

The House Call

The Official Newsletter of Dr. Bob's Home

Fall 2019

A.W.E. Center

Many of our friends in the vast community that make up "The World of Dr. Bob's Home" may or may not be aware that we have recently acquired a third property, which allows the Smith residence to now be flanked and protected on both sides by supporting structures.

These three structures and their grounds now resemble a campus, rather than a couple of homes. Collectively, they are often referred to as The Dr. Bob's Campus.

The new addition, located immediately behind Dr. Bob's Home, has the following address: 122 Everett Ave. Our board members and volunteers informally refer to this addition as "122," similarly to how we refer to the gift shop/archives house as "859" [Ardmore] and the Smith residence as "855" [Ardmore].

The opportunity for the acquisition of 122 was presented at a time when the rehabilitation of the 855 and 859 properties was moving into the maintenance phase. Simultaneously, it was becoming apparent that our ability to grow and effectively carry out our mission statement was being hindered by a lack of square footage. We were bursting at the seams, so to speak.

To make a long story short, we acquired 122 in a process that some may say had the makings of divine intervention. A new phase in the journey of Dr. Bob's Home had begun.

As many new journeys begin with baby steps, so did the visions of the possibilities presented by 122. We had many ideas, but we bore in mind our mission statement and the ability for us to carry it out. It became apparent that the educational and archival aspects of the mission should be a focal point. However, we always had the history of the miracles that occurred in the home and the foundation of those miracles – the essence of love – in the backs of our minds. The Smith household exemplified love, from Dr. Bob and



Annie's steadfast efforts to share the successful 12-step program to the welcoming attitude with which they lived their lives.

So, there it was and came to be: the archival, welcome and educational center, dubbed by one of our board members (who is fond of acronyms) as the A.W.E. Center. And it certainly was worthy of the newfound square footage.

Since the beginning of the 122 project, the term "A.W.E" is increasingly relevant and has borne itself out many times. We are so grateful to the contributions of the following: our hard-hatted board members and volunteers (who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves); the beautiful friends of Dr. Bob who donate their time, energy, skill and often mileage to sharing their crafts skills during this project; the many members of the local community, who have stepped in to contribute labor and materials to a cause they might not fully understand, but still recognize as worthy; and to the trustees, donors and visitors who remind us daily of the value of the mission to which we adhere.

We therefore humbly introduce The A.W.E. Center.

Opening in the first quarter of 2020.

Save the Date

2020 Founders' Day Weekend

June 12, 13 and 14 | Akron, OH

Visit drbobshome.org/events
for more information.

855 Ardmore Avenue, P.O. Box 449, Akron, OH 44309

330.864.1935

DrBobsHome.org

Help us renovate “122”

The purchase of 122 Everett Ave. gives Dr. Bob's Home an opportunity to expand the current campus to create a welcome center, library and archive space. Phase 1 will include replacing the failing roof, upgrading the windows and repairing other exterior structural problems. We are currently in the process of receiving estimates to complete this work.

Why give?

Making a gift to this project will allow Dr. Bob's Home to continue the mission to educate and honor Dr. Bob and the Smith family for the legacy they have given us. The purchase of this property also helps us protect Dr. Bob's Home and the story it tells.

Make a gift today!

Your gift may be directed toward:

• Renovations • Endowment • Operations

To make a gift, call 330.864.1935, go online at DrBobsHome.com or mail the included envelope to: Dr. Bob's Home, PO Box 449, Akron, OH 44309.

Thank you, non-managing trustees and friends of Dr. Bob's Home

We thank our non-managing trustees for their continued annual efforts to raise funds for Dr. Bob's Home. We also thank the friends of Dr. Bob's Home, who have held single events in their areas to support the home. All of the fundraising events support our primary purpose to maintain, restore and preserve the property at 855 Ardmore Ave. These events have also supported the expansion of the campus to include the home at 122 Everett Ave. and the new outdoor gift shop.

Anyone interested in becoming a non-managing trustee or a friend of Dr. Bob's Home can call 330.864.1935.



Chairman's Corner

Just what the doctor ordered

Dear friends,

As we get ready for one decade to end and another to begin, we are able to reflect on the bountiful blessings we have received. It is a good time to acknowledge the Grace we have been given.

In this time of reflection, it would be fitting to think deeply on the spiritual writings that have stood the test of time. All great spiritual writings have a message that carry both depth and weight.

