

KODIAK AREA MENTOR PROGRAM

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NOVEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Kodiak Area Mentor Program Inc., or KAMP, is a non-profit, faith-based program sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His love and forgiveness with our brothers and sisters who are lost in sin here in Kodiak; by building relationships with individuals we can help them overcome difficult situations and set-backs. KAMP works with those who are, or have been incarcerated with a plan to re-enter the community in a healthy, safe, sober and more successful way.

KAMP does not compete with other programs but rather encourages individuals to use existing programs within and outside the community. We take the time to educate participants on accessing available resources.

**True long lasting success comes from good people being selfless and pursuing common goals without thought of recognition.**



**A NOTE OF THANKSGIVING—TERESA SLAUGHTER, PRESIDENT**

As we approach Thanksgiving this year I am compelled to think on all the blessings (KAMP) has experienced throughout the year. I would like to take a moment to share with you why KAMP is so important to me.

KAMP to me, is an exercise in consistency, something I desperately needed in my own life. Building a relationship with someone that has no idea what a healthy relationship is – takes time. It takes meals at the table, quite a few cups of coffee and most importantly....consistency. The consistent kindness, love and mentorship of just a couple individuals in my life, literally saved my life. Though I am thankful that God allowed these individuals into my life, I am even more grateful that HE has allowed my husband and I the privilege of being a part of several lives that achieved victory over troubled pasts. We would not trade the memories of this journey for anything.

***KAMP currently has 48 networking support individuals from, Landlords, Employers and Meal Preparers to Mentors.***

The network of KAMP thrills me! When I had no idea what to do for someone, God would give me that drive to continue finding answers. The answers came in the form of networking in the community with good hearted employers, Bible Study leaders, Landlords and mentors etc. The greatest challenge “KAMP” faces at times is in getting others in the community to take a chance on someone. They cannot, from their perspective, see the hope of change in certain individuals at times. What an incredible feeling to see individuals persevere and still achieve success. It is a privilege to be part of the network walking alongside an individual doing the hard work of “real change”. It is a blessing to visit, share meals, tears, laughter and most importantly the Gospel. Though I have always felt the least capable and the least equipped, I have watched and felt God use me. We have individuals that without a doubt had the world against them in their mind. How can people forgive me? What will they think of me? How do I start over?

***KAMP GROUP is held on Friday evenings at 6pm at the Community Baptist Church.  
We serve on average 30 adults and 8 children each Friday evening***

**CONTINUED—A NOTE OF THANKSGIVING—TERESA SLAUGHTER, PRESIDENT**

***KAMP serves an average of 52 women and 156 men in the Kodiak Jail in the course of a year.***

So yes I am Thankful this Thanksgiving. I am thankful for God touching the hearts of a handful of wonderful caring people to grow an organization called KAMP. I am also thankful for that handful of individuals who then reaches into the community and networks like no other I have seen yet. They bring in mentors, employers, landlords, churches and on and on to wrap around an individual or a family to strengthen them as they begin to rebuild the wreckage of their past. Many of the individuals that participate in KAMP are not recognized for all they do. They prepare the meals, watch the children, order supplies, meet with individuals and families, write letters and many, many other things that gives God glory every day.

KAMP spends time educating others that the process of rebuilding a broken past takes time and cannot be done perfectly. Are we better today than we were yesterday? If the answer is yes, we are on the right track. Each person's growth both mentor and mentee takes an unique amount of time depending upon how much truth we each want to face about ourselves.. The more growth we go through the more we each realize that it will be a lifelong process. Yes, even the mentors are growing in this process. There is not one occasion where I left a conversation that I did not learn something about myself through it.

I am so thankful that God knew what I have needed all of my life and then continued to allow me the courage to be used for His benefit to others. God allowed me the privilege to be a part of KAMP to prepare me for the next step of my life and for this I am eternally grateful!!

I hope that my words will inspire others to want to become a part of The Kodiak Area Mentor Program. It is a truly fulfilling mission.



