

Winter 2008/2009

Mission: Possible!

Message from the Executive Director

I came back from the Retreat with a huge positive charge and a renewed and unyielding reverence for life.
— Tor Hansson, California Volunteer

2008 has been a year of two significant milestones for Reel Recovery: in April, we celebrated the 5-year anniversary of our founding; in July we celebrated our 50th Retreat. We have now concluded our 2008 season, with 16 Retreats in 12 states, for a total of 59 Retreats serving over 700 men with cancer. Stewart Brown would be very proud.

As we honor the achievements of these past five years, and look ahead to the next five, I invite all of us in the Reel Recovery community - staff and Board, dedicated volunteers,

generous donors and healthcare partners, and our courageous participants - to reflect on our mission, and to vigorously renew our commitment to it:

Our mission is to help men in the cancer recovery process by introducing them to the healing powers of the sport of fly-fishing, while providing a safe, supportive environment to explore their personal experiences of cancer with others who share their stories.

The overarching purpose of this mission is to improve the lives of the men we serve. We seek to give these courageous men a respite from their day-to-day concerns so that they might gain a fresh outlook on their fight with cancer; we facilitate discussions that give them strength, encouragement and a new network of friends and support; we provide cancer information and resources to enable better management of their disease; and we provide them new skills to bring joy, enthusiasm and renewed hope as they confront the challenges of their cancer survivorship.

For the past five years, we have stayed singularly focused on achieving this mission and fulfilling



Stan Golub (r) with 2008 Basalt participant Charlie B. and catch

this purpose; 59 life-changing Retreats, all filled with laughter and tears, joy and pain, new friends gained and some sadly lost. Thanks to all of you in the Reel Recovery Community, we have succeeded in improving the lives of some 700 men with cancer, and, as the testimonials on page 3 indicate, we have been able to touch the lives of so many more. We are inspired by their heartfelt words and by the meaningful changes they experience, and as Tor states so eloquently above, we are charged, renewed and unyielding in our commitment to our mission. Continue this journey with us, as together we will accomplish so much more in the next five years.

Be Well! Fish On!

Stan Golub
Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 15, 2009
2009 Retreat Schedule posted online

February 5, 2009
3rd Annual Patrons Dinner, Denver

April 2, 2009
4th Annual Winetasting & Auction,
Salt Lake City

April 21, 2009
Retreat Season begins



STATE COORDINATORS

The following is a list of our State Retreat Coordinators. If you are interested in helping them organize our existing Retreats, or if you are interested in initiating a new Retreat, please contact the national office.

California:
Bob Macias

Kentucky/Indiana:
Ruby Gordon
Mike Lubeach

Michigan:
Cathy Sero

Montana:
Loren Cantrell
Becky Franks
- Wellness Community Montana

Nevada:
Bob Macias
Pat Williams
- Carson Tahoe Cancer Center

New York:
Keith Duarte

Oregon:
Robert Bernard

Pennsylvania:
Ed DiGangi

Texas:
Warren Wolf

Utah:
Brent Rawson
Anne Jensen
- Utah Cancer Foundation

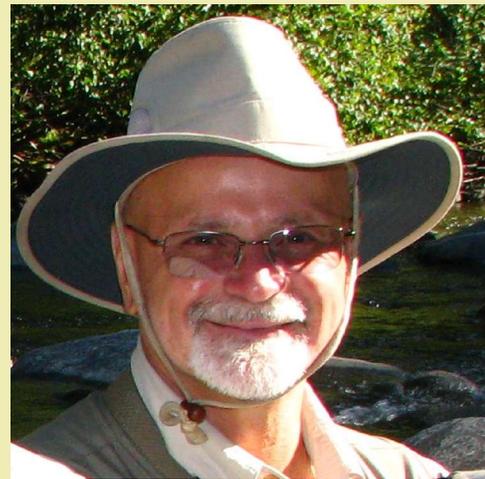
Washington:
Robert Bernard
Kris Kristoferson

Volunteer Spotlight:

In each of the states we conduct Retreats, Reel Recovery depends on a group of dedicated volunteers to help organize, staff and fund the programs. This effort is often lead by one or more State Retreat Coordinators, and we'd like to shine a spotlight on several of these wonderful men and women who make it possible for us to have a broad national scope.

Robert Bernard - Traveling Hero

Robert has been an active volunteer since October, 2003, when he joined us as a Fishing Buddy at our second Retreat ever, in Loveland, CO. An active member of Trout Unlimited, Robert helped us get a grant for that Retreat from Boulder Flycasters, a TU Chapter that has helped us every year since. In 2005, Robert moved to Oregon, and immediately set out to establish Reel Recovery in that state. Through his tireless efforts at fundraising and outreach to the healthcare and fly-fishing communities, we were able to bring our program to Oregon in 2006, and Robert has built a self-sustaining network of funders and volunteers that ensures our success in the Northwest for years to come.



Warren Wolf (r) with Program Dir. Coy Theobalt

support, he accomplished that feat with flying colors as we conducted our first-ever Texas Retreat at Joshua Creek Ranch in October. Despite his own ongoing battle with his cancer, Warren's indomitable spirit and energy has generated such great local enthusiasm for our program that we are likely to add a second Texas Retreat in 2009.