The writing I want to reflect on is Bob's own story, written in his own words.

He wrote: "I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip." If these reasons were good enough for Dr. Bob, they better be good enough for me!

To that end, the spirit of Dr. Bob's message embodies the passion, inspiration and enthusiasm of ALL who support our mission.

Every donor, every volunteer, every managing trustee, every non-managing trustee, every employee, every friend of Dr. Bob's Home has this ethos.

We at Dr. Bob's Home would like to thank you for your generosity of time, talent and treasure, all of which keep the beacon of hope burning brightly for the world to see.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your assistance that allows us the honor and privilege to serve Dr. Bob's Home and keep the Smith family legacy alive and well.

A few final thoughts would be:

1. Trust God.
2. Clean House.
3. Help Others.

As Dr. Bob said in his last talk in 1950 in Cleveland, Ohio:

"But there are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis; one is the simplicity of our Program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our 12 Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service. We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So, let's bear those two things in mind.

"Let us also remember to guard that erring member — the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance."

A sure-fire prescription for sobriety and serenity!

Thank you very much. -Harmon V.

We thank the following foundations for their gifts to support Dr. Bob's Home:

Charles E. and Mabel M. Ritchie Foundation
Kenneth L. Calhoun Charitable Trust
Northern Ohio Golf Charities
R.C. Musson and Katharine M. Musson Charitable Foundation
Sisler McFawn Foundation
W. Paul and Thora J. Mills Memorial Foundation

From Detroit to Akron — and back *By Kent C.*

As the 2020 International Convention approaches, we look back fondly on the beginnings of AA in Detroit, the convention's host city. The roots of AA in Detroit can be traced directly back to 855 Ardmore Ave.

The founding member of AA in Detroit was Archie T. After 18 years of drinking, a mentally, physically, and spiritually bankrupt Archie confided in a friend with whom he was staying that he needed help. Archie's idea of help was \$50, but his friend had other ideas.

He sent Archie to meet with a woman in Detroit who told him that, if he was willing, she and her husband would drive him to Akron to meet some men who had found a solution to their drinking problem. With no money, no place to live and no will to live, Archie agreed.

This was the weekend before Labor Day in 1938. After Archie briefly stayed in Akron City Hospital, Dr. Bob, concerned for Archie's health, convinced him to move into the Smith house at 855 Ardmore Ave. In an AA talk in Detroit on Christmas Day 1948, Archie stated that he felt bad for imposing on the Smith family for that length of time; however, upon reflection years later, he stated that he believed it to be a part of the Higher Power's plan. Under this plan, Archie stated: "I absorbed AA from one of its two oldest members where I learned to stand on my own feet and where I gained the strength and spiritual courage to go out alone. I don't think I could have done the things that I had to do later without those ten and a half months."

Archie returned to Detroit and began to search for AA prospects. The first meeting in Detroit began in December 1939 in Archie's

room, located in a boarding house. The group began to grow and moved to larger meeting spaces. By the fall of 1941, they split into 3 groups, and AA in Detroit has been growing ever since.

It is two hours and 54 minutes from Detroit to Akron by car; however, it feels as though it is light-years away from Archie's boarding house room to the present-day Ford Field in Detroit, by God's Grace. It is the story of AA everywhere.

We hope that when you visit Detroit for the International Convention that you will make time to travel Akron, so you can see where it all began – and we can welcome you Home.

Solid Foundation *By Ryan G.*

We continue to take steps forward as we restore and improve the properties in Akron, Ohio!

Some of the spaces we modified include Dr. Bob's Home (855 Ardmore), the gift shop/archives (859 Ardmore) and the welcome center (122 Everett.) The all new archival, welcome and educational (A.W.E) center at 122 Everett is nearing completion – and it is a must-see location for all to enjoy and experience.

One space that visitors do not see throughout the year is our garage. This is used during Founder's Day weekend as a secondary gift shop. It is necessary to provide quicker and more efficient service, in order to accommodate the thousands of visitors. At one time, there was discussion over whether it should be torn down. Instead, we decided to do what we do: restore, preserve and maintain. The process included raising the garage and laying a new foundation and drainage system. We also installed new drywall, electrical outlets and shelving to display all available items. These modifications were wonderful – and much needed!