**GOING FULL CIRCLE—JAMI GIBSON, MENTOR**

My name is Jami Gibson and in June of 2014 I began my journey of new life with KAMP. I became incarcerated at this time and KAMP was there for me full circle. The ladies that would come into the jail and minister to me and the other girls, gave me so much hope and showed me love when I felt unforgivable and unlovable. They shared the gospel and gave me things to think about in order to become the best that I could be in my given situation and my future. It is amazing how the people in this program can build you up when you are at your lowest point. Throughout my 2 years of being incarcerated they kept in touch by writing to me and sending me cards. This made me feel very loved and cared for. I knew that when I got released that they would be there for me because they were beside me supporting me from the very start. When I was released I joined the group at Community Baptist Church and I felt very

accepted and loved, something that I was very nervous about when coming back to a community that I had felt I took so much from and had deceived for so long. They helped me work through my triggers and with my nervousness just by being there as support when I needed someone to talk to and keep me on my walk with God. Now almost 2 years later since my release I am able to give back to the Kodiak community by becoming a mentor in KAMP and helping others that suffer with addiction and other habits and hang ups. It makes me feel good helping others and bringing them hope, the same kind of hope that I was given from the KAMP community. I am forever in their debt for helping bring me full circle.





## A MINISTRY BUILDING COMMUNITY—PETER SPRAGUE, TREASURER

One of the distinctive features of KAMP is that it is a ministry that brings the Christian community together in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ here in Kodiak. In this regard, it functions more as an inter-church ministry rather than a para-church outreach. The latter describes ministries that work alongside the local church, exercising some of its functions but avoiding some of the elements that are essential to ‘doing church’ in the fullest sense. The idea of an inter-church ministry is that it seeks

to accomplish a task that is bigger than any one local church can accomplish effectively by itself, while at the same time, preserving the local church as the primary way that Christ manifests his presence in a community. Local churches provide funding to support the work of KAMP; members of local churches serve in KAMP in a variety of ways as a part of their commitment to Christ and their local church bodies; there is a conscious goal to integrate those that KAMP ministers to into the life of a local church communi-

ty. As such, KAMP functions as a ministry of individual churches acting as one in order to make the presence of Christ visible in Kodiak in a way that advances His kingdom and glorifies God.

From a personal perspective as a pastor serving a local church here in Kodiak, the ministry of KAMP relates in a number of ways to my central passion of building community in Christ in response to his prayer in John 17. It is important to me to see the healing grace of Christ minister to the brokenness of lives damaged by sub-

stance abuse, and often associated with criminal records. The result is that some individuals find themselves on the ‘outside’ struggling to get back in. KAMP reaches out with a message of love, along with a willingness to help and a goal to restore struggling people into healthy communities. KAMP also provides me an opportunity to build relationships with members of other church bodies and to work together with other churches as a witness to our oneness in Christ.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*  
 Jeremiah 29:11 NIV



## MY TRANSFORMATION STORY—SHEILA MAJOR, MENTEE

I was in a hole deeper than ever before! I was depressed, my heart and soul were in a darkness, unable to express myself with others. And then something happened that I never thought was possible for me! I was struggling for several years with mental health issues as well as physical illnesses. I was searching for a support group

that I could really sink my teeth into. Jill Bunting, my Probation Officer, turned me towards KAMP! It is a faith-based support system where a person who is down on their luck can share their trials and tribulations, have fellowship, talk with the Mentors about life and how we want to change. KAMP has saved my life in a big way! I

started three and a half years ago and it has been a truly transforming experience for me! God is a huge part of my life now. In the time I have been involved with this program, I have continued to grow. After a couple years I finally came out of my shell! I was comfortable in my skin for the first time ever! And now I have a full time

job and I am loving it. It’s been at least fifteen years since I worked last. I am now able to have a life fulfilled! Thank you KAMP for continuing to transform me to being a much better person.





