

The Freedom Flyer

NFF's Monthly Newsletter ~ Keeping the Community Connected

July 2015

Recovery House Radio is



John R. and Ken M.

If you tune into Recovery Radio on Monday nights at 8:30, you'll hear an hour of heartfelt conversation that is both entertaining and educational. The show is *Recovery House Living* and the mission is to spread hope to those affected by addiction. Hosts John R. and Ken M. bring to light many of the issues impacting people in recovery as well as the greater community. These two have only been on the air for seven months, but have already made a great impact on their listeners.

Their show is just one of many that broadcast as part of Recovery Radio. The other shows cover "all different topics," the guys said. "Not only recovery from addiction, but also what the parents go through, teenage problems, homelessness caused by

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Newfound Sparks of Light



Shanti Silos Spreads the Light | Photo Courtesy of Maarten Huisman

An Inspirational Boost for NFF and Great Message for All

This past spring NFF had a very special international houseguest. Before she came to visit, Shanti Silos, a Holland native and good friend of Scott Fleming, was going through a difficult time in her life.

"I was feeling so bad and I wanted a change of scenery; something different. I wrote to all of my friends all around the world that I hold dearly, and Scott was actually one of the first people to answer," Shanti said. "He was the most enthusiastic out of everybody and the most open and welcoming.

I thought, 'I want to go where there's light coming from within.'" And that's how she ended up in Bristol, PA for the month of April.

While she was here, Shanti stayed very busy, rediscovering and spreading inner joy. She made connections, worked closely with the NFF staff, did a workshop for the women in the recovery houses, and presented her inspirational film, *Sparks of Light*.

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Anyone who had the pleasure of meeting Shanti knows that she loves to talk. She also loves to listen. She is driven by a desire to get to know people; to share stories. When time allows, Shanti enjoys a long conversation about, well, everything. She asks a lot of questions, and she'll answer any that you throw her way. Shanti wants to get down to the heart of the matter, whatever the matter may be. There isn't always time for a long conversation, though, and in these situations Shanti has a unique way of sharing in a short amount of time, and this method has a unique name. This is how the interview started.

"I'm going to do the finger exercise to introduce myself," Shanti said. The finger exercise, used by Shanti as an icebreaker, asks get-to-know-you questions in a very unique way. Each finger represents a different part of oneself. If you want to know the details of how it works, talk to Shanti (She's coming for another visit this fall!) For now, here are her answers:

Q: What are you good at? **A:** I'm good at telling stories.

Q: Where do you want to go? **A:** I want to travel around the world for 3-6 months every year from this year on.

Q: What irritates you? **A:** Dishonesty. I think the truth is the only real thing, so why lie about it?

Q: What are you faithful to? **A:** Myself. That's the most important thing, so I can be faithful to other things and other people. But it starts with me

Q: When are you vulnerable? **A:** Always, it seems. I thought I was never vulnerable, but I am.

"That's me in a nutshell," she said. "There's much more to tell, but I like the finger exercise because it gives a sneak peak inside in a very short amount of time."

It's true that there is much more to tell about Shanti. She is a woman of many talents. A business owner, life coach, author, and filmmaker, Shanti is a true Renaissance woman. Her strongest talent, however, is helping other people discover and utilize natural talents. All of Shanti's work is motivated by one mission: "to inspire people to inspire themselves."

"We are all here for a reason and we better make that happen," she said. "I want to help people to find that inner treasure that we all carry within us; that present that we got. And to go in, unwrap it, and share it with the world, instead of taking it to the grave. I believe that is my life mission." It is through her company, LightWorks, that Shanti fulfills this mission.

LightWorks is an international inspirational organization currently based in Holland. The company facilitates change in two areas- work and life. Business development is cultivated through management & team development programs and personal development is stimulated through one-on-one or group life coaching.

During her visit here, Shanti utilized both aspects of her business. She offered a personal development workshop for the women of NFF's recovery houses, and she facilitated business growth within Newfound Freedom.



*Left:
Pre-Workshop
Set-up*

*Below:
Shanti and NFF
staff during the
NFF Next Level
Workshop.*



The program that Shanti is implementing for NFF's business development is one that stimulates change. It's called The Next Level project and it is designed to take individuals and businesses to the "next level"

"When I was with Scott in South Africa early in 2014, I said to him, 'I think you're ready for the next level. For you as a person and for your business.' Then when I came out here, I saw that he really was ready. And that's when he began the executive breakthrough coaching."

The coaching sparked more questions, and the questions turned into more ideas.

