

Winter 2006/2007

A Wonderful Community

The Year in Review: Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to our first-ever Reel Recovery Newsletter. If you are reading this, you are a member of the Reel Recovery community that has grown from just a few guys sitting around a Denver kitchen table in 2003, to several thousand friends, including our courageous participants and their families, our dedicated, caring volunteers, our generous donors and sponsors, our enthusiastic healthcare and fly-fishing partner organizations, and so many others who have helped us along the way. It is difficult to express in writing how deeply touched and grateful we are for all your support that has brought us this far, and will help carry us in the future.

2006 is the year Reel Recovery truly came of age. From 8 Retreats in 2005, we grew to 12 in 2006, a 50% increase in the number of men served. We

also expanded geographically, from 6 states in 2005 to 10 in 2006, adding Montana, Washington, Oregon and New York to our existing base of California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Michigan and Kentucky. In every state, we have developed strong, sustainable relationships in both the fly-fishing and healthcare communities, building a wonderful pool of volunteers across the country and working with some of the nation's leading cancer centers to provide our services: Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center were among many that joined us in 2006 to help bring our program to their cancer patients.

We threw two great parties this year, one in Salt Lake City in March and the other in Denver in June. These two Winetasting/Auctions helped raise over \$50,000 for our Retreat Program, and we will do both again in 2007 (check for details on our website). Thanks to all of you who made these events such a success! All in all, over 500 individuals, organizations and businesses stepped up in 2006 to help fund Reel Recovery, and with 90% of our funding going directly to our program activities, every dollar raised makes a very meaningful difference to the men we serve.



Stan Golub and participant Jeff Hastings about to release Jeff's catch at Reel Recovery's 2006 Washington State Retreat

Encouraged by our progress in 2006, we are looking forward to an even better 2007; we hope to further expand our Retreat capacity to fulfill our mission of serving as many men as possible, as always, stretching our resources to the maximum. All of us in the Reel Recovery community share a generosity of spirit in service of that mission, and we look forward to working together with you, our great friends, to continue to fulfill the promise of this wonderful community.

Be Well! Fish On!

Stan Golub
Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 15, 2007

2007 Retreat Schedule posted online

February 8, 2007

First Annual Patrons Dinner, Denver

March 4, 2007

Winetasting & Auction, Salt Lake City

May 2007

Retreat Season begins

June, 2007 (Date TBD)

Winetasting & Auction, Denver

Our Heart and Soul: The Reel Recovery Volunteers

WISH LIST

14 Wading Staffs - collapsible
14 Rain Jackets – various sizes
8 Walkie-talkies
Waterproof Digital Camera
Flies, flies and more flies (5,000+)
New laptop computer
Frequent Flyer Miles
Auction Items

FACILITIES

If you have a chance to visit any of our Retreat hosting facilities, please tell them you're a friend of Reel Recovery. They are all exceptional places, very generous to Reel Recovery and hospitable and caring to all their guests.

California:

Clearwater Lodge on the Pit River

Colorado:

Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch
4UR Ranch

Kentucky/Indiana:

Wooded Glen

Michigan:

Gates Au Sable Lodge

Montana:

Dome Mountain Ranch

Nevada (Markleeville, CA):

Creekside Lodge
Pleasant Valley Fly Fishing Preserve

New York:

Beaverkill Valley Inn

Oregon:

Big K Ranch

Utah:

Falcon's Ledge

Washington:

The Inn at Suncadia

“The Fishing Buddies are extraordinary! They make you appreciate that there are good people in this world who are unselfishly willing to share their time and knowledge with others. I will never forget them.”

