

StepUP[®]

AUGSBURG COLLEGE • SPRING 2008

news

2008 Gala—One Step. One Story. One Journey. . . .Page 2
 Wellness Programming in Oren Gateway CenterPage 8
 A Parent's PerspectivePage 9

Emerging Leaders – Forming a Student
 Leadership TeamPage 10
 StepUP to Present at IECA
 on Educational Recovery ServicesPage 10

2008 StepUP Program Gala: An evening of inspiration, celebration, and fellowship

Patrice Salmeri, StepUP program director

Each year StepUP seems to have a theme. Sometimes it is decided before the year begins; other times it evolves over time. This year's theme seemed to have been divinely inspired. It comes to us from page 84 in the Big Book which reads as follows:

This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.

Love and tolerance of others is our code.

What an appropriate message for StepUP as we enter our second decade of existence. As we look around at current and past students of the program we can see obvious individual differences. Yet differences cannot always be seen by the naked eye. Each of us has multiple identities. It may be son, brother, friend, student, addict, and more. It is the

similarity of addiction that has brought this community together, but it's the differences that keep the community real and rich.

The StepUP program has grown from 23 students in 1997 to 64 students in 2007. Next year we will fill the residence hall to 75 students. Oren Gateway Center has



Brothers Dan B. and Peter B. smile for a snapshot after both presenting to Gala attendees.

residence space for 105 students. We hope to grow the program to capacity within the next five years.

Over the past 10 years StepUP's abstinence rate has remained at 84%. This is in direct

contradiction of the national average of 20% abstinence. Our overall Grade Point Average for 10 years is 2.9, with a 3.1 GPA last semester.

The student leadership team has once again been invited to Washington, D.C., to speak at the Joint Meeting of Adolescent Treatment Effectiveness. They will present on the diversity of Augsburg College, the StepUP program and the greater community. Attendees of the conference include policy makers, government officials, grant officers and CEOs of adolescent treatment facilities around the country.

We have begun an emerging leaders program, under the direction of assistant director Dave Hadden, for those students aspiring to take on leadership roles in the community. We received a grant from the state to pass on our expertise to other colleges and universities in Minnesota. Jamie Hedin heads up the grant projects and has developed an Education Fair for high school students in recovery. This event drew over 100 students from eight recovery high school programs.

You have probably seen the student video team. These students, under the direction of Peter Lack, will document the history

Continued on page 11

2008 Gala—One Step. One Story. One Journey.

Many thanks for the Toby LaBelle Award!

As a grateful recovering alcoholic of 26 ½ years, I am deeply honored to receive this prestigious award, named after my friend, Toby, who had the courage to “step up” and lead the effort to form StepUP at Augsburg College. You have accomplished so much at Augsburg since 1997 to help students in recovery and their academic progress. You have grown StepUP from that first class of 23 students to more than 350, and StepUP has put many young people on the road to recovery.

I am very proud of your wonderful achievements – you have established the model for colleges all across the nation to emulate in support of students in recovery. You are giving students the critical tools they need to achieve academic success. But more importantly, you are giving students the tools they need to succeed in life – through your safe, sober living environment, weekly participation in meetings, weekly Circle meetings, involvement in social activities and academic skills counseling.

Thanks again for this great honor, as it truly means a great deal to me coming from my many friends at Augsburg College StepUP! Most importantly, thanks for the remarkable work you do each and every day to help students in recovery. You are truly working our program of recovery and saving lives in the process.

Sincerely,

Jim Ramstad
Member of Congress

Thank you so much for inviting me to your gala celebration! The energy, support, and love in the room was unbelievable. The evening was a true testament to the power of one...one person having the courage to change, one director having amazing insight and compassion, one program having the power to support each other. It was a transforming evening.

I also want to comment on the character of your students. They are all courageous, brave, intelligent, wise, humble, and perhaps most importantly, kind. The greeting I received on the steps from Jake and Ben was so warm and heartfelt...the “Thank You’s” I received from Drew, Carter, and Blair for being there were so genuine... the heartfelt conversation I had with Justin was so real... such amazing people.

Thank you again for inviting me to be a part of your incredible evening and allowing me to be a part of your truly amazing students’ lives.

Debbie Shapiro



StepUP program men gather for a quick laugh before dinner.



