

the EXTENSION

The Quarterly Newsletter for Friends & Supporters of the Extension



The Lucky Dog Walk for Recovery



It was still dark when everyone pulled up at The Stone Summit Climbing Gym and Fitness Center in Kennesaw to set up. The sponsors and the band set up their tables and tents; the T-shirts, swag bags, and doggie bags were ready to go. The food table was ready, and the volunteers gathered to get their assignments; excitement and anticipation were in the air! Then, as the sun came up, walkers with their dogs, families, and friends started to arrive for the first annual Lucky Dog Walk for Recovery.

Despite some light drizzle, people continued to pour into the parking lot. Everyone quickly moved through registration and sign-in and enjoyed food, fun, and fellowship before the walk. The kids and adults enjoyed petting the dogs, greeting and making new friends. "Hopi" the miniature therapy pony, even showed up to walk to support The Extension!

At 8:00 am, everyone gathered at the starting line, and the walk was officially underway! Deputy Long of the Cobb County Sheriff's Dept. and his K9 were there to help everyone cross George Busbee Parkway safely and onto the Noonday Creek Trail. About forty-five minutes later, the walkers started returning to the Stone Summit to enjoy music, prizes, and some Zaxby's breakfast bites.

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Thank you to our sponsors!



Please mark your calendar for September 10th, 2022, for our next annual *Lucky Dog Walk for Recovery*.

East Cobb Church of Christ and Holy Trinity's "Bible on Tap" men's group tied for the churches with the most participants. Marquee Insurance Group walked away with the prize for the business with the most participants. Tim Culbreath of the "Bible on Tap" Group won the award for raising the most in donations for the event, and Laura Al Marry's daughter and their Corgi won the prize for best-dressed dog and owner. Everyone enjoyed coming together to support The Extension.

Penny Warren, one of our volunteers, commented, "I have been to a lot of charity events, and the Lucky Dog Walk is going down as one of my favorites. It was informal, and I loved the diversity of the volunteers and walkers. They all had the common theme of caring about others who are battling for a better life."

"The Lucky Dog Walk was a great event, and it allowed me to get some much-needed exercise with my best friend Godiva, my chocolate Cocker Spaniel, and we got to raise money for The Extension, a great community organization." David Schwickerath, participant.

One of our residents in recovery dressed as our Lucky Dog mascot for the event and was deeply touched by the number of people who give back and love The Extension and our residents. He commented, "they don't know how much this actually means to us; COVID has been hard."

The biggest winners of the event are the men and women we serve at The Extension. A kind word, a hot meal, or just knowing some else cares makes all the difference when you've hit rock bottom. Because of all our community support, our residents see the real-life transformation that brings healing, hope, and restoration to them and their families.



THE EXTENSION RECEIVES CHARITY NAVIGATOR'S PERFECT SCORE

According to Charity Navigator, "We rate charities by evaluating performance in Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency. Our rating show donors how efficiently we believe a charity will use their support today, how well it has sustained its programs and services over time, and their level of commitment to being accountable and transparent. We provide these ratings so that donors can make intelligent giving decisions and so that the philanthropic community can more effectively monitor itself.



WE'RE PLATINUM! THE EXTENSION AWARDED HIGHEST NONPROFIT RATING

The Extension was recently awarded Platinum status with GuideStar. Platinum is the premier level of distinction given only to those organizations meeting the most demanding criterion for organizational transparency and stewardship.

THE EXTENSION THANKS COBB COUNTY ROTARY CLUBS

The Extension would like to recognize and thank the Rotary Clubs of Cobb County, one of the world's best-kept secrets. Rotary International has 35,000 clubs with 1.2 million members in two hundred (200) countries worldwide. Rotary's mantra is "Service above Self." The Rotary Clubs of Cobb County have supported The Extension since the very beginning and continue to provide an immense amount of time and resources to help us continue the life-saving work that we do in the community.

Rotary's support for The Extension comes from multiple Cobb County Rotary Clubs and individuals, including Vinings-Cumberland, Marietta Metro, Marietta, and North Cobb Rotary Clubs.

Support is ongoing and ranges from preparing and serving dinner to our residents each month to converting a cluttered nook into a functional storage closet and a common area to an additional bedroom. Cobb Rotary Clubs regularly participate in our fundraisers, including The Marietta Blues Bash and The Lucky Dog Walk for Recovery. In addition, they have always responded to our requests for

assistance, including significant contributions to our "Building Solutions" Capital Campaign.

Three North Cobb Rotary Club members, including Shelley Elder and Dave Schwickerath, serve on The Extension's Board of Directors, with Skip Harper serving as Board Chair. In addition, Marietta Rotarian Paul Stewart serves on the Board as the Past Chair.