## A KODIAK SUCCESS STORY— JONATHAN STRONG, VICE PRESIDENT

This story begins in downtown Kodiak about three years ago, it was a rainy winter morning and I was walking on the spit past the gazebo when a gentleman said hello; I'll call him Jay. We engaged in small talk and I joined Jay's group of several men and women who were having some of the hair of the dog that bit them; drinking to clear the hangover from the previous night's carousing. I handed out some of my cards and invited everyone to the Kodiak Area Mentor Program (KAMP) meeting on Friday night and explained how we help people make positive choices. KAMP is a faith based non-profit that has weekly support groups in the community and the Kodiak Jail.

A few months later on a sunny summer evening; I had just gotten off work and drove my 1990 Chevy truck with a large cab-over camper downtown to the gazebo area to sit and eat a snack and watch the boats and harbor animals. As I reversed my old camper into a parking spot with a nice view; I noticed several men in the gazebo watching me. No doubt I looked like a fellow transient come to Kodiak in search of a "Deadliest Catch" big pay-day. As I was walking outside Jay came up to me in a drunken stooper, loud and obnoxious. He was telling me how he could hook me up with a helicopter tour of the island since his friend had a helicopter; it would only cost a couple hundred dollars. I declined politely, but Jay was determined to get a few dollars. You see, as an alcoholic Jay needed enough alcohol to last through the night or he would potentially face life threatening Delirium Tremors or DT's can be part of alcohol withdrawal. A few dollars would buy two 24 ounce cans of Steel Reserve 211 (with tax they are \$2.14 each).

Let me tell you a little bit about Steel Reserve 211; technically Steel Reserve 211 is a high alcohol content lager also known as a malt liquor. From my own personal experience I have nicknamed it "Liquid Crack"; the Urban Dictionary's top definition is as follows: *"Steel Reserve is an intoxicating liquid customarily found in 24 oz. cans and in the value-packed 40 oz. glass bottles. Now, normally I'd be compelled to use the word "beer", but that's not going to cut the mustard. This is a HIGH GRAVITY LAGER. That's what they say. After drinking this, you'll feel like someone increased the Earth's gravity field by 70%. Don't get me wrong, it's hands down the best bang for your drinking dollar... but you'll probably get arrested if you drink more than a forty ounce. So be careful! I have hallucinated and time travelled under the influence of steel reserve. After I drank a couple of forties of STEEL RESERVE I felt brave enough to fight a cop! And the cop felt brave enough to Taser me till I s\*\*\* my pants."*

For five dollars Jay could buy enough Steel Reserve 211 to get himself through the night and into the next day and when he looked at me he saw a means to stay well and not experience the debilitating effects of alcohol withdrawal. I did not give Jay any money because I knew exactly what he would buy, as I found out later he was actually banned from entering the downtown liquor store since he was caught on more than one occasion stealing Steel Reserve 211. But that does not stop the alcoholic, it's just an inconvenience. What Jay would do is find a fellow alcoholic; one who was not banned from the liquor store to purchase the 211. This of course causes many opportunities for fights and altercations, maybe you have witnessed such an altercation or been asked for a couple of dollars as you went to enter a store or restaurant in downtown Kodiak.

The next time I talked with Jay was in the Kodiak Jail; I know big surprise right? I was there as a volunteer with KAMP where we go into the Kodiak Jail every Saturday evening to establish relationships and help people make healthy choices. Jay was a couple of days sober and had made it through the early withdrawals, as a veteran alcoholic Jay has been through the Kodiak criminal justice system many times. Jay was eager to hear my recovery testimony and I shared the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ with him and the rest of the group. I recognized the pain and hopelessness that alcoholism and addiction cause in Jay's eyes; he was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I also recognized a glimmer of hope and potential change, the desire to be

**CONTINUED—A KODIAK SUCCESS STORY— JONATHAN STRONG, VICE PRESIDENT**

free from his dependence on alcohol. I invited all of the men in the group to KAMP's Friday evening group meeting and gave them my phone number; just as I do every time I go into the jail.

