

RISE & RECONNECT

The Miracle of Recovery in Community

The Official Newsletter of YSS Recovery Homes



A Place To Call Home

Youth Services System Inc.'s Recovery Homes have their genesis in the desire of Shelley and the late Bill Rohrig to honor the memory of their son Mark who had struggled with depression and died after a fall. Lazarus House and Mark's House serve men, and Mary & Martha House serves women who are working toward getting their lives back on track after treatment for substance use disorder. This is a residential, gender-specific program. It is a place to call home, with as many of the comforts of home as possible within our means and budget.



'Saved by Love'

I recently had occasion to visit St. Al's church in Center Wheeling to attend the Funeral Mass of Mike Christman. Mike and his wife, Helena, had remained close to our recovery communities for many years in loving support of our mission. As I sat there in prayer and in support of Mike's family, I was embraced again by the energy of this sacred space; by the energy of this community I served, which inspired the vision and brought to birth what we know today as YSS Recovery Homes.

Many of those good men and women who helped to get our recovery home up and going have passed on to eternal life; people such as Kate, Anne Marie, John, Gladys, Sister Barbara, Mary, George, and Bill, to name but a few of them. My own life of service was deepened



through the faith, hope, and love of these friends of God. It reminds me of the great truth of life that "nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone. Therefore, we must be saved by love." (Niebuhr).

YSS Recovery Homes happened through community, through lives shared in breaking bread around a table and talking about life with a passion for the possible, sometimes in the face of those powers which have since withered like the grass of the field. So, as I take my leave of YSS Recovery Homes, I leave it in very capable hands and hearts; and that makes me very happy. My hope is that you will continue to gather around the table, just like your ancestors did at the sacred tables of St. Al's and of their humble homes; at the table "[Where] love, like bread and wine, is all around!" (Rilke).

*Love and prayers,
(Father) Pat.*

Recovery Coaches Come Alongside Residents

By Travis McBride, Peer Recovery Coach at Mark's House
& Tonya Rodriguez, Peer Recovery Coach at Mary & Martha House

As Peer Recovery Coaches, our personal goal is to walk side by side with each individual who is seeking not only to stay clean but that complete life, heart, mind, and soul change. As peers with the lived experience, we understand that it's a complete change of everything.

We help people develop their own individual recovery pathway. We understand that the same thing does not work for everyone, and we don't expect it to. This is why we really take the time to get to know our people. With a better understanding of their strengths, we can build a recovery plan based on what best suits that individual so they can turn their greatest weaknesses into strengths and overcome their adversities. This helps them to reach all of their recovery and life goals. Watching these amaz-

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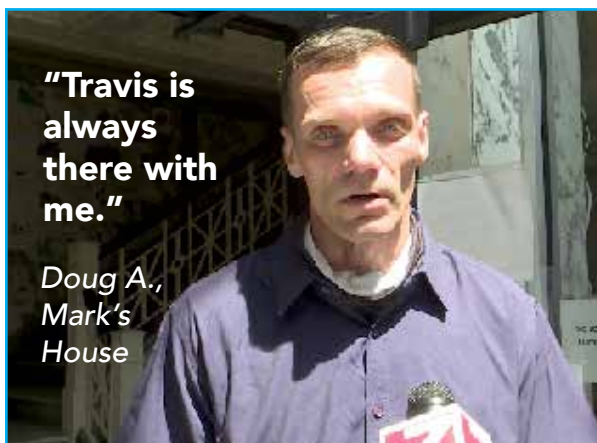
Facing 40 years prison, now the face of recovery: Coaches help others heal in Wheeling

Recovery coaches are changing lives after changing their own.



This screen shot from the WTRF-TV 7 website shows Travis McBride and Tonya Rodriguez being interviewed about recovery coaches on April 20.

ing people start their lives over and just blossom into the people they were always meant to be is what the greatest reward is with being a recovery coach.



"Travis is always there with me."

Doug A.,
Mark's House



"Recovery is awesome. It's difficult, but it's worth it and it's beautiful and I'm glad to be sober today."

Kayla G., Mary & Martha House



Photo credit: Travis McBride

Nic Cochran and Pat Condron share a laugh around the Lazarus House table. Mark Rohrig's portrait can be seen on the wall in the background.

A Place at the Table

It's been 20 years since Pat Condron decided to put God's love and compassion into action and took in the first sober-living home resident. The man, nicknamed "Beanie," was fresh from prison, an electrician by trade, and was facing imminent homelessness.

Pat hasn't seen Beanie in over a decade, but coincidentally, just as he is about to retire, he recently bumped into Beanie at the post office. (That is if you believe in coincidences.)

