity, my spiritual awakening, seeping in like the river's ripple.

On day 29 of my 30-day treatment program, in her search for half-way houses, my mother called a number, and was given another, and the person with whom she spoke suggested she look in the phone book, where she found Oxford House Windsor – the only Oxford House in New Orleans that had been mistakenly listed in the White Pages that year. After a lengthy telephone interview, I was accepted, sight-unseen – a miraculous cohesion of fate and faith. I was immediately drawn to the Oxford House concept. The blend of simplicity and absurdity seemed so fascinating, and radically ingenious. Somehow I knew that I was to embrace it, and make it a fundamental element of my recovery.

Oxford House has certainly fulfilled its objective in helping me learn not only to stop drinking, but more importantly how to *stay* stopped. It gave me the time to create a solid foundation in recovery at a pace that best suited my particular level of addiction to my particular drug of choice – alcohol. It has empowered a very powerless individual and set the stage for countless adventures in spiritual exploration. By serving my House, our Chapter, and other addicts and alcoholics, I've been guided to replace self-indulgence with altruistic philanthropy. The strength and support received from my fellow members, who have suffered as I have, is a treasure of unspeakable value. Together we embrace our successes, learn from our shortcomings, and guide each other toward a future that now has meaning, and purpose. We teach each other to adhere to virtuous principles, while reaping the intangible rewards that come from selflessness and anonymity.

While I will never be able to control my alcoholism, through Oxford House I have learned how to live my life in such a way that today my alcoholism does not control me. My dismal days of suffering, sloth and sleep are over. Limited only by my pitifully tiny human brain, I've managed to acquire a humble understanding of the non-objective powers of life and love, wisdom and growth, as they weave the intricate tapestry of our existence. All these things and more I have learned through my service in and the workings of Oxford House. So work I must now, for I have forever to sleep.

Blake B.'s Story

My name is Blake and I am a grateful recovering drug-addicted alcoholic. My addiction started in my early teens as recreation on weekends with my high school buds. There was nothing like driving around back roads with a case of beer until we threw up and laughed our heads off. Clandestine keggers in the woods were always a big hit and there was the sport of not getting caught by parents or other authority figures. It was always good fun and I was sure I would continue to have alcohol as a social outlet for eternity.

I went into the Navy right out of high school at the age of 17. It was not a very popular occupation at the time because there was this thing going on in Viet Nam. Drinking was almost a requirement because it was cheap and most likely if you wore a uniform and could serve your country, you could drink. It was during this period that I married, made babies, and discovered drugs. It was amazing how rampant drug use was at the time and I fell right into it, but I was only using "soft drugs", not that hardcore needle pushing stuff. Pot, LSD, and a craving to grow my hair ruled my life. I actually gave up alcohol and fed my addiction with the drugs. My addictive personality caused me to try just about everything. Somehow I managed to finish my obligation to my country without getting in trouble, but my marriage had suffered greatly and we separated – not because of anything I had done or said, of course. What a relief to be out of the service, 21 years old and no responsibilities.

I came home to the Northwest and helped out on the family farm for summer harvest. Things on the farm hadn't changed much and, during harvest, drinking beer was almost required. We would start work at 'dark-thirty' in the morning and go non-stop until we finished. The first thing we would do in the morning was roar by the house in our freshly serviced machines, slam on the brakes, and a cooler with a half rack of beer and some lunch was tossed into the cab. This was just the warm up. The last sandwich was washed down by the last beer by noon and the cooler would need to be refilled. Day in and day out this was the routine and of course when we came in for the night and were waiting for supper, it was cocktail time. And I could always step out to smoke a joint to get my head straight.

I began to miss my children horribly and needed a break from the booze so I hitchhiked to San Diego made amends and move them to the Northwest. We were going to get back to the land, raise our family and let the rest of the

world go by. That worked fine for a while and we even made a baby sister to join our two boys. I was complete, so I thought. There had been too much damage done in the first separation and the old resentments came back. I spent more and more time numbing my pain in alcohol and drugs. Then came the topper. After a failed suicide attempt with pills, I woke up in the hospital looking into the eyes of an alcohol counselor. She convinced me that I needed some treatment and I thought, "OK, maybe this will shut that bitch wife up." I went to a 28-day program and the VA, came home and tried to get on with life. It was a wonderful vacation but after I returned I was now sober and miserable. Needless to say, that lasted for about six months and I left, or shall I say, was asked to leave.