Over the next couple of months I saw Jay downtown; he had gone back to drinking of course and had come to KAMP's Friday evening groups on occasion. KAMP serves a meal on Friday nights, so it is a great place to get warm and have a good meal. My wife Aly had organized a prayer walk that started at the downtown Harbor Master's office. Jay was in fine form feeling ten feet tall and bullet proof that day, he asked Aly what she was doing. Being proud of her efforts, Aly explained how she had organized a prayer walk to pray for Kodiak. Jay's alcoholism became angry, who did she think she was, what has God ever done for him! Jay began to verbally assault Aly and the situation became very uncomfortable. Aly was able to get out of situation safely but experienced firsthand what many Kodiakians and tourists run into when being downtown where people with alcoholism and addiction hangout since it's near to their drug of choice, Steel Reserve 211.

One evening at KAMP's group Jay came in late and intoxicated more than usual, he was angry and resentful. I spoke with him after the group and he was desperate for change and asked if he could stay in my Suburban for the night. I had sold the old camper due to mechanical issues and was driving a 1992 Suburban I found on Swap Swap for free; so after prayer I took Jay home with me. I gave him a sleeping bag, a pillow, some food and water and let him pass out in the back of the Suburban parked in my driveway. The next morning I heard a knock on my front door and a humble thankful Jay was there asking to use the restroom. After using the restroom I gave Jay a clean towel and some of my clothes and encouraged him to take a nice hot shower. Jay's system was eagerly purging out the poisonous Steel Reserve 211; it was being released as a potent odor coming from his pours. A sober and clean Jay sat down with me and my family for breakfast and hot coffee. Jay's nature as a sober man is respectful, kind and grateful.

Jay asked me to be his recovery sponsor and mentor; he stayed that night and the next day with me and my family in our home. As time passed and Jay's head cleared even more, I was able to learn about his life and begin to build a trusting relationship with him. Jay had value, he was not a lost cause, and Jay was intelligent and caring; was open to advice and was willing to listen. Despite this, Jay is an alcoholic, he is sick and in Kodiak we do not have the appropriate resources to treat someone like Jay who is so sick he needs a residential program.

Working with the addict or alcoholic here in Kodiak is very challenging. Imagine being a doctor and seeing a patient with a deadly chronic illness, there is treatment that can save their life but it's not available in Kodiak. Of course as the doctor you make the recommendation for them to go to Anchorage or another community to receive treatment. I spoke with Jay about leaving Kodiak and entering a log-term residential drug and alcohol program. He agreed and was willing so I helped him fill out an application to enter a program in Oregon. As these things go, Jay returned to his cycle of alcoholism, he was trying and putting forth an effort to stay sober but it's impossible to do without the appropriate support and treatment. I would see Jay from time to time or we would talk on the phone, each time I knew he was trying, but will power is not enough. His application for the residential program was approved, but there were no funds for transportation to the program. Another year goes by, Jay is taking odd jobs and working processing fish just long enough to get a pay check and then it's back to a complete relapse, back to Steel Reserve 211. One afternoon I received a call from Jay, he was assaulted with a baseball bat in a drunken brawl. I took him to the emergency room; where he is a frequent customer; the staff knew him by name and knew he'd be back. The doctor didn't offer narcotics knowing Jay's system had too much alcohol and the pain medicine could be dangerous.

