



Alumni Newsletter – Summer 2013

Issue #6 | Summer 2013

Greetings Alumni and Friends!

Save The Date:



For information and RSVP click [Alumni Reunion](#)

"WE DON'T HAVE TO, WE GET TO."

Gary Fisher

Chris offered me the opportunity to write this column for the newsletter and I almost turned him down. That is when I was reminded of the advice given me one day, "We don't have to, we get to." I didn't understand it at first but as I have gotten further into my recovery it has come into focus for me. We don't have to stand in line for a movie, we get to. We don't have to shop for food, we get to. We don't have to feed the needy, we get to. We don't have to be of service at all, we get to. I didn't have to write this column, I get to.

Since I am getting this opportunity I wanted to talk about the upcoming Alumni Reunion and also share one of my favorite stories. The Reunion is the 20th, 21st, and 22nd, of September. It is an awesome time. The days are warm, and the nights are cool. The mountain will be bursting with fall colors, the nights crazy with stars and of course the warmth of our fires. We have great speakers and the food is pretty good too! There is no cost. In fact I like to think we each get paid. We get paid in being of service to each other.

My favorite story is the one where the man gets his wish of being able to see Heaven and Hell. As story goes he sees in to Hell. It is a room of people sitting around an incredibly aromatic pot of stew. The stew is hearty and looks delicious. The people however all look like they are starving! They are angry and miserable. Clearly suffering! He notices that attached to their hand is a spoon that is 4 feet long. Try as they might they can't get the spoon to their mouths. They can smell the goodness, they can almost taste it, but they are unable to partake of even a single bite.

As the story proceeds he gets to walk farther and to see into Heaven. It is another group of



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**Monthly Alumni Meeting
and Dinner**

people that are sitting around an identical pot of stew. Hearty and delicious. The same length spoon is attached to their hand but the people here seem to be well fed and happy. They look joyous! Then he sees the difference. Here the people have learned to feed each other.

I hope you will make time for the Reunion this year. It is a great time to rekindle your flame of sobriety but as important, your presence feeds the rest of us. Come and be a part. As I am fond of saying, if you can't come for yourself, come for the rest of us!

Thanks for letting me share!

Gary

THE 14TH ANNUAL CIRQUE LODGE ALUMNI REUNION

September 20th, 21st and 22nd, 2013

Please join us for a wonderful weekend of food, fellowship, activity and recovery experiences here in the serenity of the mountains. The 14th Annual Cirque Lodge Alumni Reunion is a weekend filled with just that! It is a place to meet up with old friends, discover new ones and renew that foundation of recovery here on the mountain. This year's reunion promises to be a feast of wonderful foods, words and spiritual experiences with many members of Cirque Lodge staff and alumni.

Run for Recovery

This year, Cirque Lodge is sponsoring the 2nd annual "Run for Recovery." It is a 5k race and fund raiser that not only raises awareness for the cause of addiction recovery, it also provides individuals with the funds to getting into treatment that may not have the means to do so. Last year was a wonderful turn out and we hope that this year's race is even better. We encourage all alumni who wish to participate to get prepared and come ready to race, jog, or walk to support this noble cause. Registration is only \$25.00 and it goes towards helping others with treatment. Go to Repreza.com for [registration](#) and more info.



Rekindle the Flame

The crowning point of Reunion Weekend for many folks is the "Rekindle the Flame" bon fire up Sundance with Dave Beck. This starts off with yummy cook-out dinner and some social time. Dave prepares one of his legendary bon fires and alumni participate in a unique meeting of gratitude. In talking about spiritual experiences at this reunion weekend, the bon fire is quite a significant one to be a part of.



Registration and RSVP

The reunion is free of charge to all Cirque Lodge Alumni. Spouses, significant others and friends in recovery are welcome to join us! The cost for additional guests is \$100.00 per person. This includes all activities and events including all meals, and a Cirque Lodge Candle. This year we have made it possible to register for the reunion and also pay for your guest. [Register for the Reunion.](#)

Each year, we are seeing a growing number of folks returning and participating in the reunion. To help us ensure that we have enough seating, food and accessories, we encourage you to RSVP and register for the event. This can be done by trough our [online registration](#) form, calling or email to Chris Rueckert, alumni coordinator. (801) 222-9200 x 120 or chris@cirquelodge.com.

