

Director's Letter

by Patrice Salmeri • StepUP program director

On February 22, 2007, we began celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the StepUP Program. The night was filled with excitement and gratitude as we listened to student and alumni stories and honored the El-Hibri Family for their continued support of young people in recovery. The evening began with alumni Max Marcy '03 as the emcee and followed with current student Joe Trenary, class of 2007, and alumna Sue Karber, class of 2002, sharing their stories and journeys through StepUP.

They were stories of humility and gratefulness, perseverance and courage. There was also a silent and live auction. The live auction consisted of students offering their cleaning services or yard clean-up services. The room was buzzing with bids. The students brought in \$1,200.

StepUP has indeed changed lives and saved lives. It is a place to grow and thrive, to change and become. Our students have the opportunity to impact the surrounding community on a daily basis as they speak to audiences in middle and high schools, college classes, city council meetings and churches. Over the past 10 years Step UP has served 342 students. We are an abstinence-based program in which 84% of the students remain so while in our program. The students' mean GPA over the last 10 years is 2.87.

StepUP remains one of 10collegiate programs in the country. We are by far the most comprehensive combining residence hall living with structured counseling and support services. This fall the StepUP Program will move to our new home in the Oren Gateway

Center. The new residence hall in the Oren Gateway Center will allow the program to serve 64 students, making StepUP the largest recovery housing community on any college campus in the country.

We accept this challenge realizing the responsibility that comes along with serving young people in recovery. We will continue to celebrate our 10 years of service on October 12, 2007, as we dedicate the new Oren Gateway Center. Congressmen Jim Ramstad and Patrick Kennedy will be on hand to speak and formalize the operations in our new home.

We remain grateful to you, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and Augsburg College for the gift of StepUP and the continued opportunity to serve.

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Student Leadership Activities: Spring Semester Office of Drug Control Strategy Visit, April 25, 2007

By David Hadden • StepUP assistant director

We would like to thank Congressman Jim Ramstad, Augsburg College Government and Community Relations Representative Tracy Beckman, and our friends at the Texas Tech Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery (Dr. Kitty Harris and Amanda Baker). Their efforts made it possible for students representing the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS) to meet with the Demand Reduction Staff of the Office for National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the Executive Office of the President of the United States.

ONDCP is responsible for guiding the strategic plan for our government in providing treatment, prevention, or interdiction of alcohol and other drug-related problems in our nation. ONDCP staff, Director of StepUP Patrice Salmeri, Director of ARS Andy Finch, and ARS Operating Committee Chair Monique Bourgeois guided youth in discussing how recovery schools influence recovery.

The White House has recognized

the need for comprehensive strategies to prevent, treat, and disrupt unlawful availability of alcohol and other drugs. Our friend U.S. Congressman Jim Ramstad has led the way with U.S. Congressman Patrick Kennedy in efforts to impact access to treatment and recovery support services.

Thanks to their support, students representing the ARS and emerging student organizations were able to meet with the staff of the Office of Demand Reduction to discuss how recovery school environments provide a practical solution for the difficulties our country faces in protecting the gains of treatment among adolescents and young adults.

University-level students included students from Rutgers University, Texas Tech University, Augsburg College, Case Western University, The University of Minnesota, University House (a Minneapolis sober house), and SOBER, a student organization



associated with The University of Minnesota Boynton Health Services. Also in attendance were high school students representing Sobriety High, Solace Academy, Archway Academy, and North Shore Academy.

For more information visit:
www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/index

A Sense of Belonging

By Britta S.

I came to Augsburg last fall as a freshman with much curiosity and uncertainty as to what to expect, not only from the college but StepUP as well. I was excited but nervous that StepUP was going to restrict me too much, have cliques, take up too much of my time, and cause other deterrents.

When it finally came to move-in day, I was greeted enthusiastically by admissions staff, StepUP staff, and StepUP students ready to help me lug my boxes up to my room and help me set up my room and bed. My new roommate also was waiting for me in our room, ready to help and excited to get to know me. Immediately I felt a sense of belonging.

As the semester began I quickly

realized how StepUP is a tight-knit community. It was easy meeting people and making friends because of all we had in common. Contrary to the cliques of friends I had been expecting, everyone seemed to get along really well and was not exclusive. I found myself staying up watching movies, going to meetings, playing Nintendo, or just hanging out and having a good time with my new friends.