**CONTINUED—A KODIAK SUCCESS STORY— JONATHAN STRONG, VICE PRESIDENT**

A few weeks later KAMP received a grant from the Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center. The KAMP Board of Directors approved the funding for me to escort Jay to the long-term residential program; now all I needed to do was find him. I called, thankfully his phone was still working so I left a message and searched for him downtown. Jay called back, I could tell by his slurred speech he was drunk, okay no problem but he was no longer in Kodiak. Jay had found his way on the ferry, ended up passing out in one of the bathrooms and was kicked off in Homer where he was arrested, given a citation to appear in court then released. He was determined to make it to Anchorage where he could find work; he hitch hiked his way to Anchorage in late January, nearly freezing to death along the way. Once he made it to Anchorage he was physically assaulted, his back pack was stolen and was currently on a bus to the Anchorage airport with no money or means to go any further. As he was telling me the story, I interrupted and said “great! Don’t leave stay at the airport I’m on my way.”

This was on a Friday, so I booked a flight to Anchorage and prayed we’d make it to the program on Monday morning. I found Jay in the terminal feeling good still intoxicated and had made a friend. We took a taxi to a near-by hotel and checked in, it was now after midnight and we were both hungry. There was a McDonalds down the street so we trudged through the winter snow eager for a hot meal. As we approached the front door there was a young man standing there smoking a Marlboro who proceeded to tell us the dining room was closed but the drive through was still open. He was gracious to offer us a ride in his vehicle. “Thanks” I said, “I’ll even buy you some food for helping us”. As we followed our new friend into the parking area of the hotel it became darker and darker, my gut was telling me this was not a good situation. He led us to a suspicious vehicle that was occupied by two other men who did not look like they were the helpful sort. As one stepped out of the vehicle I noticed a weapon in his waist and said thanks a lot but we’re okay, we don’t need a ride. Jay and I stepped backwards, retracing our path and made our way out of the situation. We decided to dine on gas station microwave burritos, buffalo jerky and Pepsi, I had my heart set on a Filet-O-Fish, but I think we made the right decision.

Back at the hotel I booked us both flights to Oregon and made hotel arrangements. We made it to Portland Oregon and checked into the hotel to wait until Monday morning. It was a good time to give Jay positive encouragement and keep an eye on his alcohol withdrawal, at any time he might need emergency medical assistance. As time went by and Jay sobered up the reality of entering a 6 month program began to set in. Jay’s alcoholism was not interested in recovery, its mission was to stay in control of Jay and do everything in its power to get him back to a drink. Back in Kodiak KAMP and my family were praying for Jay, he needed all the prayers he could get. I needed prayer, as Jay’s alcoholism was giving him every excuse in the book to leave. Early Monday morning before sunrise I heard Jay moving about, and as I looked up in the dim light I could see that he was packed and leaving the hotel room. He was about to walk out the door when I asked, “just where do you think you’re going?” One last chance I said “give me a minute and let’s go get some coffee and breakfast.” I dressed quickly and led him to the restaurant just outside of the hotel with a view of the program a few hundred feet away. Jay was committed, I was not letting him out of my sight, and he was so close to the opportunity of a new life. Jay devoured his huge Denver Omelet as it might be his last meal as a free man.

Going into a residential recovery program for the alcoholic or addict seems like the end of your life, even though you hate the alcohol or drugs they are like your best friend; who is always there to sooth your pain, to be a comfort through the tough times. It can be like the death of a parent or like losing the love of your life.

Jay and I walked the last two hundred feet to the intake office, as he was completing the intake paperwork his alcoholism was still doing its best to get Jay out of that program. In order to be accepted into the program you

**CONTINUED—A KODIAK SUCCESS STORY—JONATHAN STRONG, VICE PRESIDENT**

have to test clean for drugs and alcohol, it had been two days since Jay's last drink so he passed the breathalyzer. But he still needed to pass the urinalysis test. In my time as a counselor and intake coordinator many men have failed the urine test and were denied entrance into the program. I was confident Jay would pass the test, but the problem was his nerves would not allow him to give the sample. The intake coordinator and I told Jay to drink lots of water and gave him encouragement. After several more unsuccessful attempts, Jay was finally able to provide a sample and passed the test. He was now officially in the program! Wow what a relief, now all he needed to do was complete the next 180 days; I knew they'd be even more difficult for Jay than the last three.