Remember: *"If you can't come for yourself, come for the rest of us!"*

Southern California Alumni
July 11, 2013 – 6:00 PM
August 8, 2013 – 6:00 PM

Utah Alumni Dinner
Salt Lake City
July 30, 2013 – 6:00 PM

Upcoming Alumni Dinners
Thursday, July 25, 2013
Costa Mesa, CA
Location: The Green Leaf Gourmet
Host: Beth Wright
Time: 6 PM

Thursday, July 25, 2013
Birmingham, AL
Location: Ruth Chris Steakhouse
Host: Keith Fierman
Time: 6 PM

Tuesday, July 30, 2013
Dallas, TX
Location: Maggiano's at North Park
Center
Host: Gary Fisher
Time: 6:30 PM

Monday, August 12, 2013
Boston, MA
Location: To be announced
Host: Keith Fierman
Time: 6 PM

Monday, August 12, 2013
New York City, NY
Location: To be announced
Host: Stephanie Fierman
Time: 7 PM

Tuesday, August 20, 2013
Del Mar, CA
Location: Rendezvous
Host: Beth Wright
Time: 6 PM

RSVP and Info:
For all Upcoming Events
chris@cirquelodge.com
Phone: (801) 222-9200 x. 120

Join Us For:

MALIBU ALUMNI RETREAT

Chris Rueckert



We had an amazing weekend in Malibu last month at the Annual California Alumni Retreat! I want to thank all the alumni who were able to join us for the weekend. We kicked off the weekend and had a great dinner on Friday night at Café Habana. The next morning we all went for a really cool hike in Solstice Canyon. We hiked up to the ruins of a house that burned down sometime in the 60's or 70's. It was really cool to see all the fireplaces and the foundation of the house still standing strong. Some of the alumni decided to run the hike which looked like a great workout. I was walking and decided that was all the exercise I needed. After the hike we were able to celebrate one of our alumni's one year mark. We sang happy birthday and had a cupcake and candle for her to blow out. It was a special setting and a great moment that we all shared.

We went to lunch at Malibu Seafood, which is apparently the place to be in Malibu for lunch because the line was so long and the food was delicious! After lunch we were all beach bound. Malibu Beach Sober Living was gracious enough to host our alumni retreat at The Beach House. This home is set on the beach in a beautiful location with the waves crashing underneath the outdoor patio with an Infinity pool that overlooks the ocean. The Malibu Beach Sober Living staff had an amazing cookout for us as we were all busy surfing, stand up paddle boarding, swimming, playing pool, socializing and watching the NBA playoffs. The cool thing was to



overhear all the conversations going on around the room about Cirque Lodge, life, recovery, sobriety and happiness! We truly have an amazing group of alumni all over the world and it is always so much fun to see everyone doing well and supporting one another.

This was the second annual retreat in California and we hope to continue doing this every year! The next retreat is going to be the second annual Alumni Ski & Spa Retreat in Sundance, UT on January 31st - February 2nd. There will be more details to come on this retreat at the alumni reunion this year. The Annual Alumni Reunion will be September 20-22nd! Mark your calendars and please do everything you

can to attend. It is an amazing weekend and we hope to see you there!

STAYING CONNECTED

Alumnus - Heidi B.

I am so grateful for the Cirque Southern California Alumni events. These events have given me the opportunity to meet other Cirque Alumni and remain connected to the amazing and life changing experience I had at Cirque. I have developed friendships with several of the alumni I've met at these events, and we get together for dinner, hiking, meditation classes, seeing movies, and more. It's been invaluable for me to have a network of sober friends who have the Cirque commonality. These friendships help keep me strong in my sobriety and stay connected with others who are pursuing a healthy, sober life. These friendships also remind me of HOW IMPORTANT it is to stay connected to sober people, and to participate in sober activities and engage with life. This is a big change from



Alumni Reunion Weekend
Register at Repreza.com



Utah Aftercare

how I lived my life when I was trapped in my addiction, when I isolated and sat on my couch in front of my television and avoided people, avoided new experiences, and avoided actually participating in my own life. The Cirque Alumni events remind me of how important it is to go out, meet new people, engage with life, try new things and REALLY LIVE.



