

# Bringing AA and Dr. Bob's Home to Florida

By Sheryl and Stephen R.



In June 2014, we attended our first Founders' Day in Akron, Ohio. A friend of ours, Don F., is a non-managing trustee and he invited us to attend the Dr. Bob's Home board of trustees' annual luncheon. At that luncheon, we met the current board as well as other non-managing trustees. We were impressed with the presentation given by two members from New York who were putting on events in their community. They not only carried the message of Alcoholics Anonymous but shared the history of our Fellowship's beginnings in Akron, Ohio, specifically that of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith. Moreover, they were raising funds that would directly help with the ongoing maintenance, upkeep and support for the home at 855 Ardmore Ave., the home of Dr. Bob and Anne.

After Founders' Day Weekend, we returned to Tampa, Florida, still on fire from the overwhelming weekend we had just experienced and thinking how wonderful it would be to share this with Tampa. So, we set out to put our first event together. We were blessed to have Don's help, and Gail L., archivist for Dr. Bob's Home, who had recently relocated to Florida, agreed to join us as well. A committee of sponsors, friends and local trusted servants was formed. One member of this committee offered to cook for the event, allowing us to offer the hot cooked breakfast and lunch that have become the staple of our event. The final piece of the puzzle was Sandy B., a good friend who loved A.A. history. Sadly, Sandy passed in September 2014, a few months before our first event was held in January 2015, but his support and spirit was evident at that first event.

Since that first event in January 2015, much of that first committee has remained intact and we have put on five more events. Through the event, we have been able to raise funds for the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of Dr. Bob's Home and make our community aware of our Fellowship's beginning. We feel blessed to have so many people give their time and money to spread the message at our event. The results have been evident, as several people now accompany us to Founders' Day each year to experience it for themselves.

We are in the process of finalizing our event for 2021. We are on schedule for Jan. 30, 2021, and this year's theme is the three GSO secretaries that sacrificed so much for our Fellowship. Gail L. will do a presentation on her mentor Nell Wing, Billy N. from Georgia will present on Bobbie B. and Lori L. will present on her mother Ruth Hock, first national secretary and the woman who helped type the original manuscript for Bill.

As Bill W. said, "Pass it On" and we are so blessed to have done that in our community.



## 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.**

## MANAGING TRUSTEES

### Executive Committee

Harmon V., chairman  
Kent C., vice chairman  
Melissa M., treasurer

### Trustees

Bob F.  
Paul G.  
Ryan G.  
Dolly A.

# The House Call

The Official Newsletter of Dr. Bob's Home

Fall 2020

## Thank you Dr. Bob!

Dr. Bob continues to save lives. I know because he saved mine! For the first time in our history, Dr. Bob's Home was shuttered from March 23, 2020 until July 6, 2020.

God has hit the "reset button" or the "pause button" for us ALL, and Dr. Bob's was no exception. This respite has given us ALL much needed time for reflection, introspection and appreciation. The spiritual axioms of "You don't know what you got till it's gone" and "Absence makes the heart grow fonder", are rather apropos as they have become verities of our lives. The 104-day shutdown presented us with many challenges - mentally, emotionally, spiritually and, unfortunately, financially too. Some may think of these uncertain times as a curse; however, I believe through God's providence and time this eventually will turn into God's blessing, which will eventually help us to fulfill our destiny.

How I KNOW that, is because I was blessed to have the opportunity to be on Dr. Bob's campus many of those days during the "time out." I can't begin to describe the many miracles I saw, felt and experienced! Dr. Bob's Home truly is "A House Full of Miracles!" The love, hope and devotion I saw were second to none. The miracles were in our board members, our staff, our volunteers and even guests who stopped by the Home knowing that it was closed, but also instinctively knowing they would have "The Dr. Bob's Experience", albeit from the porch or the grounds. The inspiration was indescribably wonderful. That alone saved my life, along with many others' lives!

Before this hiatus, many magnificent projects were underway. Some have been completed, some have not. A few of these are a new website with many features, including social media capability and online ordering at the new streamlined gift shop. A new security system for the entire campus was installed. At the Archives Welcome Education Center (A.W.E. Center), a new porch, railing and cement wall were installed.