"He asked me if I wanted to sit in on a staff meeting," Shanti said. "And I think that's when the Next Level Started."

It was a very natural and gradual process, and it culminated in a two-hour hands-on workshop in which all the Newfound Freedom staff came together to define goals, make a plan, and move forward as a company. The workshop was a great way for everyone to see each other's visions for the future and combine efforts to achieve the desired result.

For the past three months, since Shanti left, Newfound Freedom has been implementing ideas, making changes, and working towards the next level.



Above: Shanti leading an icebreaker.
Below: Shanti playing the "game".



Anyone who meets Shanti today will see that she is full of light, a positive force, encouraging, and stoked to be alive, but she is very familiar with darkness. Like anyone, she has had her highs and lows, and it is from this place of experience that she does her work.

"I was always from the sunshine side of life. I never looked at the shadow. I didn't even know there was any dark side of life, til I had the burnout and depression," she said. "That's when it all just exploded in my face and I was covered with darkness. No light anywhere."

Shanti uses the "game", the "Enjoying Life Game", to tell her own story, and moves from square to square, explaining how she came to be where she is today; how she fought against her depression, unlocked her potential, utilized her talents, and found her inner joy.

"I share my story and I ask people to share theirs," she said. "Why? Because I believe we all have a story to tell that is worth listening to; worth sharing." The NFF girls shared their stories by standing in the square that represented their life at the moment, then in the one that represents what they want next. They took turns explaining why they chose that square to stand in, sharing how they were feeling at this time in their life and what they were hoping to have in the future. It was an emotional and inspirational session. "I had a feeling that this was a session of hope, where they thought, 'Oh, I'm not crazy', or 'I'm not that strange', and 'I can have what she has'." Shanti's workshop is a reminder that no one is alone and nothing is impossible.

In her Sparks of Light workshop- the personal development workshop attended by the women of NFF- Shanti plays a "game" that she invented based on her own experiences. It's a grid of four squares taped out on the floor, each representing a different phase of her life after the deep depression.

There are many people in the world that would benefit from Shanti's coaching. Of course, not everyone is in a position to afford services like hers. Shanti herself did a lot of her early self-work with limited resources.

"I asked myself, *What do I need?*" Shanti said. "Well, *I need to have a spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial foundation.* I looked at those four things and asked, *What can I do?*"

And here is what she did, and it's something that anyone can do. This process is a great foundation for those who are struggling to be happy and can't afford professional services.

*For emotional foundation- *Journaling. Daily gratitude (take time each day to think about what you do have). Take a break from toxic people and situations.*

*For financial foundation- *Ask around in your network about work or services needed. Put yourself out there. Find a side job. Look on the Internet. Do whatever you can to have some financial breathing room.*

*For physical foundation - *Do yoga. Go to the gym. Or just take a walk. Movement is good for you. Literally moving again. When you're tired, go outside and move and try to get in nature, because that will refill you.*

*For spiritual foundation- *Meditating everyday. (There are some guided meditations on YouTube) Read a prayer. Check in with yourself. Daily self inventory.*

In the end, she believes, you already have what you need to get to where you want to be. You have the tools. You just need to utilize them.

"Everything you want is already there. It's within you and the people around you who love you," Shanti said. "Reach out to positive, intelligent, and wise people with energy. Sometimes you think there's nobody there, but when you reach out, there's always somebody there."

Shanti's positive and optimistic outlook on life feel so natural, but it didn't come easily. She worked for her happiness. Looking back now, Shanti is able to reflect on her journey and use her experiences to spread the light.

Her final thoughts on life and happiness:

"The most happy people are people who are grateful for what they do have. So if you start being grateful for what you have, you will attract more of that. Be grateful for who you are, because you are great, and for what you have, because that's more than you think." ♦

For more information on LightWorks visit the website:

<http://www.light-works.nu/english/>

Or email: info@light-works.nu

Spotlight on Alumni: Q & A with Sarah D.



Sarah with her family.

When were you at Newfound Freedom?

2005-2006.

What house were you in?

Appletree first, and then I was one of the original members of the Jonquil Sober house.

How did you end up at NFF?

I knew Scott when he got sober. I knew he ran recovery houses so when I left the halfway house where I was, in Johnstown, I called him from the Radford Inn (ugh) pay phone and he said I should come on over to Appletree. I had ZERO dollars in my pocket.

What was your life like before NFF?

I was sober from 1995-2004, but I didn't work the program. I made a ton of meetings, was on the BOD at the 12 keys, had a great sponsor, but I simply did not have faith in God, nor did I work the 12 steps.

My relapse took me to crack cocaine. Prior to that, I was an "alcoholic only," and had never been arrested. During my relapse I lost custody of my daughter and became a felon.

How long were you at NFF?

About seven months.

How did being in the recovery house help you on your journey?

It really got me into the big book. I hated Chris Brennan at first. We had our meeting at Truman High then. I thought he was arrogant and knew NOTHING about ANYTHING. Ha. Boy was I wrong. I eventually realized he was just teaching us how to stay sober.

Tell me a little about that journey.

I loved the dynamic of the recovery house. We were the only women's house in the NFF "armada." Scott took really great care of us. He made sure we always had what we needed and was always there for us when we needed him.

The girls I lived with in Appletree were, and some still are, like my family. My dad had custody of my daughter at the time, so I had a lot of free time on my hands to make meetings, study the book and form amazing friendships. Two in particular, NFF Alumni Melissa S. and Elisa D., are still two of my closest friends on earth. With the transient nature of recovery houses in general, that is nothing short of miraculous.

Who or what influenced you the most/had the most impact on your recovery?

Strangely enough, gratitude comes in different ways. Sometimes, it's simply because you can see things differently via the spiritual experience. The greatest impact on my recovery, was the total inability of my children's father to get sober. I watched him, with sober eyes, kill himself, literally. In 2004 I got high with him. I got high with him after I left NFF. I got sober again on 9/20/2008. He died of this disease 6/13/2014. I lived with him all of those years. I watched the four horsemen of the apocalypse stampede over him.

Conversely, the love I receive from my AA "compadres" has enlightened me to what true love is- giving with no demand for reward.

I'd say those two totally different things have and continue to have influence on me, daily.

What are you doing now?

I am a mother of two children (13 years apart), I am a partner to my amazing girlfriend, I am a worker among workers at my job and a member of AA in good standing.

What are some things you took with you from the recovery house that still help you today?

Interacting with many different types of people on a daily basis consistently helps me every day. Treat others with kindness, dignity and love.

Are you still actively working your recovery, and if so, why is this important?

Yes. Not only do I NOT want to die of this disease, I want to transmit what God has bestowed on me. My job now is to help others.

What is your life like now?

My life is beyond my wildest dreams. I live my life as a free woman. I can go anywhere on earth, without fear.

What advice would you give to young girls in recovery?

Get a sponsor, ASAP. Get to work on the 12 Steps, ASAP. Get out there and help other women!

Any last thoughts?

I want to thank Scott for the foundation he gave me, though at the time I wasn't completely willing to listen or follow directions after leaving NFF. I finally did hit rock bottom, and was as willing to listen as only the dying can be. You never know when your words or actions will affect someone. I'm giving this life all I have. I'm not perfect, but I certainly try, one day at a time. ♦

HEY NFF ALUMNI! Are you interested in being featured in the Freedom Flyer?
If so, send us an email at: newsletter@newfoundfreedom.org with subject line "Spotlight"

addiction, depression. There's music and singing, lifting the spirit," Ken added. Recovery Radio is a local FM and global online station that is operated through the nonprofit volunteer-run organization City of Angels. Kevin Meara founded City of Angels after losing his son to addiction.

"My son died of a heroin overdose when he was 24," Kevin said. Soon after that, other people- family members of addicts, concerned friends, parents who also lost children to drugs- began reaching out to Kevin and his wife. They were looking for answers, for help with coping, and for ways to prevent future deaths. "So we set out to try to find out how the system works, or doesn't work," said Kevin. "[Our son] died on June 30th [of 2008] and then in March of 2009 we started City of Angels. Just to tell people how to get help. And it's grown into so much more."

City of Angels has blossomed into an amazing resource for all those who are affected by addiction. The organization offers educational programs, placement services, family support, community outreach, and many other things, including, of course, the radio station. Kevin said the thought of a Recovery Radio station came a while before it was actually up and running:

"I had a friend who came to me a while back, [with] this idea [about an internet radio station]. And I said, 'You just keep your idea, because I know there will be a time for it.' And then when we got this building, I called him up and said, 'It's time.' So they came and they put Hamilton radio in here and then they taught us how to do City of Angels radio. Then they moved out to a bigger place but now we know how to stand on our own."

