

The Freedom Flyer

Keeping us Connected to Each Other and the Community ♦ Jan/Feb 2015

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LIBERATION

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Stay up-to-date with meetings, announcements, and

In Loving Memory:

We would like to dedicate this, our first issue, to those we lost this past year.

You live on in our hearts.

2014: Year in Review



NFF at the 2014 Recovery Walk at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia

This past year was an eventful one for Newfound Freedom. Trips were taken, photos were posted, and lives were changed. Some memories seem to stick out more than others; some moments feel like they happened yesterday. As we begin to turn our focus to the year ahead, let's take a minute to look back and reflect on 2014.

The spring brought the traditional Bowman bonfires, which provided a warm and cozy setting for numerous meetings. Residents were invited to gather and enjoy refreshments as they heard speakers tell their stories, standing against the backdrop of the evening sky.

The summer fun began with the

annual Memorial Day picnic, whereat the tarp was torn from the pool and cannon balls were fired into the water. Soon after this "official kickoff" came the camping trips, softball games, cookouts and, of course, a lot of swimming. The summer also saw the addition of the newest property- the NFF shore house!

The NFF guys took several trips down to the beach, filling the new house with positive energy and laughter. They had a blast soaking up sun, tearing up waves, and sipping Perrier in Wildwood. One weekend in particular stands out in NFF General Manager Jim Eastwood's mind: The guys from NA came down and met up with the AA crew.

(Continued next page)

“They all joined together and had a great time,” Jim said. “It was one of my favorite moments of the year.” (This summer, the NFF girls will get to burry their toes in the sand when they take over the shore house.)

The beach was definitely a highlight of the summer, but plenty of things were happening on the home front, too. June brought Livingrin’s Ride for Recovery, an annual fundraising event in which we participate each year. Revved up about the ride, the NFF girls took on the task of selling raffle tickets, raising money for uninsured recovering addicts.

At the end of June, everyone headed to the City of Brotherly Love for the third annual Liberty Bell Roundup, which brought in speakers and attendees from around the world. Held at the beautiful Clarion Hotel in Philadelphia, the 2014 Roundup was a huge success, with 600 people gathering throughout the weekend.

Countless other events, picnics, and pool parties, carried us through the summer season, which concluded with the annual Labor Day party.

Every fall, Newfound Freedom volunteers gather at Penn’s Landing for the PRO-ACT Recovery Walk. On Sept. 20, the NFF team joined 20,000 people and walked to raise recovery awareness, raise funds for programs, and honor those who have been lost to addiction.

In December NFF guys visited the home of several disabled veterans. They spent the day hanging out and swapping stories while helping to clean and organize the place.

“It’s one of the best things we’ve done,” said John Korek, NFF staff member, who proudly shows photos of the decorations they put up. It was a rewarding experience for all involved.

Before we knew it, the Holidays

*The NFF
guys
helping the
disabled
veterans in
December.*



were upon us. Always the best and busiest time for Newfound Freedom, the holiday season provides many opportunities for coming together, giving back and celebrating all that we have. The Tree of Hope is a giant Christmas tree that resides in the Bucks County courthouse. This fundraiser, organized by PRO-ACT, raises money for addiction awareness. The tree is decorated with ornaments, hung by those whose lives have been affected by addiction- families who have lost someone to the disease, those who have recovered from addiction, and those who are still out there struggling.

“Last year we took the family of a girl who had passed away,” said Sue Davids, Women’s General Manager, who remembers the family hanging their ornament. “It meant a lot to them, and to us. It was very moving.”

NFF also adopted two families this year, using donations collected throughout the year. The money totaled over a thousand dollars, and allowed us to give these families a very magical holiday.

The year ended with everyone’s favorite event- the Holiday Party. Bringing in current residents, alumni, family and friends, this is a great way to come together and celebrate the year. Santa stopped by for a visit, giving all the kids great presents and all the kids-at-heart great photo ops. Houses went



*The girls selling raffle tickets for
Ride to Recovery..*

head-to-head on the Jeopardy battlefield, trying to win the title of Champions. The Appletree ladies came out the victors, winning themselves a pizza party.

Jeopardy was also the subject of a house skit last year. Staff impressions are a tradition in the house skits, but Jonquil really shone with their impersonations of Scott, Sue and Chris as contestants of the game hosted by Joe. The highlight of the show, this group’s performance had everyone rolling with laughter.

The year definitely had some amazing moments, from the seashore to the celebrations, but there was sorrow, too. We will never forget those who lost their lives in the battle against addiction. Our hearts and prayers forever go out to their families and friends.

2014 was filled with laughter, love, and loss. Through the ups and downs, we kept going, kept learning, and kept growing. Here’s to a new year filled with new opportunities and limitless possibility!

2015, here we come. ♦

A Mother's Mission:

*Chris Flood Keeps Her Son's Memory Alive
By Helping Others*

In 2012 Chris Flood picked up the phone and reached out to the last place her son, Andrew, had planned to live. Earlier that year Andrew had overdosed on heroin. Chris had been caught in a cloud of grief, trying to make sense of her son's death and figure out a way to keep his memory alive. She decided the best way to move forward was to give back.