Family and friends value spending an important night together.

Last night was just incredible! The stories. The journeys...not only the students, but of StepUP as a whole...as the vessel that supports and nourishes these souls. I got goose bumps as I listened to everyone...you must be so proud!! To have accomplished all that you have... in 10 years, with “limited” support and acceptance. I know that the views are changing, slowly, as addiction grows; and as it affects more and more people, insurance companies, the government, and society as a whole will have to change. It was so moving last night. I feel blessed and privileged to have shared last night with all who were there.

Thank you for all you do—your insight, courage, stamina, grace, and heart. It was felt last night. The spirit in that room was part of us all. Keep up the work. You and your team have the vision.



Angie B. and Peter H. gather with hall director Phillip H. for a quick photo.



Current StepUP program students take a minute to strike a pose for the camera.

2008 StepUP Program Gala: Another chance

Angie B.

My name is Angie B. and I am a current student in the StepUP program here at Augsburg. I'm 26 years old and I'm graduating this May, finally! It's been eight years in the making! Tonight, I will give you all a brief glimpse into my past, but I'd mostly like to talk about my experience in the StepUP program and at Augsburg over the past two years. It has been truly amazing.

Growing up, I was an over achiever, to say the least! I was a straight A student, except for an A- or two in high school that I'm sure I cried over! I was involved in theatre, music, and athletics and I graduated high school 13th in my class of 500. In September of 2000, I headed to college, another small Lutheran private college in Minnesota. I had academic, service, and music scholarships. I had it made and life was going to be great. At age 18, I had arrived.

My first year in college, I managed to "control" my drinking. I drank only on the weekends and kept my GPA at a B+ average. I had several friends, joined a sorority, was involved in orchestra and I was having the time of my life. Over a short period of time, alcohol became more important than everything else in my life. I went to orchestra intoxicated on numerous occasions, I was barely going to classes and many of the friends I once had realized how useless I was becoming and quickly left my life. By the time I was a senior, I was drinking daily, drunk by 9 a.m. every day, I was barely making it to any classes, had one DWI, and had a meager number of friends. All of the aspirations I had at 18 were gone. I was going nowhere fast.

I withdrew from college three months shy of graduation. I had tried to get sober my first semester my senior year and failed. At the time I withdrew I had gotten a second DWI. After my failed attempt at college and sobriety, I decided to give treatment another try. This time around, I stayed sober for almost a year, but was not living a healthy lifestyle. I wasn't really going to meetings and I spent many evenings out at the casino. I ended up drinking again for two months and things went from bad to worse very fast. I was drinking daily again and even found myself drinking Listerine and rubbing alcohol on several occasions. At this point, it had been over a year since I'd been in school and it was the furthest thing from my mind.

On May 13, 2005, God gave me another chance. I decided to try sobriety one more time, and I have been sober since that date. I lived in a halfway house for three months and then moved to a sober house for the next year. I had a job and was working 40 hours a week. After working at my job for about seven months, I started getting frustrated with the work I was doing and realized that it was probably time for me to go back to school. I toured the University of Minnesota and it didn't feel right. It was just too big for me and as a good alcoholic, I like attention and felt I wouldn't be getting much of that at such a large university!

I had some friends who talked about Augsburg College and the StepUP program. After an unsuccessful tour at the university, I decided to apply to Augsburg and StepUP. I never toured the College before I applied. I was accepted in June of 2006 and I had

Continued on page 8

2008 StepUP Program Gala: Stepping stones to make all of it possible

Peter H.

My story is just like everyone else's. My life has been faced with many ups and downs, some small and some big, but all played a significant role in making me the person I am today. Today I challenge myself to be that much better and take advantage of the second chance that God has given me.

That second chance at life is what drives me to make things right this time, to be the person I am supposed to be in every possible way and never give up.

I was 17 when I went into treatment, in two short years I have learned more about myself and experienced more than I could have ever imagined. When I was in treatment, one of my counselors shared this short story with me that I would like to share with you....

A man is walking in the woods one day, it's a beautiful day...the sun is shining, the birds are chirping, feeling good about life. He comes across a hole in the middle of the forest surrounded with big, great tall trees; he throws down his pack, looks around curiously and cautiously. As the man is walking around he falls into the hole. He quickly looks around and realizes that there is no way out.

A couple hours pass and another man comes by and asks, "Hey, what are you doing in there?" The man in the hole replies with this frustrated look on his face and says, "What do you think happened, I fell into this hole and I can't get out." The other man walks around the hole silent as a mouse studying the hole to see if there is a way to get the man out, but there isn't. He says to the man in the hole, "Well I can't get you out of the hole but I'll give you my lunch so you won't go hungry." He gives him the lunch and before he knew it the man was gone.

A couple more hours pass and a priest walks by and asks, "Hello, my son, what are you doing in that hole?" The man in the hole replies with an even more frustrated and angry look on his face and says, "What do you think happened, I fell into this hole and I can't get out." The priest studies the hole carefully but still cannot find a way to get the man out of the hole. He says to the man, "I am sorry, my son, I cannot help you, but I will give you my Bible for spiritual guidance and I will say a prayer for you." The man in the hole takes the Bible, thanks the priest, and before he knew it the priest is gone.

The man in the hole grows colder, hungrier, and is running out of hope. He begins to question if he will ever get out of this hole.

A couple more hours pass and a third man comes walking by. He looks at the man in the hole, walks around the hole silently, and doesn't say a word, but has a big smile on his face. The man jumps

into the hole. The man in the hole says to him in a thundering voice, "What are you doing, are you crazy, now we will never get out of here." The man puts his hand on his shoulder looks him straight in the eye and says to him, "Because I have been in this hole before and I can show you the way out."

That story struck me very deeply when one of my counselors shared that with me, especially when I came to StepUP because the biggest thing I have found in the StepUP program is support. A couple weeks ago I read a quote about the StepUP program that said "StepUP is a nationally known and respected program that supports students in recovery." The biggest part of that statement that stands out to me is "support."

Coming from California, all I knew about Minnesota was that it was really cold and that it was 1500 miles away from home. This program has welcomed me with open arms since day one and given me the opportunities and the tools to do things that I never thought possible.

Just as the man in the story had someone to show him the way and support him, I, too, have my guardian angels surrounding me and supporting me. I have my wonderful and loving parents whom I can never thank too much or too often for all they have done, my sponsor, Henry, who is like a second father to me and whom I love very much and cannot thank him enough for taking a chance on a kid who had lost his way, and my friends whom I see everyday but still continue to amaze me with how much we support each other, hold each other accountable, and are a part of each other's sobriety.

Last month I celebrated two years of sobriety, and as usual me and the guys, including Amanda of course, went out to dinner to celebrate. In the middle of dinner when everyone was talking, I found myself just sitting there quietly as if time had stopped. I looked around the table and felt so grateful and happy to have these people in my life. I felt so lucky to have the kind of support in recovery that you really cannot find anywhere.

Ever since I was a little kid my dad always told me, "Don't let anyone tell you you're not good enough or that you can't accomplish your dreams." Growing up I didn't fully understand or appreciate what he was saying to me; I would just smile back at him, say "Yes dad," and take it at face value. It wasn't until I was faced with some difficult times that I fully appreciated and understood what he was saying to me all those years. Now I strive to live everyday with the mentality that I can do anything I set my mind to, and this program has given me the stepping stones to make all of it possible.

A Gift and the New Beginning

Drew D.

I have lived coast to coast determined to get well. Although I do not remember asking for help, my mother says I did. I went willingly through numerous psychiatric hospitalizations, ER visits, detoxes, halfway houses, a few intensive outpatients and more than enough long-term treatment for a lifetime. I finally arrived at the realization that my life was not normal or manageable by any means; I was not the functioning type when under the influence and the facts stared me in the face when I finally looked in the mirror—I was tired, physically beaten up, emotionally drained, suicidal and hopeless, all by the age of 17. It has been quite the journey.

Minnesota is where it all started. After living here for close to seven months I started my application for Augsburg College and visited the StepUP office. I claimed to be sober for six months (that was a lie; it was only three at the time). I went home for Christmas of 2002 and relapsed on and off for several miserable months. I wanted to go to StepUP more than anything: it wasn't meant to be.

I revisited this idea of going to college in May of 2004. I had just celebrated one year sober and was a resident at a halfway house in Florida. I called the assistant director of StepUP. He asked for my cumulative GED score, and as I waited for him to call me back, I prayed that the College would let me come. The phone rang. I was told to complete two years of community college and then apply: I couldn't go.

I moved back to New York, only to find that my father was sick. I helped take care of him for the next three-and-a-half years. In that short period of time our relationship flourished. I e-mailed the same assistant director of Step-UP in December of 2006. At three-and-a-half years sober I had the chance to start applying to Augsburg. I was taking a few courses at community college after

not being in school since I was 15. I sat for the ACT at age 22 in the same high school I dropped out of seven years earlier. I was accomplishing things no one thought I would ever be capable of: I did not expect to be accepted to Augsburg.

I woke up. I think it was on July 2, to find a voicemail on my phone. I listened to it. I had been accepted into Augsburg and the StepUP program. I couldn't believe this was my life. I ran downstairs and woke my family up.

It wasn't time for me to come to StepUP neither at age 17, nor at one year sober. I had things to take care of, I needed time to clear up and get grounded in my recovery program before moving halfway across the country. I had to mend the relationship with my father first, and I did.

Thanks to my higher power, a 12-step fellowship, the people who have come and gone in my life, and especially the StepUP program for this opportunity to go away to college— independence is slowly entering my life. My parents, who have stuck by me through this entire journey in recovery, are proud of my accomplishments. I have grown and changed immensely since entering StepUP last September. Everything happens for a reason; it was the right time to come back to Minnesota and I would not have it any other way.

By all means I should not be here. Today, I am one less person my mother has to worry about, an older brother, a friend, a student and a miracle. Life for me is a gift. The longer I stay sober the more I realize how grateful I am I never gave up. I took a chance by coming to StepUP and I am glad I did. A new chapter has been started in my life.

RECOVERY JOURNAL

Over the course of the coming year, the StepUP program will be working to develop a Recovery Journal to serve college-age students. We know that recovery is a gift. Please think about the gifts of the personal growth you've received and how you could share with those who will follow you into adulthood. Perhaps there is a picture on your refrigerator that your young child has drawn? Submit the picture, an article, event, artwork or other personal work for our Recovery Journal. Past or present StepUP program students, parents, or family members may make a submission to otterson@augsborg.edu.

Life with a Dual Diagnosis

Jenni P.

Hello, my name is Jenni. I'm an addict and I'm eating disordered. I was diagnosed as chemically dependent in 2001 and diagnosed as purging anorexic in 2003. It has been a long road this past seven years. And this year alone has been a challenge as I finally took my diagnoses seriously and began the work to let go of my addictions and find a better way of life.

Dealing with a dual diagnosis has not been easy. The first time I got sober from cocaine in 2004 I did so on my own. Though, the only reason, I am sure, was because I traded the intensity of my drug use for a more intense fall into my eating disorder. Again too, when I was doing better with food I'd start abusing ADD meds and relapse into using drugs to avoid facing my emotions.

I've never had any treatment for my chemical dependency besides outpatient therapy, but I've been hospitalized twice for my eating disorder. Treatment wasn't easy to find though because most eating disorder treatments won't deal with chemical dependency while most drug treatment places won't deal with eating disorders. After unsuccessful attempts to deal with them separately, I realized this past year that I needed to work on both at the same time or else I was destined to continue trading the addictions back and forth.

Life with an eating disorder is not all about being thin despite what the media portrays. It is about control and escape. I used the obsession with my body and food to keep myself from the traumatic events that coincided with my addictions. As my weight plummeted I lost control; the eating disorder became my life and I sunk further into depression and desperation as I found I couldn't stop my behaviors.

To deal with the fact that I was out of control I once again sought escape. I found it through school and drugs; justifying my relapses by telling myself that I was only taking drugs to help me study. My perfectionism with keeping up the appearance of

normalcy forced me to hide my addiction not from just other people but from myself. I lived in a world of denial—I didn't have any problems as long as my grades were perfect.

My perfectionism with keeping up the appearance of normalcy forced me to hide my addiction not from just other people but from myself.

But I couldn't keep this up for long. My first semester at Augsburg I accidentally overdosed, wound up in the ER, and had to take a medical leave from school; I was severely suicidal and my body was struggling to stay alive while I abused it with drugs, over exercising, starving and bingeing and purging.

