



Journeys

A Place to Start:

Kari's Road to Wellness

page 4



Alumni Spotlight: John W.

Biggest positive change as a result of Skyland Trail:

“

I've been able to keep a community of people I met here, stay friends with them, stay connected, and keep them as a support group.

”

Advice to those beginning a recovery journey:

“

Take it day to day. Don't look too far in the future.

”

How to help a friend or loved one:

“

More than likely you know someone who's suffering from some sort of mental illness like depression or anxiety. The best thing to do is to do some research on mental health so you have some understanding of what they're going through. Ask the person, 'what would be the best way to support you?' Sometimes that's the best way to go about it.

”

John W. graduated from Skyland Trail in 2016 and continues to participate in the Alumni Program.



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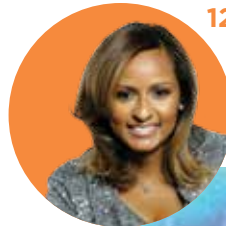
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Each of our clients has a unique journey. This publication tells their stories and ours in aiding them along their way.



Located in Atlanta, Skyland Trail is a nationally recognized nonprofit mental health treatment organization serving adults ages 18 and older with a primary psychiatric diagnosis. Through our residential and day treatment programs, we help our clients grow, recover, and reclaim their lives.

Joint Commission
 Gold Seal of Approval
 since 1998



Member of:
 National Association of
 Therapeutic Schools and Programs



American Residential
 Treatment Association



Association for Community
 Integration Programs





A place to start over. A chance to reset. Time to recover.
Skyland Trail is a healing community where our clients receive the support and services they need to reclaim their lives.

From the moment they set foot on our campuses, they start a journey toward a better future. And they quickly realize that they do not have to travel that road alone.

They are surrounded by a community of supportive peers and a multidisciplinary team of clinical experts. As they engage in our treatment program, clients begin to clear the path ahead, using newly developed skills and rediscovered strengths to remove long-standing barriers to progress.

After nearly 30 years, we now can celebrate the journeys of so many Skyland Trail alumni! In this issue of *Journeys*, we learn about Kari who graduated from our program in 2008 and still uses the skills she learned at Skyland Trail almost a decade ago to stay healthy and live the life she wanted.

We learn about families whose experiences with mental illness have inspired them to help others. And we hear

from friends and donors who, year after year, and even generation after generation, continue to demonstrate their support for individuals and families struggling with mental illness by investing in Skyland Trail.

I feel so honored and proud to be a part of this special place, where so many people find a new beginning. Thank you for being a part of our community and for helping individuals and families start their journey to recovery and a better life here at Skyland Trail.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth Finnerty
President & CEO



Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association Welcomes Skyland Trail Chief Medical Officer as New President

The Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association (GPPA) recently named Skyland Trail Charles B. West Chief Medical Officer Ray Kotwicki, MD, MPH, as president, effective June 2017. The GPPA is a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association. The organization comprises 700 psychiatrists who collectively work together to ensure humane care and effective treatment are provided for all persons with a mental illness.

Katie Dozier joins Skyland Trail as Vice President of Development

Katie Dozier joined Skyland Trail in March 2017 as vice president of development following the retirement of Margaret Denny. Previously, Dozier served as the director of development for Brain Health and Neurosciences at the Emory University School of Medicine; a campaign manager at Coxe, Curry and Associates; and a senior brand manager for The Morrison Agency. Dozier received her B.S. in commerce with concentrations in marketing and management from the University of Virginia.



Favorite thing about Skyland Trail: Being part of a community saving lives



Admissions Counseling Hours Extended

Skyland Trail's admissions department has extended the hours of operation to 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Sunday, 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. During these hours, admissions counselors are available to answer questions and kick off the admissions process.



See back page for more details!

Via Twitter

Honored to have Dr Ray Kotwicki @SkylandTrail talk about mental health in teens with parents @WestminsterATL @abaconmoore

Thank you to @SkylandTrail for hosting NAMI Georgia and the #CIT program this week! @namigeorgia

Via Facebook

“As a current client at Skyland Trail, I can say that I am so grateful to have found such a beautiful environment for healing. I am constantly impressed and overwhelmed by the quality and qualifications of the staff and even volunteers. If you are looking for a treatment facility, I can't imagine there is any place more beautiful, welcoming and filled with outstanding staff from the grounds crew to the therapists to the psychiatrists to the Board Members.” – Dallas N.

“Skyland Trail is the place that helped me choose recovery, it was a hard choice to make but I truly believe the fact that Skyland had so many opportunities (individual/group therapy, art therapy, horticulture therapy, healthy challenge...) is really what solidified my choice to pursue recovery. I have been to many other treatment facilities but Skyland really is the one place that helped save my life.” – Alex B.