"My daughter sold pens in her brother's memory to raise money for someone that could use help [with their treatment] out in PA," Chris said. "I asked around to different people who I had known through Andrew's recovery, and I was denied. That's when I looked into Newfound Freedom, because that was the last place Andrew told me he was going to." It was then that a special relationship was formed between Chris and Newfound Freedom.

Over the past two and a half years, Chris has made a point of reaching out and gifting what she can to the guys at NFF. She has donated money so the guys could get pizza on the weekend, bought boxes of girls scout cookies (thin mints, Andrew's favorite), and put together welcome packages for new guys, which included a toothbrush, toothpaste, and a picture of Andrew.

"I know some of them walk in with just the clothes on their back," she said. "I just tried to think about the things I brought up to Andrew when he was in recovery."

Andrew's journey through recovery began in August 2010, when he made his first phone call for help. He had been diagnosed as bipolar earlier in his life, and Chris said that "he would self-medicate with whatever he could get his hands on." But soon the pills didn't work and the prescriptions ran out, and he turned to something stronger. And, she said, "once he got to heroin it was just out of his league and he couldn't stop."

From August 2010 until January 2012 Andrew battled his addiction, going back and forth from treatment center to recovery program to sober living homes. It wasn't something that Chris really understood, but she supported and loved him throughout all of the ups and downs.

"This was the first thing I ever knew about heroin. I would call hospitals because there were times he would wanna stop, and they would say, 'Give him an Advil, it's gonna be like he has the flu.' Well, it was more

than that, and obviously he couldn't take the withdraw so he started using again."

In early January 2012, after two and half years of fighting, Andrew found himself back in treatment. He was released on Jan 29, after his insurance ran out, and headed to New Jersey. It was the last conversation Chris had with her son.

"He stopped here, picked up his paycheck, and told me that he was going to look at the Blue Ridge house with Newfound Freedom. And from here to there he got more heroin and overdosed."

After Andrew's death, Chris struggled with how to cope. Feeling guilt, anger, confusion, and numerous other emotions, she looked for someone to talk to, but there weren't many people around.

"I lost a lot of people that I thought were my friends when my son passed," she said. In Chris' experience, people have been quick to judge- quick to judge her son for making "bad choices"; quick to judge her as being a "bad parent".

"I dedicated my life to being a mom," said Chris. "People think that they do this to themselves purposefully, and I don't

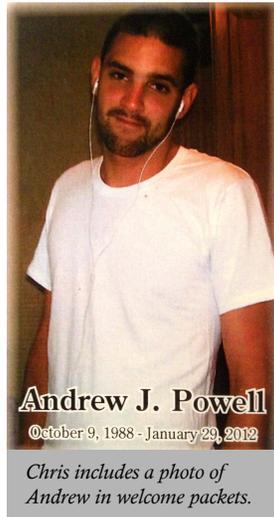
believe that, and that is a message that needs to be sent to the world. These are happy good kids," she said about those who struggle with addiction. About Andrew, she added, "He's not a junkie. He wasn't a scum bag drug addict that I hear people refer to people who use heroin...he was somebody's child. He was a friend, a brother. That's what all of these people are. They all come from somewhere. They're all good people."

Chris has made it her mission to help these good people; these guys that remind her of her own son. Maybe all they need is someone to understand; to reach out. She has also come to realize that by helping them, she is helping herself.

"I really feel that I started to heal when I reached out to [NFF]," she said. "That's where my focus needs to be right now. I can't worry about ignorant people."

Though three-year anniversary of Andrew's death having just passed, to Chris it feels like just yesterday. She will never stop hurting; never stop asking questions. There are a lot of things she has not yet begun to process. There is one thing she is sure of it's that his memory is still very much alive. Through him, Chris is sending a very important message to those who are still out there, fighting to win this uphill battle.

"I can't blame him for what happened, nor am I shameful," she said. "And just knowing that maybe I could help someone else feel that way...because they shouldn't feel ashamed for what happened. They just can't give up. They just can't." ♦



Andrew J. Powell
October 9, 1988 - January 29, 2012

Chris includes a photo of Andrew in welcome packets.

Spotlight on Alumni: Anthony N. and Alfred D.



NFF Champions Alfred and Anthony

The game was three years ago against another recovery program. They don't remember why exactly it was planned, or when exactly they played, or what the exact score was. What they do remember is how good it felt to win with dignity.

They showed up, a motley crew of recovery house residents, with their fearless leader, Scott F. They hadn't practiced, really. Some of them didn't find out they were playing until the night before.

"We just threw a team together", said Anthony. "The first time we all met was an hour before the game."

"The other team had Jerseys", said Anthony, who played receiver for the NFF team.