I was surprised to learn that StepUP also played a role in my academics. Early in the year I met with a StepUP academic skills specialist who helped me organize my schedule, find time for studying, and contacted my professors. It impressed me how my professors at Augsburg took the initiative to get to

know me and the support they provided. As I got to know a couple of them better, they shared with me their experiences, both family and personal, with chemical dependency. After the completion of a semester I had this awesome sense of accomplishment when my peers, counselor, and professors took pride in all that I had achieved.

StepUP has helped me in many areas of my life, from finding a sponsor to learning how to have fun in sobriety. It has surpassed all of my expectations because it is effective, supportive, and helpful while still being a lot of fun. I have found my niche here in the StepUP program.

My First Year in StepUP

By Katherine D.

Close to a year ago, I was a very different person. Around this time in 2006, I was trapped in a car with my family for 20 hours, driving from Washington, D.C., to Plymouth, Minnesota, with only a cell phone, a CD player, and a few books to keep me sane. As we made the long trek to Hazelden Center for Youth and Families (HCYF), I felt like my world was falling apart all around me as I watched idly, completely powerless and alone.

Today I am still powerless over alcohol and drugs—that much hasn't changed—but I have the power to live sober one day at a time, make good decisions, and be happy. In my experience at Augsburg this year, I have found StepUP to foster an environment where happiness, responsibility, friendship, and accountability flourish and co-exist, creating a safe haven within the greater Augsburg community that is eminently conducive to sobriety.

I was introduced to Augsburg and the StepUP Program while in treatment at HCYF, but immediately wrote it off, citing a litany of excuses as to why I would not even consider such an

option: *Who has ever heard of Augsburg? I do not want to live in Minnesota, it's too cold, etc.* My resolve was slowly chipped away, however, as I learned more about StepUP, visited Augsburg, and met StepUP students—I couldn't help but start to like the program.

Having recently finished my first semester of college as a StepUP student, I am happy with my decision to attend Augsburg. It was hard for me at first because I had such vivid and rigid expectations of the archetypal college experience. All throughout high school, I was dead-set on attending a small, wealthy East Coast liberal arts school like Tufts, Bowdoin, Haverford or Dartmouth, replete with tree-lined quads and stone buildings with ivy-coated walls—I refused to consider anything below the Mason-Dixon line or further west than New Hampshire.

Having broken free from such a restrictive, narrow mold and opening my mind, I honestly have only good things to say about Augsburg, StepUP, and Minneapolis. The support in the StepUP community—between the other StepUP students, StepUP affiliates and

the dedicated StepUP counselors—is unmatched. It is hard to feel alone or to slip by unnoticed. Everyone within StepUP is woven together by one common thread—sobriety—stitching a beautiful, unique pattern that encompasses a variety of backgrounds and experiences to make up a compassionate, distinctive community. Whether we are studying together, eating dinner at the cafeteria or going to see a movie, we StepUP students always have fun together and understand each other; it is rare to find such a community within a college that is so accepting, friendly, and supportive.

By going against myself and trying something completely new and different (i.e. moving to Minnesota), I have had an enriching first semester, made really great friends, and thoroughly enjoyed all of my classes thus far. I have come to view StepUP as my home—a safe place where I feel comfortable and at ease, surrounded by genuine, understanding people, a place that welcomes newcomers with open arms, and, most of all, a loving community that is truly something special.

Women's Retreat

By Eileen Mitchell • StepUP Chemical Dependency Counselor

The second annual StepUP Women's Retreat was held on a cold weekend in January at the Villa Maria Retreat Center in Frontenac, Minnesota. Thirteen women came together for 24 hours of fun, relaxation, and sharing.

Joining the StepUP students and staff were two counselors from Augsburg's Center for Counseling and Health Promotion – Nancy Guilbeault and Pahoua Yang. Nancy and Pahoua kicked off the retreat with some teambuilding activities that illustrated the importance of knowing what we can give to the community as well as being open to receive from others in the community. This was followed by making individual and group “God Boxes,” a means of giving life issues over to our Higher Power. We relaxed and focused with a yoga session before enjoying some free time and dinner. The cold weather scuttled plans for a bonfire and s'mores, but we had a blast playing games, eating the s'mores components, and just spending time bonding with each other.