A Place to Start: Kari's Road to Wellness

I took a surfing lesson this morning. I also took one back in 2008. The two lessons could not have been more different. The one back in 2008 was in Costa Rica and it was on a whim; I was following the crowd and was incredibly hungover to the point of being a danger to myself. I earnestly wanted to surf, but mainly I just waded in the water and tried not to drown. I also wanted to windsurf while I was there. But again, I was too hungover. On the day I had scheduled to windsurf, I couldn't even leave my hostel except to get bread to soak up the gallon of alcohol eating away at my stomach lining. I had a bevy of bucket list items planned for my five month residency in Costa Rica, however, my best attempts merely yielded destruction, distraction, or an athlete's least favorite, DNFs (Did Not Finish).

“I wanted fame/fortune/success so earnestly, yet I could not ever seem to get there. I had good intentions but zero follow-through.”

Life went like that for a long time. I wanted fame/fortune/success so earnestly, yet I could not ever seem to get there. I had good intentions but zero follow-through. I was basically a car that accidentally buried its tires in the mud. I was gunning it with all my might but my wheels were just spinning incessantly digging myself deeper and exaggerating my ineptness. Ironically, I was 15 when I got a friend's yellow Chevy cavalier stuck in the mud. I had no idea that would be an accurate portrayal of my next 10 to 15 years. Yes, I had bouts of accomplishments and growth, but for the most part I was tottering the Earth frenzied without direction or regard.

Prior to Skyland Trail, I lived my life

at 110 mph. I was unknowingly driving it straight in to the ground; I'd broken through Earth's surface and was feeling the intense heat of a living hell. Now living in Atlanta, I succumbed to debilitating depression, where the only thought I could entertain was how to rid the world of me. Then, maybe the very anti-depressant that kept me from my eradication jolted me into a state of total thought combustion.

This time, I was angry and irritable, yet optimistic, driven without limitation, and jubilant. Manic highs are like that. I danced all night. I called everyone in my cellphone. I burned a candle and drew a bath. I checked my 401k and made another vodka drink. The forgotten

candle started a small fire in my bedroom while I was tending to one of 17 other urgent things. Luckily my Virginia Highlands apartment was empty from wall to wall, so I was able to put the fire out easily.

I had a bunch of lovely furniture and knick knacks in a storage unit north of the city, but I couldn't be bothered

with making a home. If it didn't involve drinking and drugs, or drugs and drinking, I simply didn't have the time. Nor did I have the time to call Georgia Power. My best friend who lived 500 miles away called the power company and arranged to have the power turned on after she learned that I'd basically been squatting in my own apartment. I'm not sure if I ever made it into that bath or how I managed to reside in an Atlanta apartment in a hot and humid August without the necessary power to turn on my perfectly good A/C unit.

I do know that I have three brave friends to thank for throwing an intervention at me. I didn't think so at the time. At that time I thought I should move on to law school since I gave such a fierce and bullet-proof rebuttal. I really wound myself up with that thought and the other 4,508 thoughts tickling my brain. I didn't sleep for days, and the next thing I knew, I was staring into the surveillance camera at a psychiatric hospital wondering if I could get a copy of the footage, because surely I looked good and it would be worth something someday. I was rushed to the ER since my blood pressure was through the roof. I was surrounded by loving and caring friends. Two of which made me wet my pants from laughter on

“Ironically, I was 15 when I got a friend's yellow Chevy cavalier stuck in the mud. I had no idea that would be an accurate portrayal of my next 10 to 15 years.”



the hospital bed. I've witnessed my mom and my aunt wet themselves with laughter as well. So it's genetic and therefore pardoned since it's a family disorder. Yes, mental illness, in all its atrociousness, can also be quite amusing and uproarious. I digress.

This was my first and only trip to the psych ward. At the time, I loved it. If I had been on the other side of manic depression, I'm certain it would have been a different story. The amusement and regalement of my stay included, but was in no way limited to, apple juice, coloring books, smoke breaks, wildly interesting new friends, and all around lunacy. At the same time, it was treacherous. I was fearful and imprisoned; I laid awake the

first night (no surprise there) afraid that my roommate would knife me if I gave her the chance.

A psychiatrist recommended Skyland Trail to my mom who flew down from Ohio. This was the only time in my life that I couldn't stand my mom and refused to listen to, be around, or even acknowledge her. I didn't have anything else going for me at the time, and my friends encouraged me to consider it. Lucky for me, three meals and a safe place to sleep sounded promising.

At 25 years old, I was one of the oldest clients in the Skyland Trail residential program at the time. Luck favored me again. Emotionally, I was about 19, so I fit right in. *(continued next page)*

“If it didn't involve drinking or drugs, or drugs or drinking, I simply didn't have the time.”



I was placed in a peer group called “the yellow team” with the like-minded dually diagnosed culprits of life. Skyland Trail was clean and safe and welcoming. This was not something I was accustomed to at this point in my life. I met the new challenge with all the fervor of an exuberant student on her first day of classes. I took thorough notes in group; I was there to soak up all the knowledge I could about my new diagnosis – bipolar disorder – so that I could conquer it.