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Reel Recovery. In every state where we conduct Retreats, we have dozens of dedicated men and women who make it all work. They help us recruit participants, raise local funding, collect donated flies and equipment, write articles in local media, make presentations to local clubs, attend fly shows and staff our auctions. At the Retreats, they transport gear, serve lunch, ensure the safety of the men, and, if they are fly-fishers, act as Fishing Buddies, one-on-one assistants to the participants. More than a fishing guide, these Fishing Buddies are companions on the



water, lending an ear as well as a hand, sharing stories individually with the men that expand on the “Courageous Conversations” conducted as a group. The bonds created by the Buddies at the Retreats often last well beyond the event itself; many strong friendships have been forged with the participants, providing powerful and healing support that will last a lifetime.

From a 2006 Oregon Buddy . . .

“While I expected to have an impact on the people I was to help, what I didn't expect was the impact they had on me. Amazing to me, the men were facing their future with an attitude as good as any I have seen anywhere. I thank every one of them for showing me a side of life few of us ever have to see, and the belief that one can move forward in pain and fear without it taking over their every waking minute. I am awed and inspired by the experience.”

Sharing Their Stories . . .

“You guys have saved my life” Gene N., Nevada 2006

“I am leaving here a changed man” Pete S., Northern California 2006

We have a saying at Reel Recovery: “It’s not about the fishing.” Sure, the fly-fishing component of our program is very important: it is the “hook” that brings the men to the Retreats; it provides a healing connection with nature, an opportunity for joy and hope as the men learn a new skill, and a welcome respite from their battle with cancer. So many men have told us that, while standing with their Buddy on the stream, they completely forget about their disease, and for those precious hours, feel “well”.

But more than the fishing, Reel Recovery Retreats provide these men an opportunity to share their stories during six “Courageous Conversations”. During these facilitated discussions, men often talk openly in ways they have never talked with anyone – spouse, family, friend or physician – about their experiences with cancer and its impact on their lives. The healing power of these conversations can be life-changing, as so many of the men have told us:

After a year’s delay on my part, I finally got around to it. “It” was a fly-fishing retreat for men surviving from and living with cancer. I initially saw it as a way to try something new. I never imagined fly-fishing could open me to a new level of compassion for myself and other men. The sagely led conversations helped open me to new ways of expressing and experiencing myself. The fishing lessons taught me new forms of humility and my one catch gave me a joyful smile I can still feel. I drove home crying and feeling extremely grateful for such a wonderful gift of personal growth and support.

Be Well! Fish On!

William Hazelwood, Northern California 2006



William, Northern California 2006

Words are not available to express my gratitude for this past weekend. I have never in my 71 years been with such a loving and giving group, including staff, volunteers and attendees. Sharing the

problems of others makes one realize that ours are small in comparison. This has been one of the most eye-opening and rewarding experiences that I have ever encountered. All I can say is thank you, thank you, thank you and God bless all of you for what you are doing to make life better for others.

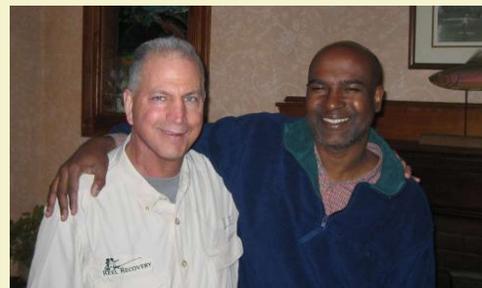
Jim K., Kentucky 2006

How do I explain my experience at the Markleeville Retreat? It is difficult to put into words but here’s a starter. It was one of the most inspiring and rewarding experiences I have had the pleasure of participating in. It was one of those life events that warms your soul and makes you stop and assess where you are on life’s journey. It makes you pause and extend a hand to those who are not as fortunate as you are, and admire those who make daily sacrifices to help others. You leave the retreat with a new spirit and appreciation of life.