Thank you to all who dedicated their love and service to our projects. We are all honored and proud to share in the continuing efforts to improve and care for this remarkable piece of history!

Visitor *By Heidi M., Grove City, PA*

When I walked through the doors of the home of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith on July 27, I was transported into another time.

It was an experience that cannot be measured by hours or days. Rather, it felt like I was encountering all those who had walked over the threshold of that house and into freedom.

There was music in the air; however, it was not made up of sound. It was the music of hope echoed throughout the house. If one was to sit still, they could feel the Presence of God. It would feel as if they have stepped out of time and into His everlasting love.

Listening to the stories of the men and women who came to this last house on the block, I could hear the melody of their stories mixed with my own. As I sat and had coffee, I could imagine myself hearing the accounts of lives conceding with their innermost selves of their alcoholism.

The walk up the stairs could almost signify the willingness to believe in a power greater than oneself. In Sue's bedroom, as I knelt to ask God to remove the bondage of self, I felt as if my song was joining the song of others who have said that surrender prayer in the past and with those who will say it in the future.

The home became a beacon of light for many who had lost everything. When I looked at the pictures on the wall, I was reminded that those who passed through the doors were family. The photographs reminded me of their stories of transformation and snapshotted their lives – ones that were full of failure and misery that then turned into ones of love and service.

There is still space for many more pictures – and there is still room for more family members to come home.



Receive our newsletter

Visit the website to sign up for our newsletter and never miss an update about the great things happening at Dr. Bob's Home!

Join our team! *By Wayne A.*

As a volunteer for Dr. Bob's Home, I have an amazing service position! It is truly one of the most satisfying experiences I have had. I get to coordinate with an awesome group of dedicated people, who have the privilege of greeting and taking our guests through the house where it all began. Overall, we have around 25 volunteer guides, who give their time at Dr. Bob's Home. Because of them, we are able to staff the house and gift shop year-round – including on Christmas Day!

If you would like to join us, simply visit the house and submit a volunteer application. Once accepted, you will receive a script and stories about each room of the house. Most of our volunteer guides study more, so they can give guests a better view of the house and what transpired there.

We don't embellish the stories of Dr. Bob's Home stories – after all, they are truly amazing in their own right. We simply provide these remarkable true stories to the best of our abilities to visitors of the home.

If you live nearby or are visiting the house, we would be happy to show you what we do. We would love it if you decided to join this spectacular team!

In love and service.

New hours at Dr. Bob's Home

11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day

Noon – 3 p.m. The day after Labor Day through the day before Memorial Day



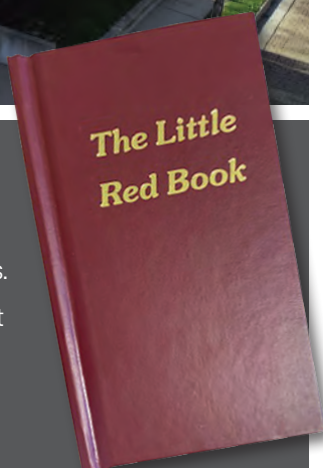
Gift shop news

Visit our gift shop and browse through the Little Red Book, published by Ed Webster and Barry Collins.

Dr. Bob helped with and was consulted for the text of the Little Red Book. He is also known to have passed Little Red Books out. They are fantastic insights into how Dr. Bob was working the Steps and taking others through them.

The Little Red Books can be purchased for \$14.95 each at the gift shop.

****Gift Certificates are available in Gift Shop for \$10 & \$20.****



OUR MISSION

Our primary purpose is to maintain, restore and preserve the property at 855 Ardmore Avenue, which was the family home of physician Robert Holbrook Smith, affectionately called Dr. Bob, one of the founding fathers of Alcoholics Anonymous. This historic site in Akron, Ohio is the birth place of this internationally known fellowship, which subsequently became the foundation of numerous 12-step programs that are improving the lives of millions.

Second, our ongoing mission is to help alcoholics by preserving the atmosphere of acceptance where early members achieved and maintained their sobriety. This prevailing attitude is simply expressed in our greeting, "Welcome Home."

Third, we educate the local community and beyond on how Dr. Bob's Home played a part in the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous and the manner in which alcoholics were helped in the early days.

BOARD LISTING

Executive Committee

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Kent C., vice chairman
Dennis T., secretary

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