Even though we have come a long way, we still have a long way to go! Unfortunately, our traditional funding sources have been severely compromised. Without guests, our gift shop sales were eliminated, as well as on-site donations. Regrettably too, our non-managing trustees could not proceed with their planned fundraisers. Even individual and group donations were drastically reduced because of the economic downturn. We NEED your help!

In closing, on behalf of Dr. Bob's Home I would like to thank you for your past support. Words can't express our heartfelt gratitude for your generosity. Your donations allow us to keep Dr. Bob's Home a beacon of light and hope for all. Thank you for supporting our efforts to protect and preserve the Home of the Smith family. In the spirit of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith, we attempt to welcome everyone who comes to our door. We want to continue to maintain the house of a man and his family whose efforts brought the promise of a new life to so many who had given up hope. You're the ones who help ensure the promise is still alive.

The year 2020 has presented us all with unprecedented challenges; however, it also holds much promise and hope. For all of us, individually and collectively, we stand at the turning point. With fortitude, faith and dedication we are committed to preserving our past, protecting the present and ensuring our future. Once more, thank you.

Until we meet again,  
-Harmon V., Chairman Dr. Bob's Home

## Gift shop news

Visit our Gift Shop, located next door to Dr. Bob's Home. Browse through a rich selection of books to add to your library. Items are available to purchase at [drbobshome.org](http://drbobshome.org).



Save the Date

2021 Founders' Day Weekend  
June 11, 12 and 13 | Akron, OH

New Dr. Bob's Home  
website coming soon!

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

330.864.1935

DrBobsHome.org



# Labor of Love By Ryan G.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Some that come to mind are labor of love and Love and Service. When you look at this picture or visit Dr. Bob's Home, you will witness service work at its finest. From the buildings to the grounds, there are a lot of dedicated volunteers to make it all happen. We are growing with the new addition of 122 Everett Ave., our new welcome center. That house joins the House Next Door and the reason we are all here, Dr. Bob's Home at 855 Ardmore. Thank you to all our volunteers for all you do. Thank you for greeting our visitors at the front door with Welcome Home. Thank you for taking care of Annie's Gardens. Thank you for keeping the houses clean for the thousands of visitors we welcome every year. Dr. Bob's campus is truly the finest example of Love and Service and is a labor of love.



## Going Social

Earlier this year, Dr. Bob's Home launched a new Facebook page through which we intend to carry Dr. Bob and Annie's message of Love and Service to the global community. We will extend our footprint to Instagram, YouTube and Twitter in the coming months. We plan to share short-form content, archival materials, inspirational quotes and photographs of the home.

Now, this is all very technical stuff. Given the fact that we are carrying on the legacy of Dr. Bob, a Dartmouth-educated doctor who once tried to remove the wallpaper in his living room with a garden hose, this is clearly no small feat. We are indebted to many members who have contributed time, experience and passion to this initiative.

We believe that the home is not just a dusty artifact (figuratively, of course, as the cleaning crew is very thorough) but actual living history. The Program and Fellowship are eternally in the present tense, it's just the furniture, books and twelve steps leading up to the home that are lovingly worn. May the circle always be unbroken.

Posts are inspired by the literature of the 'flying blind' period prior to the publication of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. To be accurate, all posts are squared with Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers (AAWS Conference-approved), the Big Book and/or the research done by our staff of historians and archivists.

In his last major talk, Dr. Bob said that there are things to be learned. He was a seeker who saw his quest for spiritual knowledge as a way to help the next sick and suffering soul. Driven by love for others, he was not afraid to pursue a line of inquiry irrespective of orthodoxy. Through our posts, we hope to capture his total commitment to one of three great conclusions: "That God could and would if he were sought."

Please remember to "like" us on Facebook at [facebook.com/drboobshome](https://www.facebook.com/drboobshome)

## 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 2 includes finishing the interior, new concrete for the front entrance, retaining wall, patio and stairs and installation of new railings and guardrails.