Oh, boy, a new adventure! I was totally relieved to believe that alcohol and drugs were not the problem, it was that woman I lived with that made me insane. I was now 26 years old and decided that I wanted to go to college and live the life of freedom to do as I pleased. The GI Bill and grants allowed me to do just that and for three years I lived that fantasy with all the trimmings. I met a girl who was the ideal drinking buddy – someone to drag me into bars instead of out of them and was ready to go home with me at the drop of a hat. Somehow I managed to get through college and actually got a degree. Now it was time to get back into the real world, get a job and work on my future. I accepted a job in Houston in my field, packed up with my "buddy" and moved to Texas. After about a year I managed to drink my way out of that job and I was stuck in Texas with nothing so I warmed up my thumb and got out of there back to the Northwest.

My disease was getting progressively worse and from there on out I was unable to hold a steady job or even keep a place to live. I was now living to drink and use and drinking and using to live. After too many years of that, I woke up one morning in the back of my 1974 Dodge Dart and said "This is enough." I'm cold, I'm tired, I'm sick, I smell, I've missed my daughter's wedding and the top of that bridge I'm parked under is looking appealing. I managed to pull myself together enough to call the VA and see if I could go to treatment again. They said that there are no beds available in Spokane for 3 months, but they can get me into Walla Walla in six days. I'm ready and I want it. My car was never going to make the trip and I had burnt all the bridges with my family so how was I going to make this happen? I was 41 years old and I had one friend left on the planet so I made the call. My mother, with her unconditional love, was willing to help me one last time and drove me to treatment.

In treatment, gratitude sets in. I had regular food and took three or four showers a day just because I could. I was finally there for the right reasons. Before I could be of any good to anyone else, I needed to do something for myself. Now came the hard part. I was safe, getting healthy and knowing what I would be doing tomorrow, but what would happen when I have to leave that warm womb? I had a very caring and stern counselor who wanted to make me an experiment. She guided me through the steps to get on ADASTA and convinced me not to go home, but to go to a place called John Owens Recovery in Vancouver, Washington. I balked but finally relented. I needed to go home and wrap up a few affairs and get some clothes so she started me on Antabuse a week before I was to leave. "Don't you trust me?", I asked. "Yes," she said, "but I don't trust your addict." These words I remember and use to this day.

While going through extended treatment in John Owens, I was exposed to Oxford House. A group of people would come and give a presentation about these group homes that encourage recovery. Sure, that is just what I wanted after living with a group of people for the last 90 days. I explored all the options as to where to go. I had made friends with another patient who was of the same mind and tired of living with "strangers". We looked at housing in the area and discovered that it was not very affordable under our present circumstances. We decided that this Oxford House concept sounded good but we wanted to open our own house under their name and be able to keep a few of us together. The local chapter and houses were adamantly against it and wanted us to move into some of the existing houses. We did, however, find one understanding rebel in the group who was willing to help us. Danny contacted an existing landlord, found a house and the Lewis and Clark Oxford House was born. I moved into the house on July 4, 1993. It was still in the process of remodeling and needed furnishing. By this time, the chapter had given up fighting us about opening the house and gave us the support we needed to make it an Oxford House. We got it furnished, had books made, got instructions for operation and read the manuals. We had opened up the 12th Oxford House in the State of Washington.

My intention was to stay for 3 months until my ADASTA ran out; however that began to change as I found a job, child support found me, and I needed an affordable place to stay. I was going through a spiritual awakening and put the length of my stay in God's hands. My higher power would let me know when it was time to leave. The first year of my stay was a time I used for myself, getting used to being sober and taking care of my home. I learned all

of the house positions, attended chapter meetings, and met some wonderful people dedicated to recovery. At one chapter meeting I was told we were going to have a guest, an Outreach worker by the name of Myrna Brown. The first time I met her, I felt I had known her for years. She had a way of putting you at ease and was so personable and caring. Little did I know she would become such a good friend, mentor and my guru. I was encouraged to get more involved and proceeded to try to give back some of what was given to me. I served as chapter treasurer, vice chair, and actually campaigned to become chapter chair. I was in awe of this simple system that worked so well. God kept me in that house for over 2 years and while still chapter chair, some other alumni and I started an unofficial Oxford Alumni house. We took the 3 basic rules with us and stayed involved with the chapter.