Ruby Gordon and Mike Lubeach - Indispensable Pair

Ruby and Mike have been our tireless Coordinators in Kentucky since first initiating our efforts there in 2005. Together, they have created a great team of volunteers, funding sources and healthcare partners that ensures our long-term success in the Kentucky/Indiana region. In addition to planning for our annual Retreats, Ruby and Mike have been able to organize regular alumni get-togethers, thereby strengthening the network of care and support for the growing number of Reel Recovery men in the area.



Mike Lubeach and Ruby Gordon

Sharing Their Stories . . .

I'm writing to thank you for inviting me to the Markleeville Retreat. Everything was first class: staff, accommodations, food, conversations, and the volunteers who donated their time to teach us how to fly fish were outstanding! Being able to share the experiences of other men who have had cancer was very moving – this experience was so much better than support groups because we could be outdoors and live life again! We were able to talk about our problems that usually no one wants to hear (“Oh No! Cancer!”) so we laughed, fished, and talked about recovery and just plain life. Everyone left with a great deal of self-worth, and life meant so much more thanks to you and your staff. **Rick K., 2008 Nevada participant**

We are so grateful for the many comments we receive throughout the year from participants and volunteers about the direct impact the Retreat experience has had on them. When we receive a letter such as Rick's, we know we are fulfilling our mission to directly help men with cancer. The letters below, from participant family members, remind us that our impact reaches beyond the immediate Retreat experience, and they renew and strengthen our commitment to serve this extended community.

Thank you for an amazing, life-affirming program! My son Bart experienced Reel Recovery in May and has been fishing every week since. In fact his whole family goes fishing now – a new family outing that puts them back in touch with nature and each other. What a terrific way to enhance the lives of those with such huge challenges. This is one mother's thanks.

Diane D., participant's mother



Bart D.,
Loveland, 2008



Gus Findroff, Creede, 2006

Gus is now nearing the end of his journey, but he wanted me to tell you how incredible his Reel Recovery experience was and how important it was to him. As a family, we are also so grateful. He was very resistant to participating; he was angry and not willing to go. But at the urging of his physician and incredible nurse, he went. He came back a changed man. His experience was not limited to the actual trip; he received so much more. He was motivated to continue, to be well, to fish on and to help his new found friends and to face his illness in a different way. Please know that mere words are not enough. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

Lara F., participant's sister

Rick Strouse loved to fly-fish. When he was invited to attend a Reel Recovery retreat as a participant he just wanted to go and fish. Rick never wanted his illness to cause him to be the center of attention so he was concerned about sharing his life with cancer with men he did not know. He didn't want to sit around and listen to others feel sorry for themselves. But his experience on that trip was incredible. All the other participants were there for similar reasons, to fly-fish, have some laughs and put cancer on the back burner for a few days. He found that sharing his story with others gave him comfort. He was honored to be invited back the following year to be a Fishing Buddy. Rick was blessed during that time. When he arrived home from a long day on the river and drive home he was so energized and filled with joy. Sitting on the bank of the river listening and sharing with the gentleman he was guiding moved him. I noticed a peace within Rick from that day on. Reel Recovery meant so much to Rick, he encouraged his friends with cancer to attend a retreat and his good friend Paul to be a Fishing Buddy. Rick's time with Reel Recovery was an important piece to his happiness during his last year. His beautiful attitude towards life and death made it easier for those of us who loved him. **Lucia Strouse, participant/volunteer's wife**



Rick Strouse (l) with participant Rick B.

News of Note . . .

Refreshed Reel Recovery Website

We have just completed a revision to our website: www.reelrecovery.org, that is more user friendly and provides a fresh look at what we're all about. New features include on-line forms for participants, volunteers, and donors. We are also introducing a new Photo Gallery that includes a selection of pictures from every one of our 59 Retreats. This is a wonderful way for new visitors to get a feel for the Retreat experience, and for alumni and volunteers to revisit some old friends and refresh some fond memories. Take a look at www.reelrecovery.org/photos.



Generous Support in 2008

We thank these major donors, and the hundreds of other individuals, businesses and organizations who joined them in supporting Reel Recovery in 2008. Because of them, we are able to meet our commitment to provide no-cost, meaningful Retreat experiences to hundreds of men with cancer:

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| Amgen Foundation | John Wayne Cancer Foundation |
| Arrow Electronics * | Kentucky Cancer Program |
| Bedell World Citizenship Fund* | L.L. Bean * |
| Cancer League of Colorado | Penguin Windows * |
| Carson-Tahoe Cancer Center | Sportsman's Warehouse * |
| Colorado Neurological Institute | Stewart Title - Denver * |
| Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation* | Trout Unlimited Chapters |
| Ex-Officio | Walmart & Sam's Club |
| High Sierra Flycasters | Washington Fly Fishing Club |
| J.K. Mullen Foundation | Wright & McGill |

* new supporter in 2008

What your Gift Will Provide . . .

Offering 16 free Retreats in 12 states on an annual budget of only \$200,000, Reel Recovery is exceptionally lean and efficient in providing our services to our clients. Over 92% of all donations go to fund our program services, directly benefiting men with cancer. With such a small, cost-effective budget, every dollar is very meaningful to us.