## Make a gift today!

Your gift may be directed toward:  
• Renovations • Endowment • Operations

To make a gift, call 330.864.1935, visit [DrBobsHome.com](http://DrBobsHome.com) or mail the included envelope to: Dr. Bob's Home, PO Box 449, Akron, OH 44309.

## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to all our non-managing trustees and friends for their efforts to raise funds for Dr. Bob's Home. All fundraising events support our primary purpose to maintain, restore and preserve the property at 855 Ardmore Ave. in Akron, Ohio. These events have also contributed to the growth of our campus with an exciting promise for the future.

Anyone interested in becoming a non-managing trustee or friend of Dr. Bob's Home can call 330.864.1935. Be safe, our dear friends!

# Volunteer? Are you kidding? By Paul G.

Don't admit to anything, don't trust anyone over 30 and lastly... don't volunteer for anything!

These simple tenets, the rules I lived by, were basically the mantra of my youth. In a serious understatement of the situation, however, I'll just say the circumstances of my life dictated the need for a change. It was at this point, in a stroke of good fortune, that I was introduced to and became a member of the Fellowship.

That was many years ago, but in retrospect it seems now that life underwent a sudden and revolutionary paradigm shift. I know it didn't happen immediately, but it soon became obvious that it was finally necessary to admit to the truth. I had to develop trust in others no matter what their age or circumstance and that I needed to actually volunteer for activities and situations that I was uncomfortable with or which I would have previously avoided. Therefore, in a relatively short period of time, the fundamental rules I had lived by were cast aside and were replaced by their polar opposites.

At some point I came across the concept of fitting yourself to be of maximum service. I recall the moments in which I recognized "I could do that" even as I knew my skillset didn't exactly fit, but that I was willing to try. It was in one such



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

Akron Community Foundation  
Charles E. and Mabel M. Ritchie Foundation  
Kenneth L. Calhoun Charitable Trust  
Laura R. and Lucian Q. Moffitt Foundation  
Lehner Family Foundation  
Lloyd L. and Louise K. Smith Memorial Foundation  
The R.C. Musson and Katharine M. Musson Charitable Foundation  
Sisler McFawn Foundation  
W. Paul and Thora J. Mills Memorial Foundation  
Welty Family Foundation

moment that I unexpectedly found myself at Dr. Bob's Home. The laughs and gratitude I experienced that day motivated me to inquire about how to join the volunteer staff. Despite my introverted nature, lack of historical knowledge, and resistance to leaving my comfort zone, I signed up for three Thursdays a month and so it was that another journey in life began. That was many years ago and the spiritual experiences that have resulted from that initial leap of faith continue to this day.

The volunteer staff at Dr. Bob's Home is a grassroots demonstration of the concept of service that Dr. Bob and Bill W. discovered to be so crucial to our recovery and our lives almost 85 years ago. In fact, because we have only one (but exemplary) part-time employee, pretty much everything else that happens on a daily basis at the Home is done by volunteers. We always need new staff as many of us experience changes in jobs, schedules and just life in general. It takes as many as 50 on the books to fill in all the scheduled openings and that is a labor of love unto itself. The decent staff isn't the only area of volunteerism, however. We are currently working on several exciting developments and we are always on the lookout for talents in all areas of modern life that can help us spread the message of the miracles that happened on this hallowed ground. Our volunteers include building and grounds, masonry, information technology, cleaning, gardening, roofing, HVAC, archives, glazing, videography, siding, concrete, social networking, painting, construction and many, many others. We are even looking at ways to generate and incorporate augmented reality to capture and share the excitement we have found at the Home. Once again, it all seems to come down to fitting ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.

Our local staff are not the only volunteers, however. Great effort is put into ensuring the success of Dr. Bob's Home by the many non-managing trustees and volunteers from coast to coast and internationally who help and support this mission in a multitude of ways. Many people help actively through all the events and fundraisers but many others passively support our efforts by simply sharing the good will they may have experienced while visiting Dr. Bob's Home at some point. Together, we all play our part by continuing the love story which began in this spot of the universe in early June 1935 and by attempting to carry the legacy that Dr. Bob tasked us with when he concluded his farewell talk in 1950 "...to extend to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us."