Our time on this planet is limited, and I am so grateful that my experience at Cirque woke me up to the fact that I allowed my addiction to put me in the role of a passive observer of my own life. Cirque gave me the tools to rediscover my higher power, and along with my higher power, to take back control of my own life. I am now an active co-creator of my own life path (along with my higher power), and I'm able recognize that life is precious – it truly is a gift – and every day I have the choice to embrace that, go out and really experience the world, embrace life, and REALLY LIVE!

I also have really loved the Cirque paddle-boarding events. They felt like an extension of the experiential events at Cirque and – just as some of those Experiential events did, have helped me overcome another fear of mine (an irrational fear of sharks!!). But all joking aside, I would strongly encourage other alumni to go to any of the alumni events in their area. My experience has been that these events help remind me of how special and important my time at Cirque was, and have introduced me to other sober people who are truly trying to live a changed, healthy, spiritual and productive life.

I am very grateful for the Cirque Alumni events in Southern California, and I am so grateful for my sobriety – I now have more than 3.5 years sober (which I never thought would be possible). There have been some rough patches – as there are in any life – but the ironic thing is I have discovered it is actually easier and far more fulfilling to live life sober, than it ever was trying to get through life when I was trapped in my addiction. Instead of just getting by, I now actually LIVE. And I try to remind myself every day to EMBRACE LIFE and experience it – the joys, sorrows, disappointments, triumphs – to be brave, every day, and experience IT ALL. Because even when things become unpleasant, or seem intolerable or impossible, I know those feelings will pass, circumstances will eventually change, and happiness and joy is just around the corner.

With wishes of Peace and Love to all!
Heidi B.

FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE

Alumnus – Ryan P.

Quickly approaching a year and a half of sobriety....and my 30th birthday... I've sat back to reflect on what has helped keep me sober and helped me develop as a person. The resounding answers: fellowship and service. If you were like me, "fellowship" made you uncomfortable because it felt like a forced friendship and, as for "service," I barely had enough time to take care of myself! Through both fellowship and service, my cup overfloweth and I have amazing people in my life from all walks of life. I can honestly say that, were it not for my amazing friends in sobriety, my life would be drastically different.



I'd like to use this opportunity to thank Cirque Lodge for their active Southern CA alumni program. I regularly attend the monthly alumni meeting & dinner in Beverly Hills as well as the alumni retreats and have met some great friends and incredible people who have all enriched my life in some way. Whether we're stand up

paddle-boarding in Laguna Beach or sitting in an infinity edge pool on the ocean in Malibu, the retreats are filled with a lot of laughter and fun. If you haven't been to either, I highly recommend giving it a shot, even if you're not in a 12-step recovery program. Whether I'm uncomfortable or just don't have enough time, amazing, unexpected things happen when I step out of my comfort zone and make the time to just show up.

July 9th – 7pm Studio
July 16th – 7pm Studio
July 23rd – 7pm Studio
July 30th – 6:30pm Dinner (SLC)

August 6th – 7pm Studio
August 13th – 7pm Studio
August 20th – 7pm Studio
August 27th – 6:30pm Dinner



Thank you Cirque Lodge for giving me back my life
Ryan P.

From the Cirque Lodge Staff:

CAN YOU HAVE FUN IN SOBRIETY?

Nic Losee

We often focus on the problem of addiction more than the results of a successful recovery. Addiction is a masterful enemy; one that is cunning, baffling, and all powerful. Addiction wants to isolate and control its victims, leading them to push away those who love them.

When people think about getting sober, one of their biggest fears is: Can I ever have fun again? The answer is: Yes, you can. Of course, being sober won't involve near death experiences, police chases, or risky actions that can hurt you or others.

