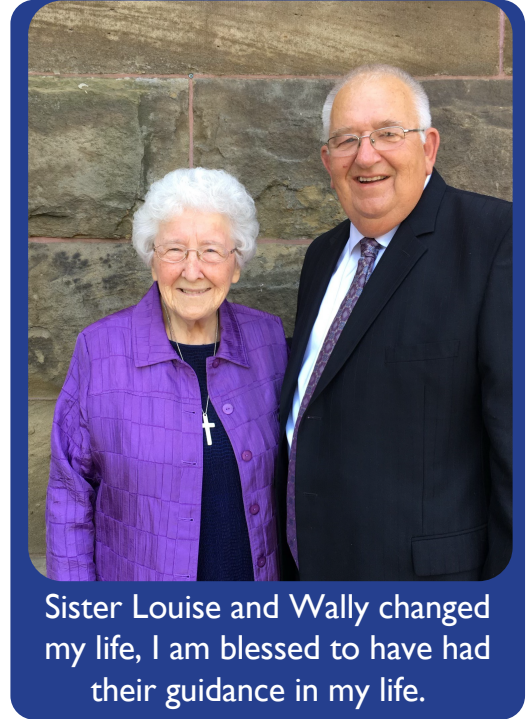




Serenity Renewal for Families



Sister Louise and Wally changed my life, I am blessed to have had their guidance in my life.

Dear

In 2005 I was deep into an alcoholic addiction. Superficially I had everything going for me, a job, a sports car, living in a cool condo, a pro athlete boyfriend and my youth but I felt empty and alone inside fighting the deep turmoil of my childhood.

My childhood started out as us three fun loving blonde daughters of my Danish parents who had immigrated to Canada but as my mother went deeper into her alcoholic addiction our lives became riddled with pain, abuse and suffering.

I suffered from anxiety and panic attacks in my teenage years where **I learned to self medicate with alcohol.** As I grew into early adulthood my addiction and dependency on alcohol grew stronger. I managed to build my life up in the same way superficially as my colleagues and friends but felt that at the drop of a pin everything would collapse because the foundation I had built everything on was entwined with toxicity.

I ended up being arrested for a DUI and felt the repercussions of my addiction. **My mind body and soul started to spin out and I started to watch my life crumble.** I sat on a barstool on New Year's Eve surrounded by glitz and glamour only to feel alone and empty. But for the grace of god (a god in which I didn't believe existed at the time) the hand of AA reached out to me. I joined AA and started to embark on my journey of recovery.

As I moved through the program, I lost a lot of my superficial gains but the program held my

spirits high. I needed professional help on top of AA because of all the abuse that I was put through as a child and AA could only take me so far. A friend in the program recommended that I look into a place called **Serenity Renewal for Families and there is where I met Wally and Sister Louise.** I signed up for a weekend workshop in which Wally would be the facilitator. Wally was (and still is) one of the most charismatic and connected speakers I've had the privilege of hearing speak. **He captures our hearts through his humility and loving nature.** It is so wonderful to see how Wally has been mentoring the new facilitators in how to run effective workshops and ensures materials have been updated to best serve the people who come to Serenity Renewal for Families for support.

The adult educational workshops **offer a safe space** to hear more information and to share how our story relates to the material. It has helped me to stay focused on my recovery journey. I have met lots of people who can't afford to pay for the services they really need and Serenity Renewal for Families' approach of not creating any barriers due to financial means is so appreciated. It is **thanks to your gifts that they can continue to impact so many families' lives.**

After my first year of sobriety, I had planned to move to Europe to study Fashion Design, my lifelong dream. My AA sponsor wanted me to be certain I wasn't trying to find a geographic cure for my alcoholism, so she told me to book a **one-on-one consultation with Sister Louise.** I arrived at Serenity Renewal for Families and was shown into Sister Louise's office, and I was extremely nervous because this was going to be my first time speaking with a nun. I didn't know what to expect except what I had seen in films. Behind a large desk was this soft little woman slight in figure but still giving a powerful yet very calming energy. She said follow me and we came to a large room where we sat closely across from one another and nothing stood in the middle of us, just an open space. She asked me why I had come? I explained I wanted to ask her opinion on my decision to move to Europe to study Fashion Design and she looked at me with those twinkling eyes and said **"Oh well, that sounds wonderful, I'm so envious!"** I looked at her shocked and stumbled on my words **"Umm, well, um, I didn't know nuns were allowed to be envious?"** She thought that was quite humorous and said **"Of course, I'm only human!"** This is where I **learned that the acceptance of uncomfortable feelings is empowering.**

Sister Louise and Wally changed my life, I am blessed to have had their guidance in my life. I understand why the organization created the "Sister Louise Angels of Hope Community" which consists of people who leave a gift in their will to Serenity Renewal for Families. I was so filled with gratitude to hear that Serenity Renewal for Families' first bequest came in recently from a past volunteer and donor. It has changed the financial stability of the organization so they can look at new ways of serving our community. All of the original staff and volunteers set the stage for the new team to carry on their legacy by offering a wide range of services while being inclusive

and serving all family members affected directly or indirectly by addictions.

I'm 18 years sober today, I completed a Masters Degree at a prestigious college, I've been happily married for 13 years and we have a lovely and happy daughter. Serenity Renewal for Families gave me tools on how to approach life in a healthy way and it continues to do so. Since moving back to Canada 2 years ago my family has continued to take workshops and counseling at Serenity Renewal for Families so that we don't fall into the cyclical pattern of abuse that comes along with addiction. **We have found a new hope to live a healthy life through Serenity Renewal for Families and are extremely grateful for everything they have given to us.** It is through this Circle of Care that our family is accessing at Serenity Renewal for Families which will allow us to live a healthy and happy family life and increase the chance of breaking the cycle of addictions to our next generation. In the New Year we will be participating in the B.A.B.E.S. program.



"This is our happy family climbing a steep but beautiful hill. I find it represents metaphorically the journey of recovery."

That way our daughter will be better prepared to break the cycle of addictions. And, we as parents will gain some more knowledge of how to communicate better and grow as a family.

Please support generously Serenity Renewal for Families so they can continue to impact the lives of the most vulnerable families in Ottawa and surrounding communities. **Thank you to the donors who have made this organization survive and thrive for 40 years. They were able to change my life and I know many other families as well.**

Sincerely,

Tina

P.S. Please make your donation today to help ensure people who can't afford to pay, can still have the support they need. Thanks to a generous donor, **the first \$30,000 will be doubled!** This matching donor transferred appreciated shares to gain a tax benefit as well. You can make a donation today by mail, on-line or by calling the office at 613-523-5143 with a credit card. If you would like more information on how to do a stock transfer, call Neil, the E.D. at 613-784-9754.