



## Our Mission

Lasting Change Alumni is a membership organization formed to supply positive influences, a strong support system, and encourage each individual to give back to sustain and strengthen their recovery. We are built on a platform of connection and community and want to continue to stay motivated to be successful with life and recovery goals.

Staying involved gives a sense of purpose. We supply the opportunity for successful clients to demonstrate that treatment works, recovery is possible, and serve as mentors to those starting their road to recovery on their journey through Lasting Change. We highly encourage all our clients to participate in the activities we have to offer for continued growth and development in recovery from addiction. For more information visit our website [www.thewhouse.org](http://www.thewhouse.org), and click on Lasting Change Alumni.

## The Alumni

Welcome!

Those of us at Lasting Change, who have graduated successfully have come together as Alumni Members. This is our quarterly newsletters to present you with happenings at our organization, informative readings, and entertaining incite provided by the woman. All input is appreciated. If you wish to not receive future newsletters, feel free to contact the Alumni Coordinator at [cremines@thewhouse.org](mailto:cremines@thewhouse.org). Any and all submission are welcome, just email the newsletter committee at [alumninewsletterlc@gmail.com](mailto:alumninewsletterlc@gmail.com).

To review past newsletters, please visit [www.thewhouse.org/lasting-change-alumni](http://www.thewhouse.org/lasting-change-alumni).

### Inside this issue

Alumni Spotlight.....	2
A Future Alumni .....	2
Hopeful Holiday.....	3
Story of Hope .....	3
New Team Members.....	4
Donor Thank You.....	4
A Holiday Thank You .....	5

### Special points of interest

- Alumni: This Program Works
- Holiday Hope
- This Christmas
- Staff Introduction
- Special Holiday Thank You to our Donors
- A Sober Mom



## Alumni Spotlight: -Diane Wooten: Lasting Change Alumni

When I received the phone call that my mom had had a stroke, it made my heart stop. I spent the next couple of days in the hospital by her side waiting for her to pass; the most devastating thing I have experienced in my life.

When I was first introduced to Lasting Change as a client in 2005, I would never have guessed how far my journey would go with this place. I knew when I got here that I needed to change my life, because I was a mess. I needed to learn how to be a responsible adult. I was introduced to the tools of recovery and started my journey on the road to recovery. A few years after graduating the program, I had the opportunity to come back as a Direct Care worker. This was a chance to share my life experience with other ladies who were starting out where I once was. It was giving me the chance to grow in my recovery and as a person. I was there to share in their joys and their tears. I had words of wisdom some days and just a hug on others. These ladies became like family to me. Some days they helped me just as much as I hoped to be helping them.

When the idea of the Alumni came up, I thought it would be a perfect addition. Ladies like myself could reach out to women just starting, to answer questions about struggles in the beginning, how life is now, or just show support. We can also support each other after graduating the program when we need it because life gets busy and we can forget to ask for help.

The reason I brought up my mom in the beginning, is the family I found here at Lasting Change. What seems like a small gesture (among so many) was after my mom passed away, I received a homecooked meal. The ingredients supplied by Lasting Change and the meal prepared by the ladies. It was delivered to my house by an alumni member. This, to me, was a gesture that could have only been done by people who love me, who care about me, and who I consider my family. My journey started looking for recovery, along the way I found a family.

### Alumni Events

#### Past:

- December 16th—Christmas with Alumni Party

#### Upcoming:

- January 20th 5:00pm—**Coffee w/ Alumni** (Rooster Moon)
- February 1st, 11:00am—**Panel Discussion** (519 N. Locust Street, open to the public)
- Monthly Alumni meeting, second Tuesday of every month 5:15pm (218 N. Potomac Street)



Alumni Christmas Party: Members—Diane Wooten, Lori Martinez, Bridgette Davidson, Chloe Remines, Rachel Reines, Cheryl Gabinet, Betty Jo Justice

## Holiday with the Alumni -Deb A.: Current Transitional Resident; Lasting Change

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a Christmas party hosted by the Lasting Change Alumni. There was food, games, raffles, and lots of laughs. It's my second Christmas at Lasting Change and I will soon be going on to the next chapter in my journey, so being able to celebrate with other women who have come through the program was just another reminder that recovery doesn't stop because you complete a

program. I see these Alumni experiencing life and they face challenges, but they stay clean through it all. Being able to participate in events hosted by the Alumni always gives me hope. It shows me that I can continue to experience life in a positive way and that recovery is possible. Thank you to the Lasting Change Alumni for an amazing Christmas Party and I hope to join you all next year as a fellow Alumni.

## This Christmas: -Victoria K: Current Resident; Lasting Change

I'm 32 years old and I'm a mother of six amazing children. Four girls and two boys; they are my heart. I pride myself on being a great mom. It was my identity and I loved it. All through life, I loved Christmas. I loved the whole season; the birth of my savior Jesus Christ, the trees, the lights, the convent calendars, candy canes, music, parties, baking cookies, wrapping presents, filling stockings, and Charlie Brown. I looked forward to Christmas each year and loved when the autumn holidays arrived. The holidays with my kids are some of the best memories I have, until 2015 when my universe was flipped upside down.