The Cobb Rotary Clubs are moving us closer to breaking ground on our new men's facility. Marietta Metro Rotarian Kim Gresh and North Cobb Rotarian Dave Schwickerath serve as Co-Chairs on The Extension's Capital Campaign Committee. Cobb Rotary Clubs and individual members have collectively contributed more than \$200,000 toward the campaign. To date, total contributions to the Capital Campaign have exceeded \$5.2 million against our \$5.8 million campaign target.

Rotarians particularly enjoy preparing and serving dinner and talking to our residents face to face. But, unfortunately, COVID 19 has made that face-to-face interaction impossible. Still, Rotarians look forward to



the day they can come in person with prepared meals and enthusiastically sit face to face with our residents again.

The Rotary Club of Chicago was founded on February 23rd, 1905, to allow professionals with diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas and form meaningful, lifelong friendships. Rotary's name came from the group's early practice of rotating meetings among the offices of each member.

Rotary's commitment to service is ongoing. Rotary began its fight against Polio in 1979 with a project to immunize six(6) million children in the Philippines. Today, only Pakistan and Afghanistan report cases. There has been just one reported in each country in 2021, down from 125 countries in 1988. Polio is on the verge of elimination by 2026. Thanks to all Rotarians around the world who have been instrumental in the elimination of Polio. October 24th is World Polio Day.

Transforming just one life touches so many others. The Rotary Clubs of Cobb are making a significant difference in the lives of the men and women we serve at The Extension and our community. Thank you for putting "Service above Self" and being so instrumental in The Extension's ongoing growth and success.

To find out more about Rotary Club, International, please visit: www.rotary.org

— David Schwickerath, North Cobb Rotary Club member



*"Whatever Rotary may mean to us,
to the world, it will be known by
the results it achieves."*

—Paul P. Harris, Founder

“By God’s grace and mercy, I made my way home to the women’s campus of The Extension on June 7, 2016. As a young child, my parents divorced when I was two years old. When I was eight years old, my Mom remarried. My stepfather was a functioning alcoholic that was very abusive to my mother, both physically and mentally. He also sexually abused me. Over the course of their 16-year marriage, I continued to witness the abuse, and it became worse with each incident. I felt trapped and helpless—like there was nothing I could do to make things better.

My grandparents would take my sister and me to church on Wednesday and Sunday, and we would attend Vacation Bible School. I remember feeling so much peace when attending with them and knowing how much Jesus loves us. One Sunday, when I was around 12 years old, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I remember feeling the closeness of Him and knowing no matter how bad things got, He would always be with me. It wasn’t long until I would turn from my spiritual walk and begin walking in my self-will.

At the age of 16, I took my first drink of alcohol and instantly drank like a real alcoholic. In fact, I never wanted to stop until I was oblivious to what was going on. I loved the way alcohol made me feel, as it would numb all my pain, and it made me a lot more sociable, because I was somewhat shy. In the beginning stages of my alcoholism, I would drink on the weekends by sneaking it in the house or sneaking out to attend parties. I was very active in school and would have graduated as an honor student but my tenth-grade year; I dropped out and moved out of the house. My alcoholism was running my life. I was steadily building resentment toward the people who loved me the most, my family, and wouldn’t let them in when they would try to help me.

I was in some very toxic relationships that were even worse than what I had witnessed growing up as a child. Throughout the course of those relationships, I experienced physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse. My self-esteem and self-worth were at rock bottom. In 2005, I became pregnant with my daughter. I was excited and scared to death at the same time. I wanted to be a mother, and I wanted to quit using drugs, but I also wanted her Dad to do so as well. We were not just using; there was an active meth lab at our house. Things continued, and nothing changed until Cobb County Police busted the door down and took both of us to jail. While back in the shower getting dressed out to be processed, I was wrapping my head around the fact I was going to have my daughter in jail when the officer called me out and told me I was going home.



When I was 5-6 months along in my pregnancy, my mom talked me into going to the doctor, I was terrified they would take my baby if they found out I was using, so I told my Mom to let me do all the talking. I’m so grateful she didn’t listen to me, and she told the doctors the truth because my potassium was so low; I was on the verge of having a massive heart attack and killing my daughter and me. They immediately admitted me to the hospital and began giving me potassium intravenously (21 bags). My pregnancy was high risk, so we were referred to a neonatal specialist who would monitor my daughter throughout the rest of my pregnancy. God saw us through, and I delivered a healthy, drug-free baby girl. When my daughter was four months old, I relapsed and went back out. My Mom took temporary guardianship of my daughter and raised her. I would bounce in and out of her life when it was convenient for me and on holidays.