Sunday morning was scheduled to begin with a silent meditation walk, but the early hour and frigid temperatures proved too much of a deterrent for many. The remainder of our time was spent making bead bracelets to represent our “universal principles,” enjoying brunch together, and having a group debriefing session.

We came away from this weekend more unified as a community of recovering women and better equipped to face the challenges of the new semester.

Student Leadership Team Attends the Joint Meeting on Adolescent Treatment Effectiveness (JMATE)

By David Hadden • StepUP assistant director

For the third consecutive year, the StepUP Program returned, along with the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS), to the Joint Meeting on Adolescent Treatment Effectiveness (JMATE). This year the meeting was held in Washington, D.C., from Wednesday, April 25, through Friday, April 27. The theme of the 2007 JMATE was “Joining with Families, Youth, and Communities to Improve Adolescent Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment and Recovery.”

Our presentation, facilitated by the Director of the StepUP Program Patrice Salmeri, M.A., L.A.D.C., was entitled “The Developing Student Recovery Movement, Common Themes.” Across the nation, the main problem that colleges deal with is binge drinking on the campus, which is the status quo on which the great majority of higher educational institutions are focused. What has been overlooked is the recovering community that can be found on most college campuses and the development of needed strategies to move young adults into recovery.

Panel members included: the Texas Tech Student Organization, University House in Minneapolis, Groveland House in Minneapolis, Students Off Booze Enjoying Recovery (SOBER), the StepUP Program, Rutgers University, and Case Western University.

Augsburg College recognizes that recovery provides the most logical solution for young people who are pursuing education and working to resolve alcohol and other drug-related addictions or abuse. Recovery strategies support treatment gains, allowing youth to prepare for successful careers as they transition to adult roles in society. As recovering youth mature, they need to develop adult life skills while experiencing meaningful inclusion, testing gradual levels of both leadership and responsibility. Across any college campus in the United States you will find young people who are in recovery from alcohol and other drug addictions. The young people who understand recovery need to be brought to the table in meaningful dialogue for exploring practical solutions in addressing addictions on the college campus.

As these students work to improve their lives, they are improving the system, reducing barriers to helping other young adults and their families. The work that these young people have become involved in helps pave the way for systems change and development of guidelines, which are becoming adopted and adapted within higher education institutions. Bringing young adults to the table in meaningful dialogue will assist improved outcomes.



Top: Jessica, Al, Dana, Josh, Emilie, Tony and Joe StepUP s
2006-2007 Leadership Team in Washington, D.C.

Bottom: Joe, Al, and Tony visit the Washington Monument

Presentation material will soon be linked to:
<http://www.augsburg.edu/stepup/>.

JMATE is sponsored by: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Reclaiming Futures: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), Society for Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Effectiveness (SASATE), and Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC).

A StepUP Parent's Perspective

By Bonnie G.

As a parent you are amazed by all the gifts you see in your children. You envision so many opportunities for them. All I really wanted was for my son to be happy and have a good life.

When his addiction became more apparent, my husband and I would have done anything to inspire him and get him enthused about life. A small part of me, while very naïve about addiction, thought I could rescue him.

In the fall of 2005, my son and I went to an art museum. The exhibit was described as "Inviting the Visitor's Interventions to Produce Some Kind of Transformation." The Chinese calligrapher Xu Bing had created a veiled sky, a net of sorts that hung across a great expanse. Sixty-four hundred silver letters were strewn together to create excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden*. The integrity of the design and its message could only be as strong as the strength of each invisible wire connection, letter to letter. In the center, a vortex cascaded three floors, spilling random letters on the ground below. I was quite inspired. In retrospect, I'm not sure if I was reaching my son with that tornado of words or any of mine.

At some point, in a moment of clarity, some message inspired my son. Shortly after our trip to the museum he chose to seek recovery at Hazelden. This was the beginning of a new outlook on life for him. My husband and I attended the parents' week. It rekindled our hope. We shared stories with other parents and we learned so much. Early on, we were given words of advice and redirection from our son's counselors that we were not ready to hear or accept. Those same words of advice have since become lessons we treasure. Our faith and the connections we made with other parents have carried us through the tough times and have allowed us to celebrate the triumphs with people who really understand.

With each transition our son has worked hard and grown in so many ways. He has taught us so much. We are still learning.