Bill Doss, Nevada 2006



Bill and Coy, Nevada 2006



Paul and Nate, New York 2006

The New York Retreat gave me more than I ever expected. I got the chance to fish again, laugh and enjoy the company of others, and feel lighthearted for the first time in a very long time. During our meetings, the stories offered by the other survivors helped me to clarify some of the confusion and loss of direction that I felt since my diagnosis. I met truly wonderful people who helped me feel at ease sharing my thoughts and feelings. I deeply appreciate all the personal attention and camaraderie from the staff and fishing buddies. I felt right at home, in the company of friends, and warmed by all the genuine support and caring. Reel Recovery helped me remember who I am, reset my compass and get back on track again. My energy and focus are back on the positive, where they belong. I’m ready to move forward being myself again, not just a “cancer patient”. Thank you for this life-affirming experience.

Be Well! Fish On!

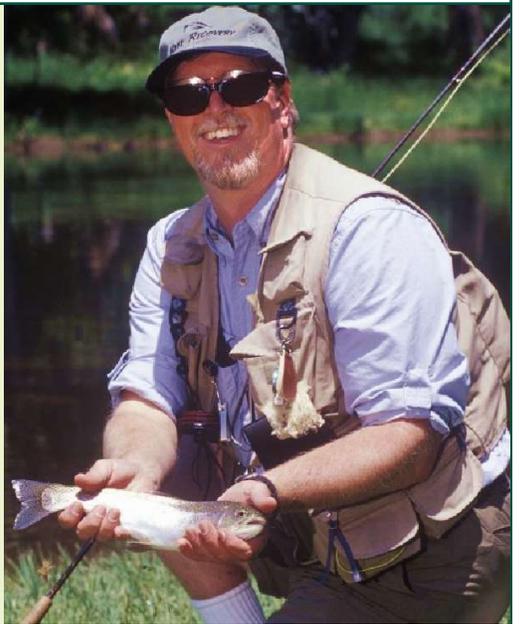
Paul Roy, New York 2006

Your Greatest Gift is What You Give of Yourself

In Dedication

“Your greatest gift is what you give of yourself.” Stewart Brown made this comment to the group of men gathered at the first-ever Reel Recovery retreat in Loveland, CO, just three days before he was to go into surgery on his brain tumor. That was Stu, always thinking of others, even as he faced his own greatest challenge.

It was Stu’s determination to give to others that formed the cornerstone of Reel Recovery. An avid fly-fisher, Stu spent many hours during the three years after his cancer diagnosis in the peaceful beauty of Colorado waters. He dedicated his final months to the creation of Reel Recovery, so other men facing similar battles could experience the healing serenity that fly-fishing had offered him.



Stewart Brown 1955 - 2003



Lance Armstrong with Stu and family

Inspired by his vision, passion and courage, a group of men joined with Stu to establish Reel Recovery in May, 2003. Though his health was beginning to deteriorate, Stu was able to attend the first retreat in June, along with his son Tyson, who served as volunteer staff. The two were able to share moments of joy, pain, fear and love as they fished together and shared stories with the rest of the group.

In Stu’s last weeks, in failing health, he summoned the strength to meet with world-champion cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong. Stu was determined to share with Lance his vision of Reel Recovery and the importance of this program to future cancer survivors. Stu’s inspiring courage was met with a generous hand in return; the Lance Armstrong Foundation has provided Reel Recovery several grants ensuring Stu’s legacy will live on through Reel Recovery for many years to come.

Reel Recovery is dedicated to Stewart Brown

How You Can Help . . .

Year-End Giving. Help yourself at tax time while helping men with cancer now! Reel Recovery is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your 2006 donations are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by the IRS.

Matching Gifts. Ask your employer about matching your contribution.

Scholarships. Help support a specific Retreat by giving a \$700 scholarship that will fully pay the way for a participant. Funds will be earmarked for the Retreat you specify.

Legacy Gifts. Give a lasting gift by naming Reel Recovery a beneficiary in your estate planning. Call us for more details.

Auction Items. We’re looking for high quality items for our 2007 fundraisers: travel, art, jewelry, sporting gear, vintage wines, etc. Call for details.

Volunteer. Check our website or call for more information.