For some time Myrna had been trying to make a go of having the Regional Organization that Paul Molloy had laid out in the beginning. Her wisdom, logic, and organizational skills came into play and the beginnings of a State Board were formed. What a privilege for me to be involved with that at the ground level. We managed to get that off the ground and, through trial and error, established some bylaws, elected officers, including alumni, and had scheduled meetings with all the chapters in the state. After some hits and misses with our State officers, we came together as a functioning group. Again Myrna came to me and told me she thought I should be State Chair, which miraculously happened. I served for two one-year terms and we managed to evolve into a strong State Association. I was proud of what was accomplished by a bunch of drunks and drug addicts.

During all of this time, I had changed jobs for the better and was being given more responsibility in my paying job. I worked some long hours at times, but I always made time for Oxford House. I was offered a position in Chicago as a supervisor in a new facility they were starting and after much contemplation decided to take it. In the three years I was in Chicago, I was very absorbed in my work, but managed to keep in touch with all my homies and make it to the World Conference every year. I would plan my vacations to come to the Washington State Campout every year. My one regret is that I didn't get involved with the Illinois houses while I was there, but they obviously are very capable of doing their own thing. Due to some economic changes and managerial decisions, the facility in Chicago closed down and I decided it was time to go back home to my beloved Northwest and family.

God went to work again and I moved into an apartment right next to Myrna Brown. I was in need of a much-needed break from working 80 hours a week and started getting involved with Oxford House again. I was elected to the State Association as Auditor and it evolved in Budget and Finance. We continued to improve the system and the number of houses in Washington increased dramatically. More Outreach positions opened up and I decided that is what I wanted to do. In the first round, someone else was selected over me so I continued to do service work at Housing Services. That is the best training ground I could have had to hone skills needed to be an Outreach Worker. I was asked by the State Association to go to Spokane and help out the chapter and houses there. I ended up moving to Spokane since I spent so much time there. What an honor and blessing that there was the confidence in my abilities to make a difference, and I could be closer to my family. We got Spokane back on track, started opening more houses, and God struck again with another opening for an Outreach position in eastern Washington. It only took 12 years, but I am now proud and honored to have been selected to be that Outreach Worker.

I pinch myself once in a while to see if it's really true that they actually pay me to do what I love to do. I have to say that it is not all joy and roses, but some of the results I see make it all worthwhile. I am in a better position to give someone the opportunity to have a chance for long-term recovery and make a difference on this planet in some small way. I have rebuilt the relationships with my children and the rest of my family, made some true friendships, and have a peace within myself that I never thought I could feel.

Thank you, everyone and everything that made this possible.

Marty W.'s Story

Lets see.... I probably have over 200 arrests totaling a criminal past spanning 16 years. I was paroled at least 20 times and usually had acquired another "case" within 30 days upon release. I only reported to my parole officer initially; I was too loaded and paranoid to go in for a second appointment, so I was always on "abscond" status. I went back with a new charge or a parole violation at LEAST 20-30 times. I can't believe the life I led.

I'm writing this crouched over my laptop keyboard late in the evening. I can't sleep as I keep trying to put my Oxford experience into tangible sentences, and it is one of the most difficult tasks I have ever found to complete.

My family kicked me out of the house when I was 17 as I had become a total deviant – drinking, partying and stealing for kicks daily, which became more than they could handle. I moved in with a drinking buddy and we immediately set off burglarizing homes at night to support our drinking and partying lifestyle. At 18, I was arrested and convicted of my first felony and sent to prison.

In prison, found a support group of other convicted felons that eagerly wanted to share their experience, strength, and hopes – not in a personally enriching sense, but in different skills that included forgery, drug dealing, auto theft, home invasions, and robbery. Being young and spirited, I vowed to become the best criminal that ever existed, as every day we would dream, plot, and scheme(my criminal friends and I), and, just beyond the guard towers, the glorious lifestyle beckoned. My calling in life was now to be an outlaw, and with the help, support, and teachings of my newfound prison "family", the world was now MY playground!