I finally reached a point where I couldn’t go on anymore the way I was living. I desperately wanted to be a mom to my beautiful daughter, and I cried out to God to please help me and show me the way to a different life. He answered my cry, and I was given the number to The Extension by my mother. I had been to jail in Paulding and had to turn myself in to Cobb County before I could begin treatment. Once again, God showed up and gave me the strength to go and turn myself in. For 22 years of my life, I had been on the streets and in active addiction, and I had no idea how drastically my life was about to change. I had finally surrendered my will and my life over to God. I entered the program and began to listen. I instantly realized that this was exactly what

I had been missing the other times that I had tried to do it on my own. I attended the classes and had therapy sessions with Wynema Barber, who helped me realize that I had suffered from PTSD. She also reminded me that our Creator doesn't make mistakes and that I wasn't a mistake. She, along with the other staff and the volunteers, loved me until I could love myself. I learned that I am a survivor.

In therapy, I learned different coping techniques to deal with stress and anxiety. I began to work the steps with my sponsor and work at making living amends to my family. Forgiveness is a very powerful action, and in time I learned to forgive myself. I was able to pray for and forgive my stepfather for all the harm he had caused in my life. I made amends with a place of employment that went out of their way to help me one of the times that I relapsed. The Extension taught me to take responsibility for my actions, stand on my own two feet, and be a productive member of society. I attended Bible study during the week and on Sundays if my schedule allowed time. I reconnected with God and began to strengthen my relationship with Him.

I transitioned on April 9, 2017, and began sponsoring ladies that were currently in the program. Over the past four years, I got to go back and be a part of Sister's in Sobriety, lead a small group, chair meetings, and be a part of other women's journeys. It was never meant for us to do it alone—it is a "We" program. Personally, I needed everything The Extension has to offer, and I am so grateful that God placed me there. In May of 2019, my mother baptized my beautiful daughter and me. I have been blessed in so many ways, but my daughter is the biggest blessing of my life. Ultimately, she was the driving force in my life that motivated me to seek help. We are both working together on rebuilding our relationship, and she has one of the most loving and forgiving hearts. I have regained guardianship, and I am now a full-time single mother. I was rehired by Moore, Ingram, Johnson & Steele and have been a legal assistant for two years. My mother has had some health issues, and I have been able to be there for her wholeheartedly and help take care of her. Recovery is a lifelong process, and today, because of The Extension, I know what I need to do to continue this path to freedom.

As the holidays are approaching, I can't help but feel so much gratitude for where I am in my life. Since I have transitioned, my daughter and I have given back to the ladies with Sister's in Sobriety together several times for the holiday months. We get to prepare Thanksgiving dishes together and attend Christmas church service together. We enjoy putting the tree up, watching Christmas movies, and doing festive activities together. The holidays now fill me with joy, happiness, and peace as my heart feels whole. We have been given a second chance, and we take full advantage of that every day."

Please post at your church or place of business.
Thanks!



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| ☐ Cereal | ☐ Notebooks & journals |
| ☐ Bleach | ☐ Pens & pencils |
| ☐ Instant oatmeal | ☐ Batteries (AA, AAA, 9V) |
| ☐ Instant grits | ☐ Stocking caps & gloves |
| ☐ Canned soup | ☐ Stamps |
| ☐ Tea bags | ☐ Umbrellas |
| ☐ Feminine hygiene products | ☐ Bicycles with helmets |
| ☐ Socks | ☐ Lawn & garden tools |
| ☐ Unopened first aid supplies | |

The Extension is a non-profit, tax exempt organization as described in the internal revenue code in section 501(c)(3). The Extension, Inc. is governed by a volunteer board of directors.

Comments or questions about this newsletter or any of the functions of the Extension, Inc. are encouraged, please send correspondence to us at P.O. Box 793, Marietta, GA 30061
Phone: 770-590-9075



Skip Harper, Chairperson
David Schwickerath, Vice Chair
Angela Robinson, Secretary
Daniel Scruggs, Treasurer
Tyler M. Driver, Executive Director

A member of our staff or Board of Directors would love to come to speak to your group about issues related to homelessness, addiction and recovery. Give us a call at the number above.

The Extension

1507 Church Street Extension | P.O. Box 793 | Marietta, GA 30061



INTRODUCING OUR NEW CLINICAL & MEN'S DIRECTOR

Tricia Roberts

The Extension would like to welcome our new clinical and men's program Director Tricia Roberts. Tricia grew up in Georgia and has a powerful personal story and a passion to see transformational change in those who struggle with the disease of addiction...

Where are you from? What is your background?

I grew up in Pickens County, GA. My parents are entrepreneurs who ran a successful grading business throughout my life. We have always lived in the country, on the family homestead surrounded by family and a close-knit group of neighbors. I went to Pickens High and then to North GA College where I graduated with a BBA in Finance. I married young and started a family while working in the grading business until 2008. At that point, the economy and a divorce (God) forced me into a different career path. I began working in the social support field and later moved into mental health, working with adults with developmental disabilities.

What prompted you to get into addiction counseling?