I married my lifelong friend when I was 19. We moved away from my home in Maryland, to Texas where I only knew my husband and his parents. Life was good for a long time and our family continued to grow. As the year's passed, my husband became addicted to cocaine, pills, and marijuana. My drinking started slowly but after we began arguing more, it progressed to a daily pattern. I met "friends" that introduced me to pain killers. My husband and I began to fight over finances as a result of our drug use, which became physical. I drank more so I could not feel the pain.

A very traumatic event led me to move back to Maryland away from my husband. The court granted temporary custody of my children to his parents. Wanting to make a new life for myself, I set up in North Carolina where I met some friends at a bar. A man there had then introduced me to heroin, cocaine, and meth. We were together for four years. My life hit the worst

bottom I never saw coming. In the end, I was selling myself for nearly nothing.

In September of this year, I moved back to Maryland. I wanted a fresh start, I wanted my babies, and I wanted to never feel dope sick again. On September 24th at 4:00pm, I used for the last time. That night, my brother drove me to treatment. I have now been at Lasting Change for over three weeks and my world, once again, is changing drastically. I am currently a little over two months clean. I feel amazing. I absolutely love my sobriety and my recovery. They are a gift from God. I feel healthier, I feel proud of myself, and my relationships are beginning to heal. I was always hesitant in believing that the 12-step programs could restore things to my life. I now know that by doing the right thing, and being the best person that I can be, changing my character defects, and not picking up no matter what, I have nothing but possibilities and success in my future.

This Christmas, I still will not be with my kids, but I'm okay with that. I know that staying clean each day brings me a day closer to being with my precious children. I believe in the healing power of God, because everything in my life seems to be falling in place. I know that is the grace, mercy, and the work of the Lord. This year I welcome Christmas for the first time in years. I know that from this point on, things in my life are going to keep getting better. Every day I learn something new and my gratitude grows. Recovery has changed my life completely, and I will keep coming back. Happy New Year, everyone.

---

*"Recovery doesn't stop because you complete a program.." - Deb A.*

---



A Story of *hope*

Kim S. Current  
Transitional Resident

My name is Kimberly Stone. I have been at Lasting Change since February, 2019. My clean date is October, 2018. Lasting Change saved my life. I have been in and out of rehabs and jail. When I came to Lasting Change I was broken and hopeless. I struggled with honesty and opening up to my sponsor, as well my counselor. I had many charges pending and my major charge was a felony; I was facing 7 years in prison. I wasn't allowed to have contact with my children for a year. Something happened with my spirituality and I knew I had to get honest with myself and my counselor, as well as my sponsor.

Although I had a lot going on in the legal system, one thing I refused to do was give up. On December 16th, 2019, God gave me another chance. With the help of Lasting Change and my support system, as well as the God of my understanding, I was able to get through the hardships in my first year of recovery, as well as having the strength to face my fear of being incarcerated again. I work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and I have a special bond with my sponsor. I love to volunteer and share my experience, strength, and hope with others. I am currently volunteering for Gatekeepers, which is a resource club. I successfully graduate the program of Lasting Change in a couple months. One day my goal is to continue to be a part of Lasting Change by joining the Alumni and give hope to the new ladies that come into begin a new way of life.

*Special Thank You to  
Our Recent Donors!*

**Food Items:**

The Wells House  
Art Hicks  
ABC, Inc.  
Barbara Munson  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Richard Hajek

**Clothing/Toiletries:**

Roshell Brown  
Gina McCann  
Robert Sandberg  
Cathy McCarthy  
Leadership of Washington  
County Class 33'  
Crystal Frierson  
Fran Wishard  
Jonathan Mathews  
Mike and Melissa Hartzell  
Laini Gillian-Joseph  
Sandra Tillon  
Linda Brooks  
Shirley Thompson  
Carole S. May  
Robert Sandberg  
Cathy McCarthy  
Kristie Matthews  
Jennifer Collier  
Morgan Plummer

**Furniture/Appliances:**

Gourmet Goat  
Ashley Zimmerman  
Dr. Tara Sargent  
Tom Freeman

**Other:**

FirstEnergy Foundation  
Spherion Staffing  
Jodi Blair  
Capital Women's Care  
Johns Hopkins University  
Rose and Gary Hinks  
Timothy and Debra Grove  
Otterbein United Methodist  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Jone Bowman Foundation  
First Data Merchant Services



*-Written by Brandy Pentz: Direct  
Care Supervisor*

**Christi Williams:**  
*-Peer Support*

Christi joined the Lasting Change team on October 28th, 2019 as a Peer Recovery Specialist. A Peer Recovery Specialist is defined as a person who has been successful in the recovery process who helps others experiencing similar situations. Christi is in the final stages of becoming certified through the State of Maryland. In her position at Lasting Change, she will assist clients through the intake process and help them apply for housing for when they have completed and transitioned out of the program. Being a part of the recovery community since 2002, she is most excited to help clients understand that recovery is possible.