Ego-ridden and self-serving ways led not to the glamorous life, but to a life spent living in stolen cars, existing from one injection to the next, and trying to steal anything and everything to support a monstrous heroin and cocaine habit. Every time parole came, the active addiction began, and incarceration only meant time to eat and rest for the next "run" upon release.

Completely beaten and realizing the lies that the "criminal code" were, I sought treatment during my last prison sentence. Nine months of intensive treatment and a work release program brought me new hope and my first job.

Then came the question, "What Now?" My counselor suggested "Oxford House" upon release from prison, and though I really wanted "my own place," I thought I would give it a try, more out of curiosity than anything else.

I showed up for an interview in my "dress-outs" – 34 years old, with 13 felony convictions, 27 misdemeanors, absolutely no experience living life in the free world clean and sober...yet...willing and honest.

They voted me in and said, "Welcome!" For the first time in my life, I didn't drink and use drugs upon release from prison. I lived with a "family" that gave me the camaraderie, fellowship and HEALTHY team support I truly needed and had been seeking from my "prison-brothers."

Enthused beyond words with this wonderful new life I had, free of all the mayhem I had lived through and now building a sense of self-worth by being a productive member of society, I began volunteering for service with Oxford House. Giving back was my priority. For seven years I helped in every capacity possible for me, from updating the hotline, helping form new houses and chapters to sitting in on hundreds, maybe even thousands, of house meetings in troubled houses. It just seemed like the right thing to do, as I was so grateful to be free of active addiction and now enjoyed my new life!

In 2001, I was hired by Oxford House, Inc. to be an outreach worker – the dream job I hold dear to this very day. I had never expected to be paid for helping others, and/or spreading the Oxford House concept to areas that so desperately need it. It has always been, and will ALWAYS be, the Right Thing To Do.

Oxford House and Oxford Inc is the family that saved my life, and continues to do so on a daily basis. I have not been to prison again, and the insane cycle has been broken.

Paul, I don't know how to end this, so I will again say a heartfelt THANK YOU for all you've done for this organization, and THANK YOU for giving me this awesome job!

Robin B.'s Story

Hello my name is Robin Breckenridge; I'm a recovery heroin/meth addict and have been clean since 10/17/1999. I was born on 8/19/1960 the youngest of seven children. I had a pretty normal childhood, family vacations lots of love and my dad was my hero.

I began using at the age of 16 – drinking and smoking pot. I had my first of three sons, Jeremy, when I was 17 years old when I made the decision to get married to Dave my son's father. My dad would not come to my wedding. He said he would not help me make the biggest mistake of my life. I was not sure what he meant by that; I was just let down by him. I soon realized what he meant was that my life was a life of in and out of hospitals from where the

man I thought I loved had beat me so bad that I would go into shelters and I would feel better and then I would go back to him (Dave) for the abuse to start once again.

By this time I was already 3 months along with my second son Mike and finally, with the help of my family, I moved away and started a new life. I was no longer using to drugs to cover up the pain and the shame. I started the dating thing and I got pregnant with Joshua. I went on to nursing school and got a degree and I bought my first home at the age of 26. I then got married to my second husband and I started doing drugs again. This time it was heroin and meth and even cocaine. I went to work every day, some days it was very hard to do so. In 1989 I went into treatment and it was then that my life started to change.

In 1993 I found out that I had cancer and I was in and out of hospitals and my life seemed to be over. My dad passed away and my second husband died of a cocaine overdose. I started using again. My life was a mess and it was then that I met Bill. He was a man that I sold dope to and I even threatened to shoot at one time. I was a very angry person. I never thought that I would ever go to jail but I was so wrong. It was then that I began the whole downward spiral of my addiction. Over the next few years I was in and out of jail and it was Bill that was there for my sons. I spent a lot of time in jail, picked up federal gun and drug charges, and lost – my nursing licenses, my home and the rental property that I owned.

I went into another treatment center in Portland Oregon in 1999 where I started my new life in recovery. It has not always been easy and it has been a lot of hard work and a process. I finished treatment and moved into the Danmore building in down town Portland after treatment. I moved back to Salem in the summer of 2000 and was living with my sister and with Bill who was also clean. I needed more time to work on myself and I moved into the Keizer Oxford houses on 8/22/2000.

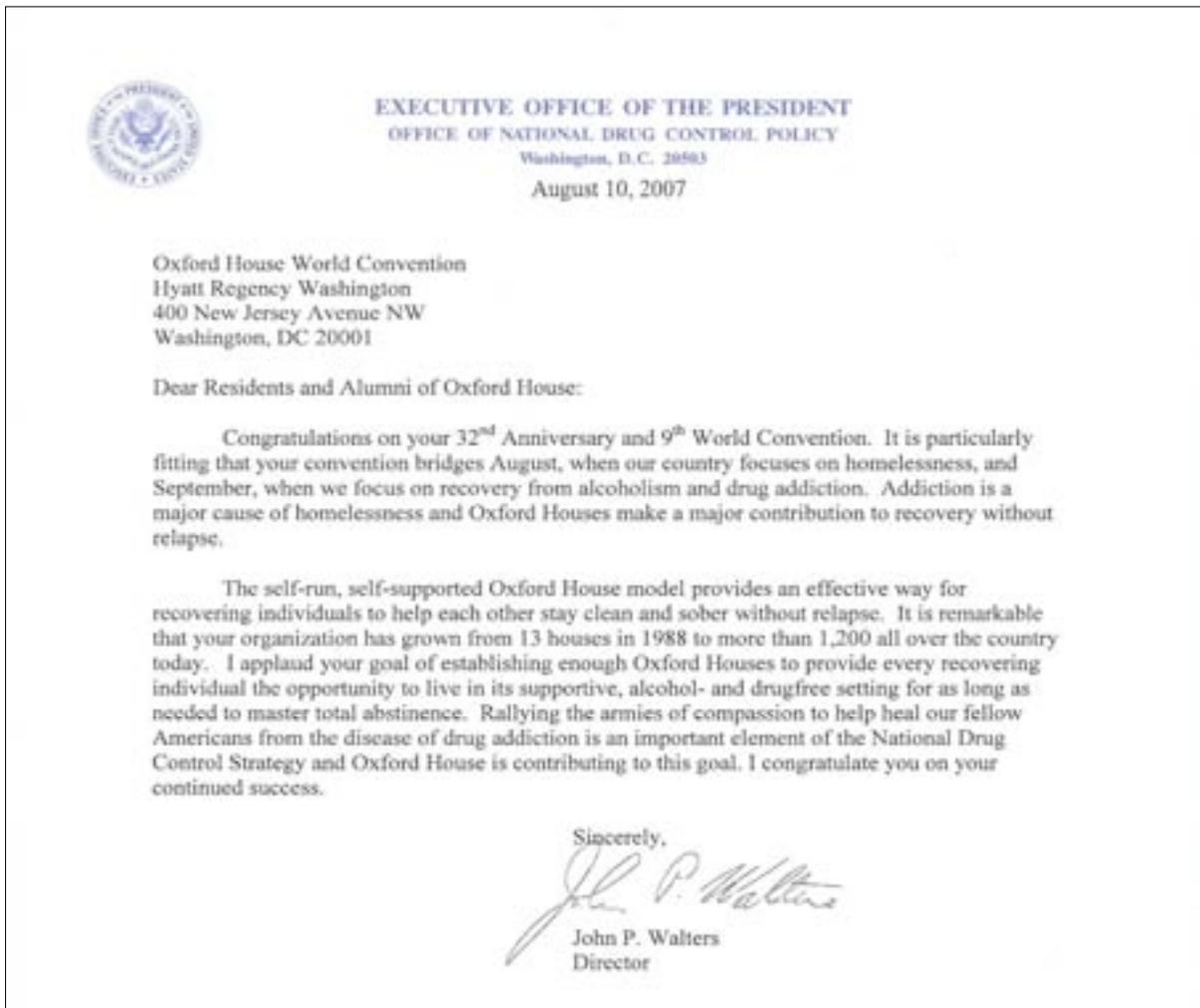
I then got a job and worked on myself and my recovery and was able to get involved doing service work. I wanted to help and I started opening houses in the Salem area for both women and men needing recovery houses, for when I moved in their was only one opening in the local chapter. I wanted to know more about this kind of houses where the members run the house and we made are own decisions as a group and that anyone that used in the houses would have to leave. So I started going to chapter meetings and State Association Meetings where I learned more about this thing called Oxford House. I learned to hold myself accountable and it was great. I had found a place to call home. My life was worth living when I got sick again and went to the hospital because of the cancer thing I was able to go thought this thing without getting loaded. I had Bill and the women that I lived with and the support of my new Oxford House family to walk with me through the process of treatments. Once again I got better.

I then married Bill, the man I wanted to shoot a few years ago. We got married (2/14/2002) at the recovery club in Salem. All three of my sons were at the wedding and were also clean, along with the new family of Oxford houses in the State. I was also the Oxford Houses of Oregon State Association chair at this time. I was going to school and was able to get a job working with the Washington County Community Corrections as a Recovery Mentor helping new people in recovery – helping them with 12 step meetings and job placement and also with drug free housing with I was good at. Oxford houses became a place that I would be able to help get folks into. After all, it worked for me. I was still on federal probation and I was working in corrections. It was a job that a person with my history could have only dreamed of; that a person like myself and with my criminal record could have ever been able to do but I was doing it.

In 2003 I was asked to apply for a job with the Oregon Recovery homes program which was a position to open recovery based houses that were peer-run and self supporting and that was Oxford houses. I knew how to do that; I had been doing this for years as a volunteer and to know I would get to do this and get paid – that was cool. I have been doing outreach with the ORH opening Oxford houses all over the State since 2003 and today I am the program manager. As of September 2007, we will have 5 Statewide Outreach Workers and the 1 Washington County Outreach Worker.

I need to say one more thing. I truly know the real meaning of love because of the man that I married in my recovery is my best friend and I'm truly blessed. My mother moved to Texas in 1999 and today she is very proud of me and thankful to the Oxford houses network of homes that gave her back her daughter.

The authors of the preceding stories hope that in some small way the stories will help communities at large to understand the value of encouraging the development of Oxford Houses in their communities. We know that alcoholics and drug addicts serious about recovery will use the opportunity Oxford House provides to become clean and sober and stay that way. With the availability of Oxford House, relapse does not have to be part of recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction.



Washington, DC 2007

Oxford House – What If?

Oxford House Resident Profile¹

Number of Women's Houses:	292	No. of Women Residents:	2,181
Number of Houses For Men:	934	No. of Men Residents:	6,967
Global Network of Houses:	1,226	Total Number of Residents:	9,148
Number of States with Houses:	41	Cities with Houses:	278
Average Cost Per Person Per Week:	\$92.50	Rent Per Group Per Month:	\$1,450
Residents Working 6/15/02:	91%	Average Monthly Earnings:	\$1,510
Percent Addicted to Alcohol only:	29%	Percent Addicted To Drugs or Drugs and Alcohol:	71%
Race --		Marital Status --	
White;	57%	Never Married	45%
Black;	31%	Separated	18%
Hispanic	4%	Divorced	32%
Other ²	8%	Married	4%
		Widowed	.1%
Prior Homelessness:	56%	Average Time Homeless:	6 Mos.
Prior Jail:	78%	Average Jail Time:	13 Mo
Average AA or NA Meetings Per Week Per Resident:	5.1	Percent Going To Counseling <u>and</u> AA or NA:	41%
Average Length of Sobriety of House Residents:	13.5 Mos.	Residents Expelled Because of Relapse:	18.7%
Average Length of Stay In An Oxford House:	11.1 Mos.	Average No. of Applicants For Each Vacant Bed:	3.5

¹ As of June 30, 2006 or April 1, 2007 based on standard OHI survey and house reports.

² Other includes Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and Hawaiian.

Notes:

*See You Next Year a
City to be Chosen*

Oxford House™

1975-2007

32 Years of Organized Self-Help To Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to Recover Without Relapse

- Sole Authority for Oxford House Charters
- Providing Technical Assistance to Establish New Oxford Houses
- Providing Technical Assistance to Keep Existing Oxford Houses on Track
- Providing Organization of Chapters to Help Houses Help Themselves
- Providing the Time, Living Environment and Support to Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to Achieve Recovery Without Relapse
- Providing the Legal, Philosophical, and Scientific Framework for a Cost-effective, Worldwide Network of Supportive Recovery Housing.

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