It took a very intense two weeks to finally admit that I had a problem with alcohol. I sat down to write how alcohol had affected me and my life. The horror of the pages stared back at me and left me

with two choices: I could either go on living the way I was, or I could change.

Twelve step meetings were amazing. People gave warm hugs and hope. They cheered for you as you picked up a newcomer chip. People clapped ferociously because they wanted the sound of the hope and the promise of the program to break through the affliction of the shame and the guilt. Randy drove the yellow team from Skyland Trail to our weekly 12-step meetings, and Anna, our yellow team counselor, taught us about our brains’ wirings and misfirings. She helped me confront feelings for the first time in my life and helped me pen a relapse prevention plan. Anna warned

our team that, statistically, only one out of every four of us would stay clean and sober. I had already sworn that alcohol would never pass these lips again, so I looked around and said to myself, “Sorry chumps. I’m going to be the one.”

I lived in the Skyland Trail residential program for 45 days. Then, I did day treatment five days a week

for months, then day treatment only three days a week, then half days in the intensive outpatient program. It was the first time in my life that I realized there are consequences to my behavior. I was taught that right living requires right action from my primary counselor. I learned that a healthy life requires you to feel feelings, not flee from them. I was introduced to yoga and meditation. I shot endless baskets in the indoor gym. I sweat out years of toxins on the spin bike. For the first time, I was introduced to boundaries and empowerment in my Family Empowerment sessions. I gardened and became one with the soil and the sunlight with our horticultural therapist. I journaled ferociously and took painfully hot showers where I balled my eyes out. I vacuumed my room on Wednesdays and did push-ups every morning. I was late for the bus most mornings; our driver was patient and relatively forgiving. I sang Christmas carols on the front porch in October and played in the Thanksgiving band. I sat with our vocational counselor and she eased my anxieties about the giant gaps I’d have in my resume. I hiked over crisp Fall leaves in North Georgia with our recreational therapist. After nine years, I remember the names of each of these caring Skyland Trail staff - Anna, Corey, Libba, Randy, and Heidi and that’s quite telling of the impact they had on me.

I’d like to say it’s been all milk and honey since Skyland Trail, but that’s not the case. Life happens. Feelings surface. Cross addictions fill a void. Rome wasn’t built in a day. I was so raw that first year out of treatment that a bout of bulimia, chugging cough syrup, and stealing my

“I learned that a healthy life requires you to feel feelings, not flee from them.”



Photos: Mindseye Studio

dad's chemo drugs all appeased my animalistic need to be okay. These destructive behaviors as well as more positive coping skills such as gymming, NAMI meetings, 12 step meetings, continued counseling, doctor visits, and volunteering kept me from completely losing my marbles that first year. At least for me, no one treatment center is a cure all. But Skyland Trail was a necessary starting point; a point of awakening.

Today, by the grace of God, I am clean and sober. No, I was not the one of the original four in my Skyland Trail yellow team to stay sober, but I know that one of my fellow yellow teammates is, and for him, I'm super stoked. In the last nine

years, I've managed to stay out of the psych ward. I hold a job in my trade and I show up on time. Today, I have connect- edness and honesty. I tend to my relation- ships to keep them healthy. I even experience peace some days if I keep my stinking thinking at bay. I am of service to my fellow man. Come to think of it, I do many of the same things that I learned at Skyland Trail; morning push-ups and prayer, cycling, 12 step meetings, yoga, gardening, and hiking. Everything except the scorching showers and singing Christmas carols in October. Also worth mentioning, my credit score is outstand- ing, I pay my taxes, and I hope to have a fiancé soon (if she says yes, God-willing).

“Nine years ago, Skyland Trail started me on my journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance, spirituality, sobriety, and ultimately serenity. And for that I am eternally grateful.”



Creating a Brighter Outlook on Depression

by Raymond J. Kotwicki, MD, MPH, Charles B. West Chief Medical Officer, Skyland Trail

What is major depression?

Major depressive disorder, also called major depression or unipolar depression, is a serious mood disorder with severe symptoms that can interfere with a person's ability to handle daily activities, relationships, and work or school responsibilities. Major depression affects about 6.7 percent of U.S. adults in a given year.

To be diagnosed with major depression, you have to feel sad or experience anhedonia, a loss of interest or pleasure in activities and hobbies, for at least two weeks. Many people with depression also experience problems with concentration, low energy, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, changes in physical activity, or feelings of guilt or worthlessness.

More than 50 percent of all people who die by suicide have major depression. It is imperative that we as a community offer effective treatment for major depression not only to reduce pain and disability but also to prevent suicide and save lives.

How We Treat Depression

In 2016, nearly 60 percent of Skyland Trail patients admitted with a primary diagnosis of major depression. Several elements of our evidence-based treatment program collectively help patients with depression improve their mood and get better.

Medication Management

Effective medication management is an important tool to reduce the symptoms of major depression. While there is no one recipe for success, our six staff psychiatrists are all skilled at developing an effective medication strategy for each patient, one that improves mood, concentration and energy, while minimizing side effects.

Expert Therapists

Skyland Trail therapists receive ongoing training in evidence-based therapeutic modalities for depression, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Patients are matched with a specialized primary counselor and peer group based on their depression diagnosis, and they receive skills-based therapy targeted to address their symptoms.

Future Focused

Our patients are not asked to go back in time to analyze the historical antecedents that led to their depression. Reiterating all the bad things that have happened to you perpetuates the idea that you should feel sad about your life. While we acknowledge the role of your past, we focus treatment on the present, specifically on recalibrating thinking. Patients learn that when difficult situations arise, they can choose to think in a way that counteracts feelings of hopelessness. Helping patients replace what we call "automatic negative thoughts" with healthy thoughts changes the feedback loop and contributes to an improved mood.

Behavioral Activation

When you're depressed and don't feel like doing anything, that's exactly the time to be active. That means exercise. That means socialization. That means not allowing yourself to go back to bed and isolate for the rest of the day. Our treatment team employs behavioral activation to help clients understand the link between behavior and mood. Our experts help patients adopt strategies to use exercise, socialization, and hobbies like art, music, and gardening as tools to stay healthy.

Our Healing Community

When you're depressed, your world tends to shrink. You spend an inordinate amount of time looking internally and thinking about yourself. That can be a recipe for continued depression. Being part of a community, thinking about and helping others, and receiving recognition for your contributions to the community is a really important part of reaching remission from depression.

Together, these approaches help patients make lasting changes in how they think and interact with the world. After completing our treatment program, patients are more able to function in their daily lives and have improved feelings of hope. They get better.

In 2016, about 60 percent of Skyland Trail clients had a primary diagnosis of major depression.

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Offered for Treatment-resistant Depression

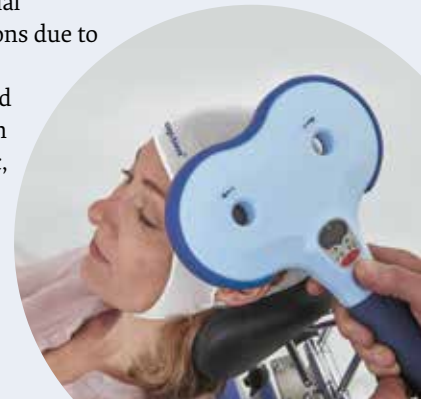
Skyland Trail now offers Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) services.

The FDA approved the clinical use of TMS for the treatment of major depressive disorder in 2008. TMS is a noninvasive brain stimulation therapy. A TMS machine generates a magnetic pulse with field strength similar to that of an MRI machine. The magnetic field then creates an electrical current within the brain. The machine narrowly targets the electrical current to affect the brain's left prefrontal cortex, which is implicated in depression.

Patients receive TMS in one hour sessions (including 37 minutes of treatment delivery), five days a week, for a total about 30 sessions. During the treatment session, patients sit in a reclining chair and can watch TV, read, or simply relax. After the session, patients can go back to their daily routines.

For individuals with major depressive disorder, TMS has been reported to have results approaching those of the "gold standard" depression treatment, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), but with minimal side effects. TMS offers another therapeutic option for individuals with treatment-resistant depression, whose symptoms have not responded to medications. TMS may also be beneficial for patients who cannot take medications due to allergies or other contraindications.

TMS is one of many services offered in the Glenn Family Wellness Clinic, an onsite primary care and wellness clinic, staffed with physicians and clinicians with expertise in both mental health and traditional primary care and preventive medicine.



Skyland Trail client Emiko S. created this image in a process art therapy group. It illustrates how Emiko sees her depression lifting and hope returning.

Demonstrating Success in Depression Treatment

When we talk about depression, we talk about two measures of getting better. The first is called "response." Typically in the research literature when someone has "a response" to treatment, they have at least a 40 percent improvement in symptoms.

At Skyland Trail, we use standardized psychological instruments to measure that change from admission to discharge. But you can also think in practical terms. For example, think of a person who, in the past 6 months, missed 10 days of work because of depression. A response for that person would be if, in the next six months, he missed six days of work instead of 10. The patient with a response is still encounter-

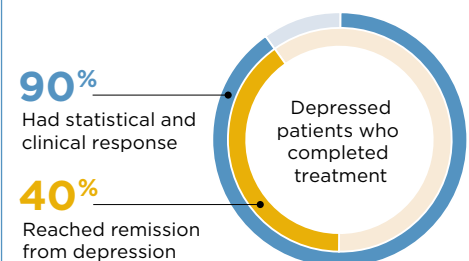
ing some disability due to depression but is showing a 40 percent improvement.

Another measure of getting better is called "remission." In the example above, the patient who reached remission would not miss any days from work due to depression.

In 2016, 90 percent of Skyland Trail clients with depression had a response, and 40 percent reached remission. Patients who reach remission no longer have any disability due to depression.

These outcomes indicate that Skyland Trail's evidence-based treatment strategies yield exceptional outcomes for patients with depression.

Clinical outcomes suggest that for depressed patients who complete treatment at Skyland Trail, 90 percent have statistical and clinical response to treatment, and a full 40 percent reach remission from depression.



One Family's Path:

Moving Forward by Giving Back

Anjali's father died from suicide when she was 8 years old. Forced to grow up quickly, Anjali became her mother's helper and cared for her siblings, including her youngest sister, Shanti.

Many years later, as adults, both women's lives continued to be shaped by mental illness. Shanti experienced episodes of depression and suicidal thoughts. Anjali's oldest son, Kyle, started showing signs of psychiatric illness in grade school. Kyle was eventually diagnosed with bipolar I with psychosis, borderline personality disorder, and substance use. Kyle completed treatment at Skyland Trail in 2015.

Despite their struggles, Anjali, Shanti, and Kyle supported one another as a family and, as individuals, are now forging forward by giving back.

“I so believe that now this is my purpose in life. I need to take my knowledge and blessings to help other people.”



Anjali, mental health counselor

“Mental illness is a lifelong daily challenge,” says Anjali. “But our family is trying to take all of our challenges and turn them into positives to help others.” Anjali just completed the first year of a master’s program to be a clinical mental health counselor. She started an internship this fall. Her plan is to work with young adults with dual diagnosis, hoping one day perhaps to work in partnership with her son. She also started a NAMI chapter at her church and speaks at Skyland Trail family orientation when possible, traveling from Charlotte to volunteer.

“I so believe that now this is my purpose in life. I need to take my knowledge and blessings to help other people.”

“You still have difficult times. You have to allow yourself to grieve a little for what you saw as a potential future for your loved one or your relationship with your loved one. But these experiences have helped me put life in perspective. I appreciate my blessings, and I have learned to value each moment, enjoy each day, and appreciate the simple things in life. My advice to anyone caring for a loved one with a mental health disorder is to never give up.”

“A peer specialist is someone who’s been there, done that, and is willing to help you through the steps to get to a different place in life.”



Kyle, peer support specialist

Temporarily residing at home after living independently for the last seven years has allowed Kyle to reconnect with his siblings, a relationship that, at times, was estranged and complicated.

Kyle recently completed his North Carolina Peer Support Specialist Training. He is now seeking a position as a peer support specialist so that he can use his journey to help others with a psychiatric diagnosis.

“A peer support specialist is more like a friend,” says Kyle. “Someone who’s been there, done that, and is willing to help you through the steps to get to a different place in life. We can help you through situations that are familiar to us.”

As a peer support specialist, Kyle is applying an important idea he learned in treatment. “I started to make progress in treatment when I realized that sometimes it takes more than one person to get somewhere. In my mind, I had to do everything solo. When I allowed myself to be a part of a group, share my experiences, and work with others on my recovery, I was able to move forward.”

“In our social media society, people love to knock others down, but what are we doing to help others heal?”



Shanti, founder, “Silence the Shame”

Shanti is using her platform as an entertainment executive to launch a movement called, “Silence the Shame.” Through the initiative, Shanti hopes to spark a national conversation to increase awareness and funding to support those living with mental health conditions.

“I was seeing the effects of mental illness all around me,” says Shanti. “In addition to seeing my nephew struggle, my best friend died by suicide. I decided to confront the issue head on.”

Silence the Shame launched May 5 with a multimedia, worldwide campaign. It received 90 million impressions in two days, with people sharing the message and showing their support from as far away as Capetown and Tokyo.

“We have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable,” says Shanti. “No one wants to be labeled. The shame we tend to associate with mental illness makes it difficult to open up and share. In our social media society, people love to knock others down, but what are we doing to help others heal?”

Shanti hopes that the Silence the Shame initiative will keep opening up conversation, raising money to help people get the services they need, and start launching new therapeutic programs.

I Don't Have to Live in Chaos Anymore

Lauren T., Financial Aid Recipient



“I really love this place. Skyland Trail has really changed my life.”

For the last 10 years I had been in and out of treatment, but was not officially diagnosed with bipolar disorder until April 2017. I was very resistant to medication and seeing a therapist consistently. I would see someone for a while, take medication for a while, get to a good place, and then say, “Ok. I’m fixed. I’m good. I don’t need this anymore.”

In October 2016, my best friend died from a heroin overdose. I was homeless three days after that. When I finally did get into a place of my own, I was severely depressed and was trying to deal with a lot of overwhelming emotions. My substance use went off the charts. My parents came to me, and my mom said she was scared she was going to be planning my funeral. I told her that I needed help, and we started looking. We found Skyland Trail.

I really love this place. Skyland Trail has really changed my life. Just a year ago, I think I could have ended up dead. I was homeless. I had been in jail before. Now, I have hope that my life doesn’t have to look like that. I don’t have to live in chaos anymore. I have a routine now. I know that it’s OK to have heavy emotions, and I know how to handle them now. I know that I can’t use drugs and alcohol anymore, and that I don’t need them to feel better or to be ok.

Thank you to everyone in the Skyland Trail community. You’ve made a big difference in my life, and I know that it’s not just me. When you see clients walking around campus with our bookbags going to groups, getting better, and finding hope, you help make that possible. So thank you.

Skyland Trail Associates Support Client Services

In addition to fundraising activities like the Associates Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show, Associates members volunteer throughout the year to enhance client services and help make Skyland Trail a welcoming, home-away-from-home for our clients. Associates supported Arts in the Garden this spring by providing cakes for the cake walk and volunteering to facilitate the activity. This summer, several Associates and their families

gathered to assemble welcome bags for new clients. Fall plans include decorating the Skyland Trail campuses for the holidays. Thank you Skyland Trail Associates!

IMAGES: (left) Julie Collins and Diana Tipton (middle) Beth Finnerty, Diana Tipton, Beth Shaifer and granddaughter, Ann Hays, Karen Parker, Sue McKinley, Julene Hodges (right) Karen Parker and Julene Hodges





A Grateful Family: One Mother's Story

We are a grateful family. Our son started in the Skyland Trail day treatment program in 2014, after leaving college due to a major depressive episode. Previously our son had been able to handle many challenges, including a learning disability, by leveraging his core personal strengths of determination, intelligence, creativity and compassion. But during the depression he could not even handle the tasks of day-to-day living. Our whole family was under stress and losing hope.

The Skyland Trail program provided our son everything he needed to do the hard work of recovery, including a better diagnosis, effective drug therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, art therapy, and physical exercise. Our family greatly benefited from family therapy. Perhaps most important, for our son and for us, was the community of compassion and understanding we found at Skyland Trail.

“The Skyland Trail program provided our son everything he needed to do the hard work of recovery...”

“Perhaps most important was the community of compassion and understanding we found at Skyland Trail.”

Our son was able to continue in the program until he had a great set of new skills, better self-knowledge and a renewed ability to draw on his core personal strengths. He chose to return to college and graduated this spring. He looks forward to an interesting career, but remains mindful of doing what he needs to do to manage his mental health.

We will always be grateful to Skyland Trail. It is important to us that Skyland Trail have the resources to continue to offer hope and be able to serve people who need financial assistance, particularly those who suddenly lose insurance coverage when just a little more time in the program would allow them to be much more ready for discharge. Skyland Trail is always in our prayers and is an important part of our charitable giving. Thank you, Skyland Trail!

- Shauna M.



ENSURING OUR FUTURE

Individuals who support Skyland Trail through a planned giving commitment become members of The Cypress Society.

These legacy gifts ensure that Skyland Trail continues to meet the needs of future generations through state-of-the-art facilities and innovative, leading-edge treatment programs.

Contact: Elizabeth Alexander, ealexander@skylandtrail.org, 404-709-3172

Learn more: www.skylandtrail.org/cypress



Firsthand, we have witnessed Skyland Trail's excellent outcomes for clients suffering from mental illness and stand in awe of the change we see in so many lives. These outcomes are based on carefully planned programs, a highly professional staff, and a sensitivity to the changing dynamics of mental health. We are confident in Skyland Trail's ability to sustain this unique combination well into the future. Through Cypress Society giving we are looking to continue our commitment to Skyland Trail into the next generation.

- Melissa Lowe



In My Grandfather's Footsteps: A Legacy of Giving

by Brooks Barge

When I made my first gift to Skyland Trail, I gave in memory of Charles West, the founder of Skyland Trail. My grandfather, Alvin Barge, served on the board of Skyland Trail for many years because he believed in the cause of his dear friend Charles.

I continue my family's tradition of investing in Skyland Trail because I understand the value of mental health treatment – to individuals, families and the community. I have benefited from medication and therapy myself, and I have seen its impact on others. Best-in-class treatment can be life-changing, and I want to help Skyland Trail continue pioneering in this underserved, and too often unaddressed, area of health.

I want my giving to have a substantial impact on the lives of people the organization serves, and I gain fulfillment in contributing to causes where I can see the tangible benefits. Year after year, I hear the profound testimonials of Skyland Trail clients, who often describe how this unique treatment program saved their lives. Many received financial aid, made possible by charitable giving, that helped them complete their treatment. Their stories illustrate how Skyland Trail helps those in immense and often silent pain

learn to help themselves and find peace. Their stories also inspire me to continue to support the important work of Skyland Trail and to be supportive of those in my community who may be struggling.

I am proud to help continue the legacy started by my grandfather and others, and I hope that my philanthropy and engagement will help Skyland Trail serve more and more clients and continue to create a national model for excellence in effective and compassionate psychiatric care. And I hope that by participating in Skyland Trail events, as well as just talking to friends and colleagues, I can help reduce the stigma of mental illness and encourage others to ask for help and seek treatment when needed.

Brooks and his wife, Libby, have been supporters of Skyland Trail since 2013. In addition to providing financial support, Brooks currently serves on Skyland Trail's Advisory Board.



“I am proud to help continue the legacy started by my grandfather and others, and I hope that my philanthropy and engagement will help Skyland Trail serve more and more clients and continue to create a national model for excellence in effective and compassionate psychiatric care.” –Brooks Barge

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✦ *New members in 2017*

New Advisory Board members (l-r): Jennifer Fuqua Fowler, Bob Mills, Michael Mock, Tracy Cahillane, Lizeth Arizmendi Smithgall.
Not pictured: Hill Hardman, Cara Isell Lee, and Daraka Satcher



How you can help: Events

EACH YEAR, SKYLAND TRAIL HOSTS several unique fundraising events. Each event offers a fun and distinct experience and an opportunity to support recovery for individuals with mental illness. We are honored by your participation and especially grateful to our volunteers and sponsors.

Associates Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show 2017

On March 17, 2017, Skyland Trail held its tenth annual Associates Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show at Piedmont Driving Club. Led by event co-chairs Diana Tipton and Sue McKinley, the event welcomed nearly 300 guests and raised more than \$80,000. Guests enjoyed lunch, a fashion show by Abbey Glass and a presentation from keynote speaker, Doris Fuller. Fuller shared the story of her daughter, Natalie, who struggled with psychosis.

Event Chair: Diana Tipton
Event Co-Chair: Sue McKinley



IMAGES: 1 Sue McKinley, Doris Fuller, Diana Tipton, Beth Finnerty 2 Jennifer Fuqua Fowler, Jane Jackson, Loretta Lepore 3 (1) Diana Tipton, Natalie Quirk, Shannon Wiley, Shelby Gutenberger, Diane Tanner, (2) Beth Finnerty, David Martin, Ashley Morris 4 Kim Nalley, Anna Paré **Photos:** Kimberly Link

Southern Shindig 2017

On August 18, 2017, Skyland Trail hosted its seventh annual Southern Shindig at SweetWater Brewing Company. Over 200 young professionals attended the fundraising event, generating more than \$54,000 to support financial aid scholarships and unique therapeutic programs. Guests enjoyed music from Bradley Smith while sampling SweetWater brews and barbecue from DAS BBQ.

Event Chairs:
Katherine and Jason Deere

Auction Chair:
Reeves Henritze



IMAGES: 1 Katherine & Jason Deere 2 Mike & Morgan DiOrto, Katherine & Jason Deere, Laura & Robbie Service 3 Brooks & Libby Barge 4 Morgan & Alan Hamilton, Reeves Henritze, Ashley McArthur 5 Chris & Kwynn Everest with Connor Davidson 6 Jeremy Jones, Matt Sirockman, Harrison Martin; **Photos:** Tim Wilkerson



“The more my family and I learn about Skyland Trail the more we are eager to give our support. Skyland Trail not only changes the lives of the individuals they treat but also works tirelessly to end the stigma of mental illness.” – Katherine Deere

Benefits of Laughter 2016

With an election year theme, the 2016 Benefits of Laughter drew a “big tent” crowd to support mental health. Dems and Reps, blues and reds, all came together to raise \$825,000 to support Skyland Trail clients and programs. After Skyland Trail graduates shared their recovery journeys with those assembled, no party or candidate was spared as The Capitol Steps helped guests cast their vote for laughter during this “seriously funny” evening.



photo: Claudine Mandel

Event Chairs:
Donna Davidson and Lorri McClain

Corporate Chairs:
Chip Davidson, Forrest McClain,
and Jay D. Mitchell

Patron Chairs:
Lisa & William Bridges
and Jenifer & Mike Dobbs

*Corporate Chair Chip Davidson,
Event Chairs Donna Davidson and
Lorri McClain, Corporate Chair
Forrest McClain*

*(See event pictures in Journeys 2016
or online at skylandtrail/BOL.)*

Skyland Trail graduate Janice took the stage to share her recovery journey.

“Skyland Trail and its people became like my home and still are a family. Family knows you pretty much as well as you know yourself and accepts you and loves you for who you are – ‘warts and all’. I have always felt welcome and cared for here, and felt that they knew me.

Skyland Trail does not just assume that if you have depression or addiction or PTSD or whatever the diagnoses, that you are going to all be the same, or act the same, or need the same things. They get to know us as individuals. They listen. They learn. They understand. They help us understand. They teach. And, they hold our hand and guide providing hope.”

“I am me, not my diagnosis codes. I am my story, not the names of my traumas. I am Janice. And thanks to Skyland Trail, and your support, I am alive and well as Janice. Thank you all so much.”

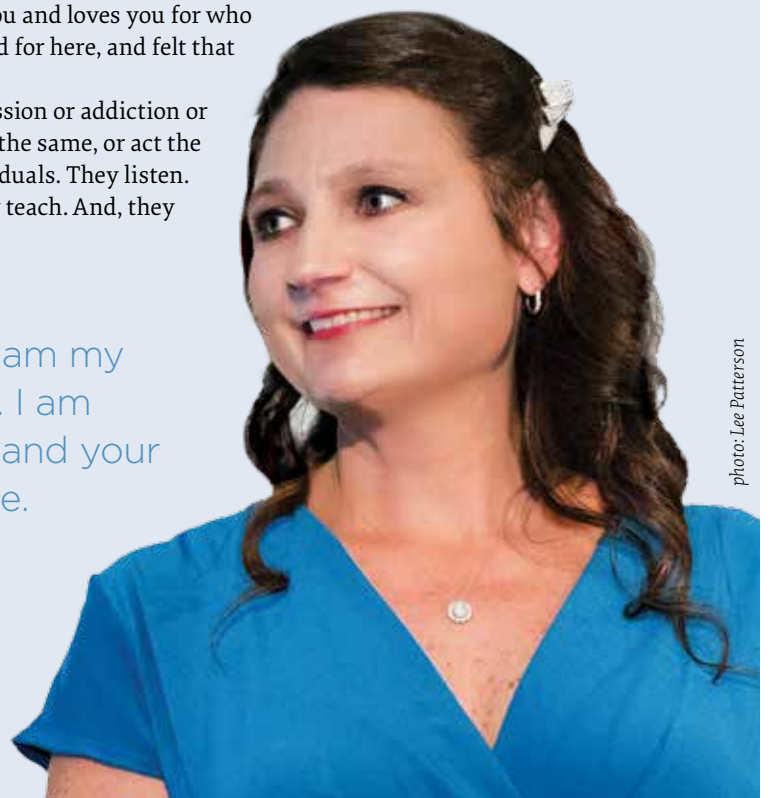


photo: Lee Patterson

Event Chairs:
Jane and Clay Jackson

Patron Chairs:
Christine and Bill Ragland

Corporate Chair:
Andy Stull



Nate Bargatze

Thursday, October 19 | The St. Regis Atlanta

Event Chairs Jane and Clay Jackson invite you to join us Thursday, October 19, 2017, for an exciting Benefits of Laughter.

Our signature fundraising event, held at the The St. Regis Atlanta, Benefits of Laughter offers a unique and fun-filled evening as Atlanta's philanthropic and corporate leaders gather to celebrate

and support recovery for individuals struggling with mental illness.

Learn more about patron and corporate sponsorship opportunities at www.skylandtrail.org/BOL. For more information, contact Ashley David, adavid@skylandtrail.org or 678-686-5905.

Entertainer

Nate Bargatze was named one of *Variety's* "10 comics to watch," his comedy albums have topped the Billboard Top Ten Comedy chart, and he has appeared on *The Tonight Show* starring Jimmy Fallon and Conan.



IMAGES: 1 Event Chairs Jane and Clay Jackson
2 Corporate Committee: Daraka Satcher, Event Chair Clay Jackson, Corporate Committee Chair Andy Stull, Ray Michaels, Chip Davidson
3 Patron Committee: Caryl Smith, Jane Jackson, Patron Committee Chair Christine Ragland, Mary Johnson, Mary Watson, Carrie Lanier, Donna Davidson

Thanks to our event sponsors!

Businesses and foundations that support Skyland Trail through event sponsorship help our clients grow, recover, and reclaim their lives.

We are pleased to recognize the organizations that sponsored 2017 events including Benefits of Laughter, the Associates Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show and Southern Shindig.

Benefits of Laughter 2017 *(as of August 30, 2017)*

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SOMETIMES, OUR HIGHEST HEIGHTS HAPPEN LONG BEFORE TAKEOFF.

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“When it became apparent that my daughter needed residential treatment, it was a very confusing and scary time in our lives. Skyland Trail came highly recommended and after meeting the staff at family orientation, we all felt that she was in the best hands possible. Thank you, Skyland Trail!”

– Family of Skyland Trail graduate

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Skyland Trail Psychiatric Team Grows to Six Staff Psychiatrists

The Skyland Trail psychiatric team includes six staff psychiatrists. Each psychiatrist works directly with patients. Two psychiatrists focus primarily on psychiatric assessment during the admission process. After admission, each client is matched with a psychiatrist with specialized expertise and meets with that physician in weekly one-on-one sessions focused on medication management and psychotherapy throughout treatment. Skyland Trail also offers follow-up outpatient psychiatry to graduates of our treatment program.

Photographed at their recent team meeting, our psychiatrists are: (back row) Ben Hunter, MD, Medical Director of Outpatient Services; Raymond J. Kotwicki, MD, MPH, Charles B. West Chief Medical Officer; Stephen McDaniel, MD; (front row) Kimberly Venable, MD; Mary Burns, MD; Adam Meadows, MD.