Our son's sponsor had attended Augsburg and felt confident that our son would meet his academic goals as well as find support within the StepUP Program. In our son's friends, we have seen a multitude of talent, diverse interests and a common goal of sobriety and interest in each other's success. Their insights and words of advice to those new on this journey have been invaluable. Each has their own story, something that inspired them to want to change and begin to use their God-given gifts.

Over a period of time, our son's success has allowed him to see the gifts

we have always seen in him. He has a greater knowledge of the possibilities ahead. Ironically, he is taking an Art in the City class and is enjoying it. I think back to our visit to the museum. The hundreds of words of inspiration would not have brought about change until that personal moment of clarity when each person chooses sobriety and takes that first step up on the path to recovery. As a parent, I thank God that places like Hazelden and Augsburg's StepUP program and the people within those groups are there, to empower and applaud our children along the way.

StepUP's 10th *Anniversary Gala*

AN EVENING OF HOPE AND CELEBRATION

TBA

Keynote Remarks by:
TBA

Questions? Contact the StepUP Office at 612-330-1405.

Please consider sponsoring a table as a
Corporate Partner. \$25,000 for a table of eight

Limited number of individual tickets available at \$100.

Tickets available mid-August

Recovery Maintenance and Transition: Twelve Steps, the StepUP Contract, a Message to our Students, Then and Now

As we move to greater levels of independence and leadership, recovery maintenance becomes a key issue. Application of the 12-step approach to maturation stresses the ability to work step 10 and to continuously take daily inventory, admit mistakes, and do the next right thing. As we complete step 10, we then enter the world of the spirit as we ask for wisdom and guidance. Step 11 challenges us to seek meaning in everything we do and to live lives in which we are genuinely true to ourselves while respecting the dignity and wellbeing of others. In recovery, we seek to become better persons, sensitive to our own needs while looking for the greater good. As you enter this agreement, you are challenged to manage old impulsive thoughts and behaviors and to live respectfully.

As a member of the StepUP community, there are four key factors in recovery: to be a friend among friends, a worker among workers, a member of a family, and a useful member of society (*AA 12 and 12, chapter 4*).

OUR HOPES

For our students, program alumni and college graduates, we hope that you will continue your commitment to working a recovery program, whatever works for you – AA, NA, CA, GA, Alanon, Spirituality – and that you will seek some type of mentorship to guide you in recovery. As we support the recovery of present and past students, the 12-step legacy of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness remains central to recovery. Our ability to recognize that high-risk environments, blind spots and co-occurring addictions provide risk factors which require vigilance in ensuring long-term recovery.

The relationship between past and present members of StepUP challenges us to a respectful relationship, which provides new members a pathway to successful adulthood. We have challenged our past and present students to work to reach their potential, to be productive, and to be committed to their work of choice. As students leave the protective environment of Augsburg College, we are hopeful that the effort to care about

self and willingness to reach out to others to give and receive support when life gets difficult. We must not forget that we need to take responsibility for our own recovery addressing emotional and recovery needs, and to take pride in meeting our personal needs.

As we move forward in life, taking responsibility for our behavior, and respecting ourselves and others, are the greatest tasks of all. We hope that the time our students have spent with our recovering community has prepared all to be better citizens, living a life of purpose and intent. Please remember, how you live your life, and what you do does matter. We thank you for the work that you have done which prepares the way for others in recovery to follow.

PROGRAM FACT

StepUP 10-year abstinence history results, Fall 1997 through Spring Semester 2007:

- Average Yearly Abstinence Rate = 84.2%

Rivard Family Invites Alumni, Parents, and Friends of StepUP to Join in Providing Scholarship Support

In May, 2006, Stephen and Christine Rivard of Glenview, Ill., established the Ryan Adrian-Hendrick Rivard Scholarship to honor their son upon his graduation from Augsburg and his successful completion of the StepUP program.

During Ryan's academic journey at Augsburg, he prided himself on the challenge of staying sober and pushing himself to be the best student he could be. This fall Ryan will continue his

education at DePaul University in Chicago pursuing a combined law and MBA degree.

The Rivards were not in a position at this time to establish a fully endowed scholarship (\$25,000) but wanted to do something now to honor their son and provide support to young people in recovery who seek a supportive, sober college experience and need financial help. They decided to establish this scholarship that provides \$1,000 each

semester to support a StepUP student.

Steve and Chris are confident that there are others who could consider making this kind of commitment. They are currently working with the College to send a personal letter of invitation to the StepUP family of alumni, parents, and friends asking them to join in providing scholarship support to StepUP students.