I remember having to go back to the basics. I had to try and remember what things I used to enjoy doing, and for me, that was sports. I signed up for a softball league, fast pitch baseball, took up golf, and started playing tennis again. I filled up my free time with things that wouldn't hurt me or get me into trouble. I had a blast at the same time. I had forgotten how fun it was to get a hit in a close baseball game, or hit an Ace down match point. I started to feel alive again for the first time in years, and slowly started to get back to how I used to be. I was able to share my experiences, strengths, and hopes in meetings, versus just being a person who took from the meetings. For me, it was sports. For you, it could be something completely different.

Here's a list of ideas: Hiking, walking, studying the stars, painting, drawing, learning a new instrument, baking, cooking, skeet shooting, bowling, scuba diving, fishing, or coaching youth. You could also get involved in service projects, such as feeding the homeless, volunteering at an animal shelter, or helping your elderly neighbor. If these aren't for you, then find something that is. I wish you the best of luck.

Nic

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF CARE

Family Corner w/ Keith Fierman

I think it is very hard for family members and friends of people in recovery to focus on self-care. It seems to go against their very nature to not be focused or even consumed with their loved one's recovery. When this happens, and it often does, people start to fall back into unhealthy behaviors.

People start crossing the line into other's recovery by questioning their loved one on things like "Are you going to your meetings?" "Are you calling your sponsor?" "Are you seeing your therapist?" These are just a few examples of things family members might say. Often family members are having feelings and thoughts that they just keep to themselves. Worry, shame, anger etc. start to creep in.



"When people think about getting sober, one of their biggest fears is: Can I ever have fun again? The answer is: Yes, you can."



"All evidence shows that if the whole family does their own work, the entire family system gets healthier."



It is suggested to family members to dive into their own recovery through Al Anon, therapy and other self-help modalities. Sadly, a large number of people do not take such advice and continue in co-dependent behavior. The natural instinct for people seems to be, that if their loved one is doing what they are told or suggested to be doing, then all is well.

All evidence shows that if the whole family does their own work, the entire family system gets healthier.

Most people leaving treatment have a lot of shame and self-loathing. Families that continue to focus on the client only, magnify those emotions. When a family member doesn't practice self-care it solidifies the feelings the addicted person has that "they are the problem" and it keeps the family member feeling that they are responsible for the addicted person's recovery.

The only thing you can control is your own recovery! I encourage everyone to give their own recovery a chance. Trust the process and you will be amazed over time the healing benefits you will all receive.

Staying Connected

Southern California Weekly Continuing Care Group
2001 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 505, Santa Monica, CA 90403

Men's Group
Facilitated by Dr. Reza Nabavi, PhD
Thursdays ~ 2PM - 3:15 PM

Women's Group
Facilitated by Maryam Akbar, PhD
Fridays ~ 2PM - 3:15 PM

More Information on [Cirque Lodge Continuing Care Group - Los Angeles](#)

To inquire about these groups, please contact:
Dr. Reza Nabavi, PhD at drrezanabavi@gmail.com or (310) 295-8485
Dr. Maryam Akbar, PhD, MFT at drmaryamakbar@gmail.com or (310) 896-5643

RELASPE TRACK & GUESTING PRIVILEGE

Chris Rueckert

The "Relapse Track" is a 10 day to 2 week program. It is typically better if you do the relapse track at the facility where you graduated. The staff would know you better and there is a good chance you would get the opportunity to work with the Primary counselor you worked with

Keith Fierman
Director of Family Services
(205) 533-2489
kfierman@cirquelodge.com

Beth Wright
Southern California
Outreach and Alumni
Coordinator
beth@cirquelodge.com



previously. The primary goal is to evaluate and strengthen your continuing care plan and to autopsy what went wrong and why. During these two weeks you are doing individual, group and experiential sessions centered on what led to your relapse. You also will concentrate on putting together a different plan for aftercare that addresses what was lacking in the first go around.