Christi Williams: Peer Recovery Specialist

**Laura Johnson:**  
*-Addictions Counselor*

Laura is an addiction counselor with her Bachelors in Psychology from Frostburg State University. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Social Work from WVU. Laura has been in the recovery field since 2015. She has previously worked in Roxbury Treatment Center, Franklin County Drug and Alcohol, and the Washington County Health Department. Laura currently runs Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient groups at Lasting Change along with meeting the women individually each week. Laura chose to work at Lasting Change because she is also a member of the recovery community and feels passionately towards helping women with substance use disorders.



Laura Johnson: Addictions Counselor

## WISH LIST

- ◆ Shampoo/Conditioner
  - ◆ Pillows
  - ◆ Razors
- ◆ Feminine Hygiene Products
  - ◆ Dressers
  - ◆ Towels
  - ◆ Body Wash

## A Holiday Thank You

**-Linda G.: Current Resident; Lasting Change**

Dear Donors of Lasting Change,  
Past, Present, and Future:

We are so grateful to you for everything you have done and are doing for us here at Lasting Change. We appreciate you and all the time you spend on us and away from your family. I want to thank them, too.

When I first got to Lasting Change, I had no clothes and hardly any hygiene products. When I got here, I gained all of that and more. Before I arrived, someone stole all of my belongings. Being here, I don't want or need for anything because of all that is donated: food, clothing, hygiene products, and shoes; some of which are very great, top-of-the-line items! As a woman, I like to have nice things and sometimes we don't feel so great about ourselves, but we are all beautiful women, and the donated beauty products help us feel that way. With all the food donated, we can choose to eat healthy or to snack between the fruits and veggies or the cakes and snacks. At any given time of the day or night, we can do any of these things thanks to all that is donated. I know I am so blessed to have people like you in our lives that want to give back to us ladies. I don't know how I would have been able to make it without you. Another client told me how amazing last Christmas was at Lasting Change, thanks to the donations! She was able to send gifts to three of her children that were unable to visit her.

Since I got here, I have helped people less fortunate than myself every chance I could. I have learned from you and from being here, that it is not about money, it is about giving back. It is about picking someone up when they are down and maybe just making someone smile or giving a hug. The world is a better place because of people like you. You give me hope and joy every day. I am very grateful and thankful for all you do.

Love,

Linda G. and the Women of Lasting Change



Drawing by Elena S: Current Resident; Lasting Change

## The Day I Became A Sober-Minded Mom -Fury G.: Former Resident; Lasting Change

For the first time in my life, I spent time with my child without being under the influence of a distorting substance.

From the moment of his conception—I was high on something. I had never fully participated in my son's life; his growth, his creation, his existence—without the crippling poisons of drugs in my system.

Until the other day.

I sat across from this young male form of my design.

Every inch of his face is etched in my memory. Every word that he said resounds within my mind. I can easily recall with great joy the tone of his voice, the mimicking faces of his humor, the testing nature of his stubbornness, and many other little moments of perfection that I had never made the effort to enjoy, before I made the choice to unchain myself from the slavery of addiction.

I immersed myself in the sweetness of his presence. Time was a limited gift I had gotten used to rushing through. I was always thinking about drugs and planning how to get more; while my children were gracious enough to seek my attention; I was not invested in their words, their needs, or their lives. I was absent. I was hollow. I was craving my own intentions, and their was so much of their lives that I missed.

Until the other day.

What was once a burden, had now become a blessing.

What was once a job, had now become a privilege.

What was once a responsibility, had now become an honor.

Just today, I become a sober-minded mom..



## Lasting Change

---

### Board of Directors

---

Dawn Sweitzer (President)  
Michael Hartzell (Vice President)  
Jodi Blair (Treasurer)  
Heather Guessford (Secretary)  
Kylie Johnson, Executive Director  
Erin Tack, Clinical Director  
Kandace Carpenter  
Kevin Conn  
Lt. Rebecca Fetchu  
Bill Gaertner  
Tiffany Gardner  
Chief Paul (Joey) Kifer  
Susan Martz  
Wayne Rummel  
Heidi Stossel

### Honorary Members:

The Honorable Kennedy Boone  
Donovan Bachtell

## Alumni Members

Chloe Remines .....(Alumni Coordinator)  
**Bridgette Davidson**  
**Cheryl Gabinet**  
**Tasha Griffin**  
**Bettyjo Justice**  
**Lori Martinez**  
**Rachel Reines**  
**Melanie Watts**  
**Diane Wooten**



## Lasting Change

---

519 N. Locust Street  
Hagerstown, Maryland  
21740

Phone: 301.791.7826  
Fax: 301.791.1266  
E-mail:  
alumninewsletterlc@gmail.com

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE