

# THE OXFORD CONNECTION

## *Oxford Houses of New Jersey*

A compilation of Oxford news and events from us to you...

page 1



### A Note from Outreach

Hi Family, it has been my privilege to be one of your Outreach Services Representative these past 2 and a half years.

I have had many challenges here in New Jersey and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you all.

I originally came from Washington State where I began my journey with Oxford House and my recovery, not necessarily in that order. Oxford House saved me from being out on the streets after I was released from Treatment in May of 2002. I recently celebrated 6 years of continuous sobriety and I thank my Higher Power everyday for the blessing He has bestowed upon me. Most of you know Kristen and I from you all being involved with your individual houses and Chapters.

Since coming on board here in Dec. of 2005 we have come a long way in regards to the strength of our Houses and Chapters, and now the birth of our State Association. We have a lot to do here in New Jersey and we look to you all to be a part of that growth. We must focus our attention on getting the houses to pay back their Start Up Loans so we can begin to expand again where we need it. And from the calls I get, we need houses bad!!

We also need to focus on Contributions to World Services.

Without them, we would not be here today and the thousands of guys and gals before you and after would and will not have a chance at this wonderful thing we call recovery. We as Outreach are here to help you all become great houses and we need you all to step up and give back what so freely given to you. This newsletter is more for you and we would like your input with future editions. Send us your stories, successes, concerns, complaints, whatever. We want you to have a voice and besides getting involved with your House, Chapter, and the State Association, you can be heard here too. Of course, we would only print letters from Oxford members and Alumni and no cursing is aloud. We also have a page where we would love to celebrate your recovery with acknowledging recovery birthdays and house birthdays too.

Our goals for the future are to increase the number of houses in New Jersey, get some State Workshops going and hopefully some fun stuff like campouts, dances, and weekend retreats where we can learn from each other and have some fun at the same time. It works, because you all make it work, and we need to keep this going in order for that next person who needs a safe place to come home to after work or play. Please feel free to contact us anytime.

Yours in Service,

**Mike Zalusky**

Outreach Services  
Oxford Houses of New Jersey  
[mike.zalusky@oxfordhouse.org](mailto:mike.zalusky@oxfordhouse.org)  
Ph: 1-732-693-8006  
Fax: 1-732-349-4123

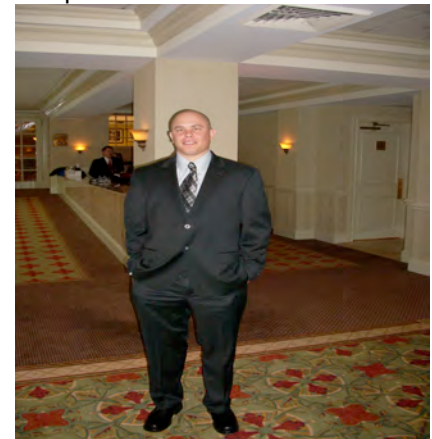
**Kristen Stevens**

Outreach Services  
Oxford Houses of New Jersey  
[kcurrie307@comcast.net](mailto:kcurrie307@comcast.net)  
Ph: 1-732-948-8121  
Fax: 1-732-608-6021

### New Outreach Worker

We would like to welcome George Kent to our Family of Outreach Services here in New Jersey. He started with us on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. He has been the Chapter 6 Chair-Person for the last couple of years in Ocean County and recently was elected as our State Association Chairperson.

George has been a great asset to us all here in the Eastern part of New Jersey these last 3 years and we look forward to having him on board With Kristen and I as we look to grow here in New Jersey. He already has been to a few Chapter Meetings throughout the state and we are looking forward to introducing him to the rest of the Chapters real soon.



Please join us in welcoming him onboard and feel free to contact him if you have any Outreach questions in the future along with Kristen and I. His contact information is:

**George Kent**

Outreach Services  
Oxford Houses of New Jersey  
[Gkent3@mac.com](mailto:Gkent3@mac.com)  
Ph: 1-732-684-3678\_



### **Farewell to Wendy Carlson from Chapter One!!!! We'll miss you!!!!**

It is with great joy and trepidation that I say good bye to Wendy from Chapter One. She was the Chapter Chairperson there in the Cherry Hill-Audobon, NJ area and was a great help in getting the Chapter up in a manner that bonded all the houses together and helped me personally when I needed to get the Chapter to meet out of the scope of the usual Chapter Meeting day. That in itself is a big deal !!!! lol

She, lived in Oxford House-Vassar and was also instrumental in helping Outreach help other Chapters.

She is moving to Washington DC and into another Oxford House down there and I know they will be blessed to have her as a member of their house in the same way I was blessed to have her here in New Jersey.

I'll miss you Wendy and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you did to help me with your Chapter. She is now an official Alumni of OHNJ and we thank her for that too.

The Chapter had a little going away party for her and I snapped a couple of pictures to share with you all.

They had great food and I was grateful to be there to say good bye.

I asked her write a little something for me, and this is what she had to share with you all:

"My experience living in the Vassar Oxford House has been a way for me to find out who I really was without the use of drugs. The love and support I received from the women of the Vassar House holds a special place in my heart. I truly know that if it wasn't for the Vassar

Oxford House I probably wouldn't be clean almost 3 years later. While living at the Vassar House I found new way of live, and found out who "Wendy" really is with the support system that the Vassar Oxford House provided me." Wendy Carlson

**THANKS AGAIN WENDY FOR ALL YOUR SERVICE WORK**

**Mike Zalusky; Outreach**

**Oxford Houses of New Jersey**

### **Monthly Resident Activity**

Oxford House is a very special place to really succeed at staying clean and sober forever. I know that because it worked for me. Thousands of others know it because it has worked for them. The DePaul University studies verify that we all were lucky to get into an Oxford House because it bought us the time, peer support and disciplined democratic living environment that help us stay gain comfortable sobriety.

One of the unique characteristics of Oxford House is that we all want good scientific information about who we are and what we do to stay clean and sober. Statistics such as the Monthly Activity Report can be important not only for our own sobriety but also to help show others that Oxford House serves all kinds of people and helps produce long-term sobriety.

Thank you for your help. We are proud of the Oxford Houses here in New Jersey and the information the completed Monthly Activity Reports will help convince the state and treatment providers that Oxford Houses work.

Please complete the Monthly Activity Report at your Chapter meetings and promptly send the information to your Outreach Services Representative, Mike Zalusky, to put on the World Services database. Thank you.

### **The Gift of Life-**

### **Kristen welcomes Donny IV**

**7/11/08- 7lbs 2oz**

Kristen and her husband Donald welcomed the birth of their baby Donald Stevens IV in July. The Mom and Baby are doing great and I know Kristen is excited to be a mom again even though the little darling is a handful!!!! LOL

Just another miracle of the rewards of living in recovery and I am blessed to be a part of their lives. We are looking forward to having Kristen back at work after her Maternity Leave is up in September after our return from the Oxford House World Convention in New Orleans.

Our best wishes and congratulations go out to the Stevens' and may God shine His light on them forever!!

**NOW HURRY UP AND GET BACK TO WORK!!!!!! LOL**

Here are a couple of pictures of the Mom and Donny I thought I'd share with you all. He is so adorable.....





## Oxford House and Storage Units What is Donate and Un-donate?

We have been having problems with individuals moving into our houses and cleaning out their storage units into the houses they are moving into. Most of the time the individuals moving into our houses that have storage units don't want to pay the storage unit fees. They tell the houses they want to donate their belongs to the Oxford House. Most of the time they even believe it themselves.

How many times have you heard. "I'm not going to need these items" I'm going to live here forever or for a long time and if I move I'm going to get all new stuff anyway. We've had three bad situations in the last two months, countless times in the past. The individuals in question here convinces the house to get rid of their older sofa, love seat, tables, dining room sets and even coffee pots, microwaves, pots, pans and dishes. You name it. They donate their entire storage unit to the house and the house gets rid of their furniture and other belongs to make room for the newer or maybe better items.

What happens when these individuals move out, relapse or are asked to leave for disruptive behavior? They Un-Donate the things they donated, and want to take everything they no longer own out of the house. There is no such thing as un-donating. Then the house has no means to buy and/or replace what was un-donated.

If your house has someone wanting to donate their storage items to your house, make sure you get it in writing from them. We've had this happen so many times.

One of these most recent situations with someone undonating OUR belongings was, they wanted a lot of other items from the house that they got donated to the house or were not theirs in the first place because nobody knows any better. We were told that, I got it donated so that means it's mine. They donated it to me. We all know that's not true. It was donated to Oxford House maybe on behalf of that person and to remain in the Oxford House to be used by many others still to come that we haven't even met yet.



We as Oxford Houses provide individuals with beds, dressers and nightstands. We have individuals moving into our houses that have their own furniture and want to use it in their rooms. I can relate to that. I would want to use my own bedroom furniture too. What we are getting at here is, when someone wants to do that and the house allows them to put the houses furniture out in the carport or in the damp basement or even outside under a tarp. The mattresses, box springs, dressers and miscellaneous furniture and what ever it is start to get flees and ticks, moldy and musty. The glue and the wood in the furniture start falling apart. When they move out the furniture is no good. The house has to BUY new things. That costs YOU and YOUR

house MONEY to replace what was put out for THEM to SAVE MONEY not paying storage fees.

Please make people responsible for the care of the furniture they put out so they don't have to pay their storage fees. Your house might want to think real hard before you allow someone to let the house use their living room set, dining room set, etc.

while they live there and get rid of the houses. Some day your going to have to replace it and your house may not have the funds to do so. The items you got rid of or put out could become real valuable to your house once the individual and their items are gone. It ends up costing YOU and YOUR HOUSE money to help them save money not having to pay their storage unit fees. Try to keep Oxford House furniture and personal furniture from getting mixed up. It's better for all in the long run.

IF YOUR HOUSE ACCEPTS DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS GET IT IN WRITING, MOST OF THE TIME IT BECOMES A PROBLEM WHEN THAT PERSON IS MOVING OR HAS BEEN EXPELLED.

IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO NOT ALLOW PEOPLE TO USE OR LOAN THE HOUSES THEIR PERSONAL FURNITURE WHILE THEY LIVE THERE UNLESS THEY DONATE IT 1<sup>ST</sup> TO THE HOUSE.

Gino Pugliese; Outreach Services  
Oxford Houses of Washington State

# SOBRIETY BIRTHDAYS

## THE OXFORD CONNECTION

**Birthdays For The Months Of August thru November, 2008**

**Chapter** \_\_\_\_\_ **House** \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to see your Sobriety Birthday printed in the November 2008 edition of the Oxford Connection, please fill out the form and send it to the address below by September 15, 2008.

NAME (1 <sup>st</sup> & last initial)	HOUSE	SOBRIETY DATE	SOBRIETY AGE

Complete and mail by September 15, 2008 to:  
**Mike Zalusky**  
**P.O. Box 3099**  
**Pt. Pleasant, NJ**  
[mike.zalusky@oxfordhouse.org](mailto:mike.zalusky@oxfordhouse.org)

**OKAY, ENOUGH OUT OF US, NOW LETS HEAR FROM YOU, THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT WORK !!!!! GOOD, BAD, INDIFFERENT, SEND IT ALL TO ME ALONG WITH THIS PAGE. THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS !!!**