

10-26-18 The Spirit of Hope

“At the end of the day, all you need is hope and strength. Hope that it will get better and the strength to hold on until it does.”

That quote is on a humble wooden plaque in Alice’s House at Humarock beach in Scituate. The house has an amazing history, begun by John and Alice Feeney who, for more than fifty years opened their hearts and home to individuals, families and groups in need of support and comfort. That is amazing in and of itself. After Alice died, her friend, Janet Gibson, created a non-profit to purchase the house and continue the healing tradition, naming it Alice’s House.

In 2012 the house was destroyed by fire. The place had helped so many, Janet knew the help must continue but after the fire it was overwhelming. She wondered if reviving the place and the tradition of Alice’s House could be a reality. She needed hope. She needed a basis for that hope. As word spread of the need, those who had been helped in the past jumped at the chance to give back, with donations and helping hands, rebuilding the house and opening in 2016. The new house is beautiful inside and out, just as some people are. They raise funds by renting it in the summer and, at times, having fundraisers.

Their 5k race and food and music brought me to Humarock on Saturday, happy to learn more about the place. The weather was perfect, the sky was beautiful, the music was great, and I was surrounded by the good vibes of a good cause. A two-year-old, who, apparently, had recently discovered his pockets, rocked back and forth to the music, hands in pockets, looking like a cool guy and very happy.

After visiting the good people in the village of Humarock, I moved on to another fundraiser, another good cause, another group of good people. I went to Mayflower Cranberries, owned by Jeff LaFleur, for his hosting of the second annual *Black Tie and Blue Jeans on the Bog* scholarship fundraiser event. Jeff has opened his heart and his land to help The Brook Retreat, a sober recovery home, teaching men the skills to live successfully without alcohol or drugs. It saved the lives of the three men who bought the house. Like those who were helped by Alice, these young men wanted to give back and help save the lives of others. Through mentorship and a rigorous schedule, they guide young men to recovery. Their website says, “It is essential we practice the skills taught during the program in order to figure this life thing out. Our goal is simple, change the person who came in.

<http://brookretreat.org/brook-retreat-for-men-plympton/>

That line about changing the person who came in, struck a chord with me because as I was earning my master's degree in Health Promotion, the same phrase was often used. Every health promotion program aims to change the person and/or change their thinking. It is a tall order and not easy to achieve! I give these young men so much credit for conducting a successful health promotion program that is saving lives! They have been so successful, they have expanded the program to another home for women. <http://brookretreat.org/brook-retreat-for-women-weymouth/>

While they have dedicated their lives with their program out of gratitude for their own lives being saved, I understand that not all people can do that. People might want to help but don't know how or think they can't contribute much.

If you find a cause you believe in and want to help, but don't have the income to assist financially, please ask if there is anything else you can do. Helping hands are always needed at fundraisers. Who sets up? Who lines the barrels with trash bags? Does the organization need anything you can donate? Whatever you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

Small contributions are great contributions, for the spirit of hope breathes life into any act, perpetuating the hope so desperately needed by so many.

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