"He's doing well," Pat said. "He's had some struggles, but that's recovery. Recovery is not about a straight line. We do fall off the path, but we back get on it again."

Pat, director of the YSS Recovery Homes, will turn 70 in June and will retire June 30. As he contemplates the past, present and future of what he's built with the help of God and a supportive community, he reflected that the basic formula hasn't changed.

"It started out with a community of one or two. It started at a table. And we're still at the table, except that the table is much longer and the whole community is much bigger."

What started with one resident eventually became the

Lazarus House, first located on 15th Street and Wood in 2005. In 2007, it moved to E. 11th St., where it remains home to six men. After being gifted a home in Center Wheeling, Pat opened Lazarus House 2, but it did not last. Mary & Martha House was added on E. 12th St. in 2009, a home for five women.

In 2017, circumstances threatened to end the whole program, until Pat approached his friend John Moses, CEO of Youth Services System. John's motto, adopted from his predecessor Ronald C. Mulholland, is to say "yes, yes and yes again." John said yes, and the two homes were placed under the YSS umbrella. There, they have flourished, thanks to a faithful and generous community of supporters.

In 2020, the state of West Virginia awarded YSS a grant to open a new nine-bed recovery home for men, which was named Mark's House after Mark Rohrig, whose family has supported Pat's dream from the very beginning. Thus the program, including all three houses, became the YSS Recovery Homes.

Pat has continued to set the table and gather men and wom

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en around it because he believes addiction is a disease of isolation. Connection is the key.

“When you gather around a table, great things happen in the breaking of bread. ... I think it’s in the breaking of the bread of our lives, that’s where healing happens.”

Connection is happening not just between residents but also with the greater community.

“What has changed for the better is that the involvement of the greater community of Wheeling that has become more engaged. (YSS Recovery Homes) has helped really to address the stigma attached to addiction. It’s not the dirty needles and people with hoodies ducking down the alley. It’s people like me and people like Nic (Cochran) and like Travis (McBride).”

Nic will assume the director’s role upon Pat’s retirement. He has been assistant director since September. He has an Associate of Arts from Washington State Community College in Marietta, Ohio, and a Bachelor of Science degree from

“When you gather around a table, great things happen in the breaking of bread.”

~ Pat Condron

Wheeling Jesuit University, graduating summa cum laude in 2015. He is pursuing post-graduate work in psychology.

Beyond academics, it’s Nic’s warmth and empathy, built on the foundation of his personal recovery and his work with people experiencing homelessness, that make him a perfect fit for this mission. He said addiction is, at its most basic level, an escape from pain.

Nic said: “We’re trying to create an environment where we can all work through that (hurt) together. ... This isn’t the end of the story, this hurt, and I don’t have to rely on something to change the way I’m feeling. I can feel this way and that’s OK because it will

pass. And there are other people who will love me through that.”

Nic said he has learned from Pat the simple – yet sometimes difficult – art of spending time around the table with the men and women in recovery, and loving them right where they are.

“At the end of the day I think what we all want is to be loved and accepted. And so that’s one of the things that I see Pat doing so well and that I strive to do, too, is to say I love you. And you’re OK where you are.”

Pat said although it is his time to leave this particular table, he can look back knowing lives have been changed.

“Overall, I’ve seen more growth with it. I’ve seen folks move on into their own independent living, the reconciliations with family, going back home to Mom and the kids. And it all started because you were given a chance at this.”

And he knows the residents are in good hands.

“This is where the presence of God is most deeply felt. It’s hoped something will live on. If something is truly inspired by the Spirit of the universe, then that

YSS Recovery Homes Spring Cookout Fundraiser

11 am-5 pm | Saturday, May 29 | Hazel-Atlas Building

Grilled Hamburgers, Baked Chicken, Potato Salad, Pasta Salad, Chips, Baked Beans, Homemade Desserts, Later Gator Iced Tea

\$8 | Take Out | Eat In | Delivery in City Limits

To order, call 304-670-1871.



Join us to bid Pat farewell and Godspeed!

Donations to YSS Recovery Homes: Lazarus, Mary & Martha and Mark’s House

Enclosed is my gift for Lazarus/Mary & Martha/Mark’s House:

___ \$200 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ Other amount

Name: _____ If you wish your donation to be private, check here

Prefer an e-newsletter? Please provide your email address: _____

Please make checks payable to YSS, P.O. Box 6041, 87-15th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003.

Use this form or write YSS Recovery Homes on the Memo line.

Thank you and God bless you!

If you wish to UNSUBSCRIBE to this mailing list, please email Nic Cochran, ncochran84@gmail.com.