- Call Tommy, Scott or Molly in admissions for pricing details. (801) 222-9200 x. 115

The "Guesting Privilege" is a chance to return to the facility and guest with us from 72-to 96-hours free of charge. During the Guesting stay, alumni can refocus, refresh and renew their own recovery as well as share with the current residents here. Guesting is done at the same facility where you received your care. This is a lifetime privilege for those alumni who have maintained abstinence and have not relapsed. This program was originally setup to help those who were struggling in sobriety, however it seems to be most effective for alumni who are doing well, as a way to stay connected with the Cirque program. Our goal is to give our alumni a safe environment away from the rigors of the world. This safe haven can be an instrument in preventing relapse as well as giving you an outlet to share your experience, strength, and hope! If you have any questions please feel free to call me or anyone on the admissions team! Remember there is no charge for Guesting!

- Call Tommy, Scott or Molly in admissions to schedule guesting. (801) 222-9200 x. 115

PRIVATE ALUMNI FACEBOOK PAGE

The purpose of this group is to help alumni through their journey of recovery and to stay connected to Cirque Lodge. This is a private group where only alumni of Cirque Lodge are members. The alumni director is the administrator and will post alumni events and opportunities to connect. We hope this group will unite alumni all over the world.

How to Join the Private Alumni Facebook Page!

1. Log in to www.facebook.com
2. You will need to create a profile if you do not already have one.
3. Send a friend request to "Al Clodge"
4. I will then add you to the Cirque Lodge Alumni Group
5. This group is completely voluntary and you can leave any time

The 'private' Facebook group is ONLY for Cirque Lodge Alumni! This is a way for alumni to communicate with Cirque Lodge and other alumni on Facebook, while still allowing you your anonymity to the rest of the Facebook world. The only people that will see you as a member of this group are alumni who are already members themselves.

So I've created the pseudonym Al Clodge from Orem, UT. (aka. Al[umni]C[irque]lodge). I am the administrator for "AL Clodge" and have to approve all friend requests. You can click on the following link www.facebook.com/alclodge and 'add friend'. I will then add you to the Cirque Alumni Group which is a "secret group". A secret group on Facebook is a group that cannot be found in searches, and non-members can't see anything about the group, including its name and member list. The name of the group will not display on the profiles (timelines) of members. To join a secret group, you need to be added by a member of the group. When non-friends are in the same group as you, this does not allow them to see any more of your profile (timeline) information than your privacy settings allow. For questions about groups: [Facebook Group Privacy Policy](#).

NEW PRIVATE FAMILY FACEBOOK PAGE

We have started a Private Family Facebook Group. The purpose of this group is to help family members through their journey of recovery. This is a place for family members of Cirque



Chris Rueckert
Alumni Director /
Aftercare Coordinator

Alumni to communicate and support each other. Also, Cirque Lodge staff will be able to answer questions that may arise in your own recovery.

(801) 222-9200 x 120
chris@cirquelodge.com.

To join, just send a friend request to "*Kirk Ladoge*" and then I can add you to the private group.

How to Join the Private Family Facebook Page!

1. Log in to www.facebook.com
2. You will need to create a profile if you do not already have one.
3. Send a friend request to "*Kirk Ladoge*"
4. I will then add you to the Cirque Lodge Family Group
5. This group is completely voluntary and you can leave any time

The 'private' Facebook Family group is for Cirque Lodge Families ONLY! This is a way for families to communicate with other families and Cirque staff on Facebook, while still allowing anonymity to the rest of the Facebook world. The only people that will see you as a member of this group are other family members who are members themselves.

I am the administrator for "KIRK LADOGÉ" and have to approve all friend requests. Use the following URL, www.facebook.com/kirkladoge, and 'add friend'. I will then add you to the Cirque Lodge family Group which is a "secret group". A secret group on Facebook is a group that cannot be found in searches, and non-members can't see anything about the group, including its name and member list. The name of the group will not display on the profiles (timelines) of members. To join a secret group, you need to be added by a member of the group. When non-friends are in the same group as you, this does not allow them to see any more of your profile (timeline) information than your privacy settings allow. For questions about groups: [Facebook Groups](#).



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