I've come a long way since that day in the hospital. After two rounds of treatment for my eating disorder and intense therapy I've found the 12 steps and started my new life. It's been hard work and I'll never be completely out of the woods. For as long as I'll be addicted to drugs I'll be addicted to food. I have to watch myself every day and every meal; most importantly I have to

take things one day at a time.

I joined StepUP this past fall and that has changed my life even more. I've found a huge support group that relates to and can help me in my recovery. One of the most terrifying things I've done was to open up to my flat about my eating disorder but it was also one of the most rewarding; all the women were very supportive and offered to help in any way they can. Now I have people who hold me accountable in my recovery, both from drugs and from my eating disorder, and who help out any time I am struggling.

I've been abstinent from my eating disorder for three months and sober from drugs for a year; this has been the best time in my life. Without my Higher Power, the support of friends and family, my sponsor, the fellowships of AA and Eating Disorders Anonymous, and my treatment team I wouldn't be where I am now. Today I am grateful for my sobriety as well as for the experiences I've had that have given me the ability to speak out for everyone suffering with chemical dependency and eating disorders.

StepUP Academic Skills Workshop – Wellness

The StepUP program students recently took part in an academic skills workshop, designed to enhance learning engagement and academic success related to education and campus living. Jen Zotalis, a local independent consultant, facilitated the workshop.

The different components of wellness were addressed – physical, emotional, intellectual, occupational, social, naturalist, and spiritual wellness. Students learned how personal wellness enhances attention, concentration, memory, information processing, and higher order thinking skills. Healthy practices were emphasized because they provide mental and physical stamina and allow students to sustain their academic practices through the end of the semester.

The three physical wellness resources that play key roles in achieving stamina are nutrition, sleep, and exercise. Practices and techniques for enhancing physical stamina were introduced, such as decreased intake of sugar and caffeine, taking multivitamins, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, napping, and the utilization of Tai Chi or yoga classes. Specific practices for students challenged with ADD/ADHD were also addressed.

Zotalis addressed the management of semester papers and projects, emphasizing planning strategies, choosing a topic, and how to research material when preparing for writing projects.

Certain skills were introduced as keys to successful writing, including starting with a vision, moving to re-vision, defining concept and content, understanding structure and organization, having a stylistic voice, and the mechanics of confident writing.

Students also learned tools for best study practices in preparation for exams, such as time management, anticipating test content, strategies for review, study guides and materials, “cramming” and triage test taking, stress management, group study, and test anxiety.

If they practice consistency and routine of nutrition, sleep, exercise, and study, Zotalis said students are setting themselves up to meet their personal goals. This carries into every aspect of the student’s life including recovery, academics, occupational, and social. Zotalis teaches these skills to the students entering into the StepUP community.

For the Spring 2008 semester, four Academic Skills Workshops will be held February through April to provide academic support and strategies for success approaching midterm and final exams.

Christian Vocation and the Search for Meaning

Jeremy Myers, assistant professor, religion

REL100: Christian Vocation and the Search for Meaning is a class that every Augsburg student must take. Some look forward to it, others do not. My experience has taught me that StepUP students generally thrive in this class. Why is that? I have two theories. First, the students seem to bring every ounce of their life experience to the table. In general, they do not take anything for granted, especially an opportunity to expand one’s worldview. They are rarely, if ever, apathetic toward the subject matter and have proven to be avid critical thinkers. Second, many have come to the realization that their survival depends upon some recognition of the relationship that exists between themselves and their higher power. They are eager to move beyond simply expressing a dependence upon a higher power. They actually want to know more about how people over the ages have thought about God and gods, why different people believe in different ways, and what (if anything) organized religion might have to offer. God is not something to be acknowledged but to wrestle with and chase after. This is good and it makes teaching them so exciting.

Many of the students I have taught who are associated with the StepUP program have humbly shared their life experiences with other students in class which has benefited their classmates in a couple ways. First, it has inspired them to think more deeply about the blessings of life so they are not missed. Second, though I have no data to support this, I would have to assume that when a StepUP student shares his or her story of addiction and recovery with another student that it has a positive impact upon the other students’ decisions surrounding drugs and alcohol.

There are days when I have to pinch myself because I can’t believe I have the opportunity to get paid to do what I love, wonder about God with young adults. My experience with the students of StepUP has only reaffirmed my vocation by encouraging me to teach about religion with the sense of urgency, seriousness, and humor that religion, life, and recovery demand of us. They inspire me to be a better teacher, and I am thankful.

SAVE THE DATE

StepUP Program Graduation

Celebration honoring students graduating from the StepUP Program and/or Augsburg College

Friday, May 2, 2008 at 1 p.m., Sateren Auditorium

Wellness Programming in Oren Gateway Center

Phillip Hernandez

The Oren Gateway Wellness Programs is an initiative which includes 30 programs to improve decisions on a variety of individual topics. Each program is developed by Residence Life student staff to help promote healthy expectations and a successful collegiate experience.

The focus of the wellness programming model is to help students create their own multidimensional plan for wellness, starting in their first year of college and continuing well beyond graduation. Aspects that are addressed include identifying overall wellness goals, striving for balance, organizing the plan, staying on track, accessing campus resources, self-improvement, staying on top of coursework, making thoughtful decisions, identifying strengths, and obtaining confidence to achieve more.

Oren Gateway residents say they enjoy getting everyone together and having a laid back, good time, and talking about wellness. The Oren Gateway wellness programming model has brought a sense of community, and positive and healthy social interaction and fun.

Angie B., StepUP resident advisor on fourth floor reports, "They seem to bring a good turnout and many different people in

StepUP end up showing up. It's a great way to get students together and have a good time, without drugs or alcohol."

"When I first heard of the wellness model, I thought it was a great way for me to incorporate these things and make them more enjoyable and fun," explains Dave Afdahl, community advisor on the third floor of Oren Gateway. "After doing some programs, I've discovered that I can learn a lot about the residents and also that I can work a lot on these models in my own life. They've been helpful for me too."

One of the best things about the wellness programs is that they are applicable to everyone. In Oren Gateway, the residents are from all across the board, from first-year students to seniors getting ready to graduate. The wellness programs meet the students where they are at and challenges them to think about what the next step for them is going to be.

To keep residents in the loop, each resident has been given a brochure of all the wellness programs happening this semester. You can find a copy of this brochure in the OGC lobby near the welcome desk. The programs are also posted on the Residence Life website at <http://www.augsburg.edu/reslife/oren>.

Continued from page 3

no idea how much my life was going to change after that point.

Since I've been at Augsburg and in the StepUP program, I have had great academic success, through the assistance of faculty at the College and the StepUP staff. I've been held accountable with class attendance, work, and StepUP meetings. When I came to Augsburg in the fall of '06 I had no idea what I would be capable of in school and how successful I would be. I could not have

done it without StepUP. Not only have I received many wonderful gifts from the StepUP program, I've also been able to give back to the program. This year, I have been the RA on the women's flat in Oren Gateway. I believe that I have been able to be a good example to other women in the program within this role. Last year I was on the governing board, and this year I am a member of the StepUP Leadership Team. I am forever indebted to the StepUP program for helping me have a successful educational experience at Augsburg College.

A Parent's Perspective

Barbara and Mike H.

It was no surprise to hear recently that the StepUP program has a fairly lengthy waiting list (100-plus) for next year. StepUP is an amazing program, and we are very thankful and proud that our son has embraced it and is challenged and thriving. He is now completing his second year in the program.

We could certainly go on at great length about the advantages of StepUP and Augsburg and our personal story. But perhaps the best way to tell interested parents about what we've experienced is to answer a few questions.

We're from California, very close to San Francisco. Without a doubt, we had questions and concerns—and more than a few misconceptions—when considering sending our son 1,500 miles away to StepUP, Augsburg, and (freezing) Minnesota winters.

We wondered, for example ...

Will our son be safe and get the individual attention he needs to remain successful in recovery?

We were very pleased to discover what a supportive, safe, and structured environment the program provides. In addition to regular weekly sessions with a StepUp counselor, students have the support of their individual sponsors, a StepUP resident advisor who resides on their floor in Oren Gateway, and the StepUP director and staff, who are readily available in the StepUP office (just downstairs in Oren Gateway). But perhaps the greatest source of ongoing support are the friends within the program, who share experiences, truly take care of each other, and are always there in a time of need. We know that our son is making lifelong friendships that will offer support for many years to come.

Is it just a continuation of rehab, not really exposing him to a real-world college experience?

The great thing about Augsburg is that it is a small, highly-regarded liberal arts college that offers not only outstanding

academics but also unique opportunities for those interested in sports, theatre, music, film, student government, spirituality, politics, and so on. StepUP is of course a huge part of our son's experience at Augsburg, but there are many other areas of interest that consume his time. He has played on sports teams, been an RA, participated in student government, organized fundraisers, and volunteered to speak to high school and college groups about his experiences.

Do they have any fun? How are they perceived by other non-StepUP students?
We wondered if our son might not immediately "connect" with others in the program and might not find friends there.

Quite the opposite was true. These young people clearly have fun, explore all the great things that college life offers, and are challenged by each other in good ways. We have had the opportunity to invite several StepUP students out to California to stay with us or to travel on vacation with us, and we've seen firsthand their energy and excitement for life. These are dynamic, smart, talented, and caring individuals who are pursuing careers in law, medicine, business, psychology, and other fields.

Students and faculty at Augsburg pick up on this and often note that StepUP students seem to have a special bond and clearly know how to have a good time. Faculty seek out StepUp students to participate in international programs (as our son did last summer, in Greece and Turkey) because they know they will be good team members and provide a positive influence on fellow travelers.

All in all, we are very pleased with StepUP, extremely proud of our son, and are hopeful that the program will provide similar experiences for more and more families.

We were very pleased to discover what a supportive, safe, and structured environment the program provides.

StepUP to Present at IECA on Educational Recovery Services

This spring StepUP will join the Hazelden Center for Youth and Families and Gray Wolf Ranch to present “Getting Into Recovery, Living in Recovery, and Thriving in Recovery.” The presentation will be part of the spring conference of the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA) held in Minneapolis, Minn., May 15-17, 2008. The directors of all three programs will present with two StepUP and Augsburg alumni who will share their experiences from primary treatment through college graduation.

The presentation is designed to highlight adolescent recovery and educational services available throughout the continuum of chemical dependency recovery. The benefits from primary treatment, extended continuing care, and a collegiate recovery community will be presented. Program design and the necessary components of each stage of recovery will be discussed. Former students will speak from their experiences as they share the hope and strength they have received along their journey of recovery.

IECA is a non-profit international professional association representing full-time experienced independent educational

advisors. IECA sponsors professional training institutes, workshops and conferences, publishes a directory of qualified consultants, offers information to students and families regarding school selection issues, and works to ensure that those in the profession adhere to the highest ethical and business standards.

IECA conferences are attended by consultants, college and program admissions officers, administrators and staff, and related service companies. Conferences feature thought-provoking and informative workshops and discussions led by leaders in their fields including specialists in educational trends, college admissions, and boarding school issues, adolescent development, learning differences, and emotional disorders and treatments.

StepUP's presence at this conference will help spread the word about our premier program and open new doors to those working directly with students and families. Visit www.IECAonline.com for more information about the conference and presentations.

Emerging Leaders – Forming a Student Leadership Team

Every year the StepUP Leadership Team prepares to form a new student government, looking for StepUP student leaders who have proven themselves. We are currently in the process of grooming emerging leaders for the coming year. Typically ideal students have been with us for more than one semester, are working a strong recovery program, have been involved in recovery service, and may have also served on our Review or Governing Boards. They have experienced our contract, witnessed students who are successful, and have found success themselves.

Some students have come to StepUP highly motivated and have not had difficulties setting priorities. Our priorities are recovery, academics, and a rich social life in recovery. As students learn to be successful they need to keep these priorities in mind, and if they make a mistake, take ownership of their behavior (Step 10), which provides the willingness that recovery requires.

The task of the Emerging Leaders is to examine the present government process, suggest changes for the future, and set a platform for the governmental term. Central to that process is the concept that less government is more. In order to have less government involvement in their personal and academic lives, recovering people are called to be willing, responsible, and to take action. When students are able to admit errors and make amends, they and the community are restored to wholeness. It is said that as people become addicts, they become their own worst enemies.

Recovery is all about making things right. Our Emerging Leaders will examine how we can integrate restorative justice into the program.

Most recently the Emerging Leaders have been discussing restorative justice. This is very closely tied to the 12 Step process of making amends. Although we have a contract outlining consequences for student behavior, we are exploring additional ways to use the amends process within our living environments and our Review Board process.

Presently some of our Emerging Leaders are serving on the Review and Governing Boards. Their experience of learning how both branches of government work will be helpful as we transition to the coming year. Over the last year our leaders worked to build format in the above branches and to strengthen the dialogue of the Leadership Team. Our present Leadership Team will attend the Joint Meeting of Adolescent Treatment Effectiveness conference (JMATE), presenting for the third year in a row.

We look forward to the coming weeks, as our new platform is developed and our 2008-2009 Leadership Team comes on board.

Education Fair

Jamie Hedin

On January 9, the Augsburg College StepUP program and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions hosted the first annual Education Fair for Students in Recovery from alcohol and other drug addictions. This inaugural event welcomed more than 100 students and administrators from local recovery high schools to a day of workshops, exhibitor booths, and fellowship with other students in recovery.

The event came to fruition after surveying more than 150 high school students in Minnesota to assess their post high school preparation, plans, and needs. We were able to complete this process with the help of a grant from the State of Minnesota to provide educational opportunities to students in recovery. The data collected in this survey illuminated the need for post-high school planning and options exploration for this student population. Students noted that they wanted to explore an array of post high school options including trade schools, technical and community colleges, and two- and four-year colleges and universities. Some also expressed a need for additional assistance in the form of resources and tools for assessing their options.

With the assistance of the Augsburg College Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the StepUP program planned an event that would provide support for these students. The collaborative efforts generated resources and tools in the form of post secondary educational options within the state of Minnesota and educational seminars that reflected needs as described in the

Continued from page 1

of the program as we move forward. Their creative works will be transformed into a DVD about the StepUP program to be available to prospective students, treatment centers, and to be used as a marketing tool. I am consistently amazed at the people who continue to tell us they have not heard about our nationally known program. This project will help get the word out.

All too often the world continues to hear about adolescents and young adults and the troubles they cause due to their alcohol and drug use. And you can recall the impact this had on you personally. What I am here to tell you is There is Hope.

survey. We felt it was important to include educational workshops that empowered the students to make informed decisions about their future and to equip them with the resources to make these choices.

We were thrilled to have exhibitors from Century College, The College of Saint Scholastica, Saint Paul College, Metro State University, Argosy University, The College of St. Catherine, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the Aveda Institute. The educational workshops addressed issues such as college readiness, how to pay for college, post high school educational options, and how to stay sober in college. Others offered tips for taking the ACT, how to fill out applications, and how to maintain wellness as a student who is in recovery.

One of the most attended workshops was a panel discussion that included StepUP program students who shared their journeys in recovery and answered questions from the student audience. This inspiring session had a level of openness and honesty that magnified the students' inner strength and spirit of recovery. It also provided hope for the high school students to begin thinking about the future and how to become the people they were created to be.

This gathering of young adults in recovery proved to be a wonderful success with hopes and plans of continued improvements in the years to come with this annual event.

Recently, I walked into a room filled with StepUP students and great warmth came over me. I looked around and thought "this is the future." Look around you. The future is in this room. Young men and women who value the differences in each other and know that they can make a difference in the world. Young people who have been through the fire and have risen up out of the ashes to claim their place in the world. They are well on their way, step by step, one day at a time.

All of you have contributed to the success of these students. We have grown together and continue to learn from each other. My life has forever been changed by these students and I am forever grateful. The FUTURE BELONGS TO THEM.

... hope for the high school students to begin thinking about the future and how to become the people they were created to be.



Campus Box 82
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit No. 2031

ADDRESS
SERVICE
REQUESTED



Send us your information!

Send your news, photos, and information by mail to StepUP, CB 82, Augsburg College, 2211 Riverside Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55454, or by e-mail to otterson@augsborg.edu.

Personal Information:

Full name _____ Graduation year or last year attended _____
Home address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home telephone (_____) _____ E-mail _____
Partner _____ Class year if Augsburg _____

Work Information:

Employer _____ Job title _____ Work phone _____

Additional/Advanced Degrees:

Degree _____ Institution _____ Area of study _____ Date conferred _____

News (marriages, births, deaths, anniversaries, etc.): _____