The studio is in the back room of a larger space in COA's current home, the Raymond Dwier Center. Posters line the wood-paneled walls, boasting the number of radio shows that operate out of this room. It is both a casual and professional environment. There is a round table in one corner of the room, with several chairs and numerous microphones, all within arm's length of the phone, for when listeners call in. There is a couch on the other side of the room, where John, Ken, and guests hang out before the show starts. Once 8:30 hits, though, the switch is flipped, and the guys are all business. Business doesn't mean boring. Their show is quite the opposite.

"It's one of the best shows that we have going," Kevin said. "The most consistent one we have."

Charming, enthusiastic, and entertaining, these guys make their guests feel right at home and invite their audience to be a part of the story. Each week the guys invite someone different to come on air and join in the conversation. Several of NFF's residents and alumni have been on the show and shared their stories. One thing the show does is educate people about recovery, and about recovery houses specifically.

"A big part of the message is letting people know that a safe, structured environment one week out of detox might

be helpful. A lot of people don't know it exists," Ken said. "Or they hear about it, but they rule it out." Though the guys often touch on specific topics, the process itself is very organic.

"It's very much adlib and natural," Ken said. "There's no real canned questions, we're not looking for canned answers. There's no script. Things that come out of our heads that are supposed to be said at that moment. We think it's a spiritual invitation, too, when we invite someone to share their experience. It's truth."

"We feed off one another," John added. "We're natural, sitting behind the microphones."

The two of them go back and forth effortlessly, no notes, no agenda. In fact, there is only one real goal, which they better accomplish by just being honest in the moment. "We just want people to know that hope is available," Ken said. "HOPE stands for: *Helping Other People Everyday*, or, *Hold On Pain Ends*. It depends on how you want to look at hope. There are a lot of opportunities [to provide hope]. We talk to people about dialing ten digits. That's as simple as it gets for us. That's the hardest thing for an addict or an alcoholic to do, is make a phone call and ask for help. It's the toughest thing. And we just want to let people know, hey, we're here to call." And people do call.

"They call in live when we're on the show and they ask questions," John said. What they ask will vary, depending on whether the caller is a young kid needing help, a parent looking for a resource, or another member of the recovery community, or anything in between. "We've had parents call," Ken said. "We've gotten emails from overseas. Cause people listen to it. It's worldwide. It's not just something that's in this little community."

"The concept is incredible," John said. "You can sit in that little room and reach people who are struggling with addiction who wouldn't ordinarily reach out. We kind of make it safe for people to do that. You can call on the phone. We don't know who you are. And get information that could save your life. And that's why we do it."

"The message we send with that is 'addiction lives on'. It's a powerful force. So, either you get that or you don't. Hopefully you will get it, and you'll erase the chance of you being one of those statistics."

Both John and Ken are in recovery and they both know how hard it is to take that first step. They also know how much better things get once you do. Sharing their experiences, their hardships and pain, and their successes and happiness, allows people to relate. Even someone who isn't struggling with addiction or alcoholism can relate to these guys, because their message is universal. They discuss issues that affect everyone. No matter who you are or what you are dealing with, it's never too late. People mess up. People make mistakes. People choose the wrong path, sometimes. But, hope is real, help is available, and, maybe most importantly, change is possible. ♦



Logos courtesy of City of Angels

Newfound Freedom at Founder's Day by Brian K.

June 10th marked the 80th anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous. The weekend of June 12th brought the annual Founder's Day Celebration in Akron, Ohio at the University of Akron. Given that it was the 80th anniversary of the founding of AA some New Found Freedom residents, alumni, and staff were honored not only to attend but also to be in service.

On June 12th. Scott F, Jim E, Chris N, Dorothy S, Joe C (Combo), Gene H, Phil B, and I drove to Akron, ready for a fun-filled weekend, and Founder's Day didn't disappoint.

Upon arriving I felt like I was stepping onto sacred grounds. The magnitude of what had occurred there eighty years prior didn't escape my grasp. Once we checked into our hotel rooms and registered for the event we went to our first speaker meeting. It was awe inspiring to see thousands of alcoholics packed into an auditorium to hear a strong message of experience, strength, and hope.

Saturday brought our commitment in registration. They told us they have a tradition of welcoming those who are attending for their first time by shouting "FIRSTIMER" and giving them a round of applause but we immediately knew we could step that up a notch. From 10 AM until 2 PM we screamed for almost every person we registered. Some were a little taken aback by the "crazy people from Philly" but most enjoyed our enthusiasm, and we loved spreading the joy. Combo said it was "AWESOME". He especially enjoyed the commitment, and it showed by his lack of usual vocal prowess by 10 PM. (No one complained about his not being able to talk, though.)

After our registration commitment some of us were exhausted and went back to the hotel to take the always-important power nap. (Others heard a fantastic message from Sharron C. from L.A. She spoke in front of another packed auditorium and gave a shout out to the nuts from Philly.)

After our re-charge, we visited Dr. Bob's gravesite. It was crazy to me that I was standing at the grave of one of the men who has inadvertently had such a profound impact on my life for the past fifteen months. It was a truly moving experience for me, as well as for Phil, Combo, and Dot, who said it was her favorite part of Akron.

We then returned to the University for the main speaker meeting which was held in the stadium. Almost ten thousand people waited somewhat patiently for the meeting to begin, but due to a thunderstorm we all had to evacuate the stands. Soon the clouds parted and a beautiful rainbow encompassed the skies over the stadium. Phil said, "I didn't expect to find God in a rainbow, so my expectations for the trip were exceeded."

We all shuffled back into the stadium. The Founder's Day Committee began the meeting with a sobriety countdown, asking everyone with one year or less to stand, then counting down until they got to twenty-four hours. Looking around I could only see a few standing but each one of them had tears pouring down their faces. Those with twenty-four hours all got a Big Book, and as they walked down to accept I felt the emotion building. Then they asked everyone else to stand and counted up from two years. The last man sat down with 58 years of continuous sobriety, which left everyone in the building cheering. Finally the main speaker, Tina A. from California, took the podium and delivered an amazing message. We finished with close to ten thousand people holding hands and reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Sunday morning brought us back to the auditorium to hear another great message from Charlie P. from Dallas, Texas. Although I enjoyed the message I had to Boo him when he revealed he was a Dallas Cowboys fan. (I did make amends for it after the meeting.)

While winding down our weekend and saying our goodbyes, we spoke to the committeeman who is in charge of handing out the service commitments. He said that he loved our excitement and enthusiasm; that we brought so much of it, that next year he wants us to be tour guides on the busses that take people to the historic sites around Akron. (So, if you're interested brush up on your history now.)

Before heading out of town, we stopped at Dr. Bob's house, which was one of my favorite parts of the weekend. Being a bit of a history buff, I was impressed at the condition the house was in. The archives committee in Akron has done an exceptional job with the restoration and upkeep.

Our ride back to Bristol was uneventful compared to the celebration, but I was able to use the time in the car wisely. I sat and reflected on an overall amazing, historic weekend.

"If you allow yourself to serve something greater than you, you will loose yourself in it and find joy, and that's what I found in Alcoholics Anonymous." -Scott F. ♦



University of Akron

Brennan's Corner

Be As

You Wish

to Seem

-Socrates

July 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 AA Step Mtg 7pm @ First Pres. NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's	30 Men's Big Book Study 7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil	1 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman	2 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	3 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Have a great weekend!!! ☺	4 Happy Independence Day!
5	6 AA Step Mtg 7pm @ First Pres. NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's	7 Men's Big Book Study 7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil	8 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman	9 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	10 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Have a great weekend!!! ☺	11
12 9am- Freedom Fighters vs. STR	13 AA Step Mtg 7pm @ First Pres. NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's	14 Men's Big Book Study 7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil	15 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman	16 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	17 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Have a great weekend!!! ☺	18
19 9am- Freedom Fighters vs. Tommy D's	20 AA Step Mtg 7pm @ First Pres. NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's	21 Men's Big Book Study 7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil	22 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman	23 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	24 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Have a great weekend!!! ☺	25
26 9am- Freedom Fighters vs. Emilie House	27 NFF Celebration Mtg 7pm @ First Presbyterian	28 Men's Big Book Study 7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil	29 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman	30 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	31 2:00 Men's Group Mtg 3:30 Women's Group mtg Have a great weekend!!! ☺	1

Freedom Flyer Writing Contest! Open to Everyone!
 We will be accepting submissions on the theme of *CHANGE*.
Pieces can be in any format (personal essay, poem, informational article, cartoon, etc.)
 Winners will be selected anonymously by NFF staff. Pieces will appear in the October Freedom Flyer.

Email submission to:
newsletter@newfoundfreedom.com OR mail to:
 NFF Newsletter,
 2817 Bowman Ave, Bristol, PA 19007
Include your name & how you heard about us.
Submissions due by August 15th

Upcoming Events!
 *4th annual Liberty Bell Roundup- August 21-23
Register Now!
<http://libertybellroundup.com>
 *NFF Labor Day Picnic- September TBA
 *PROACT Recovery Walk- September 12



NFF Celebration Meeting
Last Monday of Every Month!!!

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