UnBELIEZable

By Richard Birkett '07 and Dan Hayward '07, StepUP alums

At the beginning of January, we traveled to the country of Belize for a medical mission trip with another Augsburg grad, Emily Anderson, and nine other pre-health students from across the country. The trip was set up through International Service Learning, a nonprofit organization based in Kansas City.

We met at the Belize International Airport, hopped on an old, white school bus and drove to Belmopan, a large city in the center of Belize. We stayed at a church compound for a night where we were introduced to common tropical diseases, triage, and physical examination skills. The following morning we set out on a four-hour bus ride through jungles, mountains, citrus groves and arid prairies to Punta Gorda, a city on the southern coast. Rafael and Jenny Chuc, two pastors from the River of Life Church, housed us in an old wooden barn next to their cinderblock church. Despite the scorpions, tarantulas, and fearsome mosquitoes that infested the barn, we slept well since we were the only men on the trip and had the upper floor to ourselves.

Each morning, after a sunrise run and a shower, we climbed back into the bus in anticipation of a two- to three-hour ride down precarious dirt paths to Mayan villages in the mountains near the Belize–Guatemala border. Dr. Zamora, a critical care physician with a practice in Belmopan, led the clinical trips with his family. His wife Ana and the student team set up a makeshift clinic and pharmacy in whatever buildings the village had available, usually a schoolhouse or chapel.

While we were setting up the clinic for the day, we introduced ourselves to the children, usually very friendly and

curious, and took their pictures. Showing them the pictures on our digital cameras was a thrilling experience for them, as most had never seen a picture of themselves, or a mirror for that matter. By the time we had set up, we were swarmed by villagers looking for much-needed medical care as well as many people who just wanted to get a look at the strange people who were visiting their beautiful village in a large white bus.

We split into teams. One team stayed with the doctor to conduct physical exams and patient intake, while the other went door to door in the village conducting community health assessments and sending patients to the clinic. Both experiences were extremely rewarding and educational. In the clinic, we interviewed and examined patients and made a “pre-diagnosis” which was then confirmed or corrected by Dr. Zamora. Through this we were able to gain valuable experience with patient interaction, especially with touching patients, as well as access to the vast knowledge of tropical primary medicine possessed by Dr. Zamora. In the community outreach, we were able to experience the day-to-day life of a Mayan village—thatch roofs, stray pigs, and all. It was amazing to see the beauty and simplicity of life there, as well as the extreme poverty.

On our third clinic day, Richard spent his morning doing door-to-door assessments in a town called Mabil Ha. He arrived at a hut with a smaller Mayan man standing in the doorway. Richard introduced himself and was invited into the smoky home, out of the scorching sun. In the corner, sitting on the mud stove, was a younger girl with a baby

wrapped heavily in cloth tucked tightly in her arms. The father said nothing, but pointed at the child. As Richard pulled away the cloth that wrapped the babe's head, a large hemangioma, a collection of burst blood vessels twice the size of a baseball, was revealed on the back left side of her tiny skull. Richard immediately began asking questions and taking vital signs of the baby. He asked the name of the child, and the father finally spoke, informing him that the baby was not named because they were waiting for her to die. Richard had found nothing else wrong with the child and insisted that they return to the clinic with him to see Dr. Zamora. Dr. Zamora was able to see the child and refer the family to a hospital in the nearest city, Punta Gorda. They were so relieved that there was hope for their child that they decided to name her.

After a full day's work in the clinics, we would climb back into the bus for another bumpy two- to three-hour ride back to our barn, where dinner was waiting for us. We cleaned up and ate, and after about an hour of conversation, couldn't wait to get to bed to start the routine over again bright and early the next morning.

After several days of clinic work, the group headed back to Belmopan for a few days of leisure and sightseeing before heading to an island about an hour off the coast of Belize City named Caye Caulker, where the last two days were spent in a very laid back, Caribbean environment. We were grateful for the inspiring experiences with the Mayans, memories that affirm our choice to attend medical school and the need for service in our lives.

TAKING STEPS TOWARD FUTURE CAREERS

We the staff of the StepUP Program, are proud of the academic achievements of the students within our community. We also share their enthusiasm for the future as they explore various career paths. If you have or know of employment and/or internship opportunities that we can share with our students, please let us know.