I started my education in counseling with a curiosity of what made people tick. More specifically, why do the people in my life behave the way that they do, and why do I respond the way I respond? I began to see patterns in the families I was close to. In my own family, one of the most impactful and influential men was my Granddaddy. His addiction to alcohol has had repercussions that are still felt, almost 30 years past his death. His addiction had a negative impact on his finances, his marriage, and the upbringing of my father, which ultimately affected me as well. He was a master at "burning it down" as we say. His relationship with my Daddy was strained the entirety of my life. When I was very small (back before car seats and seat belts) I can remember riding all over the county standing in the truck seat beside him. My mother became fearful for me to ride with him; his use was out of control. Soon after, when I was 6, he had a massive stroke and car accident. He spent the next 13 years in a nursing home, paralyzed completely on one side. I had a front row seat to the destructive nature of his addiction and the challenges it caused. My grandmother managed her life around his care. She always felt obligated to see him and fix meals for him daily. After he passed away, she followed in less than a year due to a heart attack. I always believed her death was directly linked to stress and I resented the time I felt I lost with her.

Naturally, when the opportunity presented itself in the master's curriculum, I was drawn towards substance abuse counseling. I worked with children in the drug court system throughout my practicum and internship, and I recognized the need for addiction counseling. However, through my own experience and seeing kids flounder in the

court system, I knew I wanted to work with adults. Adults are the ones who can actually enact change, the kind of change that disrupts the generational patterns and writes a new story for themselves and their families.

What is your area of expertise and focus?

My focus is on trauma, trauma resolution and addiction. I have found trauma and addiction are interwoven for most every person I have worked with. I am a certified EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapist. This modality of treatment is one of the leading treatments for PTSD and is effective in reducing anxiety, depressive symptoms, urges to use substances, and many other mental health issues.

Why did you want to work at The Extension?

I did my homework. The Extension has a stellar reputation and the alumni involvement is a testimony to the work that is done here. The Extension is a front-line battle ground of the addiction war in our area. I wanted to be a part of that. Now that I'm here, one of the things I love most is the idea that we are a family. I am impressed daily at the heart everyone here has for our mission and our individuals. I have never met anyone with more compassion and determination than Tyler; I didn't know it when I came, but having him as a boss is at the top of the list for why anyone would want to work at The Extension.

What positive changes would you like to bring to the men's program moving forward?

My biggest change, at the earliest, SAFEST, point will be to bring our alumni and volunteers back on campus. I keep hearing about how "it was great before Covid, there were so many people here, loving on our folks!" Not having that connection right now is my most difficult challenge. Beyond that change, I would like to implement more intensive 1:1 therapy and continue to expand our group curriculum. This month we have implemented or updated "Helping Men/Women Recover". This is an example of evidence-based programming that will help our individuals gain insight into themselves, spark motivation and allow for measurable outcomes. I would like to continue outcome analysis and use the information we are now able to assimilate to make decisions on programming that will help our individuals better attain and maintain healthy recovery for the rest of their lives.

— Tricia Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC
Clinical Director/Men's Program Director

Griffaroo 2021



The Extension would like to thank Scott and Marcy Griffin and Board Chair Skip Harper and his wife Jeanine for hosting the 2021 Griffaroo event to benefit The Extension's "Building Solutions" capital campaign. The star-studded evening raised more than \$44,000 to help fund our new 22,000 square foot building that will increase our capacity to serve men in our community by seventy percent.

The Griffins opened their beautiful home to more than 120 guests who enjoyed a delicious plated dinner, an open bar, and a night of live music with Nashville's best songwriters. The evening included a songwriter's round, including Grammy-nominated Clay Mills, #1 hit-writer Brice Long, Georgia-native songwriter and recording artist Eric Dodd and the super-talented Stephen Hunley! These singer-songwriters have collectively had numerous #1 hits, including Darius Rucker's "Don't Think I Don't Think About It" and Jon Pardi's "Heartache on the Dance Floor."

One of the many highlights of the evening was Alumni Greg Bennett sharing his story, which dovetailed perfectly with the stories shared by some of the songwriters. According to Skip Harper, "the evening was magical... I have received so many gushing comments about the evening, some saying it was the best event they have ever been to in their lives. The whole thing was perfect, weather, food, entertainment, company, and mostly the cause."

The Griffins started "Griffaroo" last year to gather songwriters when the music festival "Bonaroo" was canceled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The Griffins hope to continue to give back to the community with future Griffaroo events. The money raised from this year's event brings us to just over \$5.2 million of our 5.8 million dollar goal to reach by the end of this year. We plan to break ground on our new building in the first quarter of next year and open our doors in 2023.

Again, thank you, Scott and Mary Griffin, Skip and Jeanine Harper, and everyone who made Griffaroo 2021 a very special evening.



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