194 days later, Jay successfully graduated the program and signed on for the re-entry phase where he was able to stay in the program and seek employment. Jay is still in Oregon, I have advised him not to come back to Kodiak; he has the best chance for success elsewhere. Jay is happy and healthy, he is employed, going to AA meetings, has a local sponsor and is attending a local church. Jay is thankful and grateful for KAMP and the support he has received. Jay's journey has just begun and his recovery testimony has many chapters remaining, I am fortunate and grateful to be a witness to a small part of it.

If you or a loved one struggle with alcoholism or addiction get in touch with me.

Jonathan Strong, NCAC I  
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**RE-ENTRY RECOGNITION KODIAK—JILL BUNTING, PROBATION OFFICER, DEPT OF CORRECTIONS**

On June 2, 2017 Department of Corrections Adult Probation and the Kodiak Area Mentor Program (KAMP) held the first **Re-Entry Recognition Kodiak** event.

Invitations were sent out to individuals in the legal community, employer community and housing community. Due to security requirements (as the Courthouse is closed Friday afternoons) this event was limited to invitation-only participants.

The qualifications to be a speaker at this event were: successful completion of probation, employment, housing, transportation and living a changed life.

Five speakers were on the agenda. Each speaker was given three minutes to address Judge Steve Cole and the members of the audience. They told their stories of recovery and victory over substance abuse. They recognized the people in their lives that helped them in their journey.

Three of the five speakers were participants in the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA), and some went on to own their own homes. Robenett Sagalkin, Asset Supervisor for the Kodiak Office of the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, was in the audience to hear the stories of these individuals. She had this to say, "Today I was invited to attend one of the most heartwarming recognitions/celebrations that I have ever been a part of in my years of working with AHFC!! Five local individuals, all who have served time on felony probation, were allowed to share their success stories and to acknowledge the programs and people in our community who have led to their success. Each of the five ...started nervously at the podium in Courtroom A, where they had previously been sentenced for their crimes at one time, by thanking Superior Court Judge Steve Cole for his hand in their successes. Each of them were participants of the Department of Corrections Kodiak Probation and Parole; each them are currently participating members in Kodiak Area Mentor Program, which is a 3 year old non-profit that is making huge strides in the success rate for those re-entering society; and three of the 5 are former TBRA/PAR-SW successful participants!! They openly shared their appreciation for the

**CONTINUED—RE-ENTRY RECOGNITION KODIAK—JILL BUNTING, PROBATION OFFICER, DEPT OF CORRECTIONS**

help, stability and support that our program gave them!! Three out of the five, (which includes two TRBA) have moved on to permanent employment and HOME OWNERSHIP!!!!!! I must say, that their personal stories and accomplishments moved many to tears.....including Judge Cole!”

Major Dave Davis of the Kodiak Salvation Army attended, and sent the following email after the event, “WOW! How impressive is your Mentoring program in making a difference for both the recipients and those who lend support. An excellent bridge that was sorely needed when I was here before and to see the many aspects, like a spider web of love catching those who might otherwise fall through the cracks. SALUTE!”

After the speeches were presented the floor was turned over to Judge Cole who spoke to the audience and speakers about how moved he was at hearing each individual’s presentation. Judge Cole acknowledged the agencies represented in the room (Kodiak Area Mentor Program, District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender Agency, Threshold Recycling, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Borough Mayor and employer Dan Rohrer, Kodiak Police Department, Alaska State Troopers, and others) for working together to address the needs of the community of Kodiak and the individuals with whom they interact. Afterward, a reception was held with a celebration cake, coffee, and conversation. This event was deemed a success and we look forward to presenting more success stories to the Court and the community in the future.



Left to right: Will Davis, Shawn Olsen, Erica Delacruz Sanchez, Joan Sison, and Alison Thomas. Judge Steve Cole.

**To make a difference in someone’s life you don’t have to be brilliant,  
rich, beautiful or perfect. You just have to CARE.**