"We had white tees on!" said Alfred, one of NFF's defense players. Regardless of differences in the uniforms, the guys on the field were all going through

the same things; all recovering from the same disease-addiction. They shared a mutual love of sports, and were all there to play some football.

"It was sloppy at first", Alfred said, remembering that both teams had a rough start. The players were all struggling to find their rhythm. "There were so many scruffles in the beginning." But at some point, Anthony said, the NFF guys started "handling the game." That's when the scoreboard began to change.

"When we started playing together, [the other team] kind of fell apart. We were just beating them." That's when the scruffles got worse. The other team wasn't going to give up without a fight. Anthony remembers watching the confrontation. Alfred, who was on the line, got a first-hand look.

"[They were] throwing punches and trying to start fights." Alfred said with a shrug, "I only had 90 days. I'm surprised I didn't stoop down to their level, honestly." But he didn't, and neither did any of his teammates.

"Don't get me wrong," said Anthony. "We weren't perfect. But we weren't trying to start fights."

"They got a couple of sucker punches in," Alfred said. Three months before this game, he would have been throwing punches back. "But I hung out with Scott a lot back then, and that probably kept me in check a little bit. Seeing how he lives his life. How he presents himself."

"Scott got punched and took it like a spiritual guru," Anthony said. "He didn't do anything."

The other team was fighting against the scoreboard, trying to come back, but as the game went on, it was clear that NFF was going to win. Then, at some point, the scruffles stopped. The fists unclenched. The attitudes transformed. Alfred remembered when it happened:

"The other team... they changed during the game. There were definitely a couple of dudes on the line when I was on defense that went from being aggressive to trying to be friendly..."

As rough as the other team played, the guys were able to cut them some slack. They understand how hard it is to be newly clean and sober; how much anger still resides, and hard it is to break free of old habits. You have to re-learn everything- how to interact with others; how to deal with emotions; how to have fun.

"To me that was the start. I remember after the game, I was like, 'That was fun. I get it. I get how you can have fun. Legit sober fun.' After years and years of thinking I was going out and having 'fun', putting chemicals [in my body]... It was my first glimpse of living life the way it's supposed to be done."

Anthony and Alfred have remained good friends, and continue to live life the way it's supposed to be done. Listening to them go back and forth, playing off of each other, laughing, remembering moments from the game, one realizes this story is about much more than football. It's about the realizations you have when you decide to think differently. It's about the change that happens when you decide to do the work. Anthony reflected on his own personal experience:

"I don't have to stop and think about right and wrong anymore. It's second nature now. [But it takes work to] change your thought process. For me, going through NFF, having to report to someone and be accountable for my actions, and going through the steps... I accredit it to the steps. The house isn't there to get you sober.

The house is a tool- to help you and surround you with like minded individuals all trying to do the same thing.”

“People doing the right thing, it rubs off on you,” Alfred adds. Anthony continues:

“Exactly, and that connection, that network you have through NFF, seeing guys come back and visit, it helps. If it wasn’t for someone taking me under their wing I wouldn’t be in the position to take anyone under my wing.”

This football game was, as Anthony said, the start. For these guys it was one of many fun afternoons they would have as part of their new life.

When it was over, the teams shook hands and said, the traditional “Good game,” that so many teams have said to each other so many times before. But this one meant more. This one proved that all the work was paying off. ♦

Quote of the Month

There seems to be a mystic Power that is able to transform your life so thoroughly, so radically, so completely, that when the process is completed your own friends would hardly recognize you, and, in fact, you would scarcely be able to recognize yourself.

It can lift you out of an invalid's bed, and free you to go out into the world to shape your life as you will. It can throw open the prison door and liberate the captive.

This Power can do for you that which is probably the most important thing of all in your present stage: it can find your true place in life for you, and put you into it.

This Power is really no less than the primal Power of Being, and to discover that Power is the divine birthright of all men.

-Emmett Foc, “Around the Year”, January 1st

**A Very Big THANK YOU!!! to our
2014 donors:**

ShopRite* *Dietz and Watson

Ken Klaus* *Chris Flood* *Fran Young

Your generosity helps us do what we do.

What's Going On?

Jan/Feb 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					30	31
1	2 Brennan Mtg 7pm @ First Presbyterian	3	4 Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7pm @ Bowman	5 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	6	7
8	9 Brennan Mtg 7pm @ First Presbyterian	10	11 Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7pm @ Bowman	12 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	13	14
15	16 Brennan Mtg 7pm @ First Presbyterian	17	18 Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7pm @ Bowman	19 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	20	21
22	23 Celebratory Mtg 7pm @ First Presbyterian	24	25 Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7pm @ Bowman	26 Recovery Rap Mtg 9:30am @ Blue Ridge	27	28

Upcoming Events!

- Get fired up for Bonfire meetings starting up in spring!
- Cape- May Round up in May- Tickets available now!
- Annual Memorial Day Party will kick off the summer!
- 3rd Annual Liberty Bell Round Up in August- Tickets available now!

Contact Us:

855-587-2329 ♦ www.newfoundfreedom.com

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