

20 Years of Giving. 20 Years of Good.

When I reflect on the past 20 years, I keep coming back to the Dave Matthews quote I wrote in our Newsletter way back in 2007: “When you give, you begin to live.” So simple, so true, and still so very central to our mission. And no one has better described what Reel Recovery “gives” than David, a participant in Arkansas:

“Reel Recovery staff and volunteers:
You give hope where there is hopelessness,
You give strength where there is weakness,
You give caring when it seems that no one cares,
You give joy when everything may look so sad,
You give fun and pleasure when life can be so unpleasant.”

Hope, Strength, Care, Joy, Fun. Pleasure. To men coping with cancer. We offered 34 Retreats this year, our most ever, and at every one, this magic happened. Hundreds of volunteers across the country and across the globe, gave these gifts to our participants. And the participants gave back: Inspiration. Motivation. Courage. Resilience. Wisdom.

We have had so much to celebrate over these 20 years: so many lives changed, friends made, cancers beaten. And we have grieved as well, too often, but that’s the nature of the cancer beast.



Such good people like Norm, Loran and Bruce, who touched hundreds of lives with their kindness, care and humanity; so many courageous men who graced us with their honesty, warmth and dignity. For 20 years, we have welcomed and embraced the full gamut of life’s experience with respect, empathy and compassion.

When, often of late, it feels like the world is dominated by rancor and division, Reel Recovery is an antidote, offering kindness and connection. Genuine connection. Together, we have created a sanctuary, where goodness dominates. I may be sounding a bit preachy, but it’s only because my belief in what we do is so strong; Reel Recovery is more important than ever right now, to the men who attend, and to all of us who help it thrive.

But better than hearing it from me, listen to the voice of one of our participants

this year. In our Closing Circle, we ask the question: “What are you taking away from this Retreat?” His simple but powerful answer was not about cancer, not about fishing, but far more profound: “Being here has restored my faith in humanity.”

I return to that comment time and time again; such a testament to the power of what we do, and how we do it. I hope all of you in this great community can appreciate what you are giving to these men, and to each other; nothing short of sustaining the goodness in humanity, and demonstrating the best of what we can be.

On to the next 20 years!

Be Well! Fish On!



Stan Golub, Executive Director

In Tribute....

In the Fall of 2023, we lost three men who were not only long-term contributors to the success of Reel Recovery, but were also dear friends who modeled for all of us how to be caring and generous, giving deeply from their hearts. They each had cancer, and their courage, strength and dignity in the face of their diagnoses inspired everyone they touched. And they touched so many of us in the Reel Recovery family. We miss them dearly, and are better people for having had them in our lives.



Participant Norm



Bruce, center, First Utah Retreat, 2004



The Oregon Team; Stan, Loran, Jake, Phil



Volunteer Norm



Bruce (l) bringing joy to a Utah participant



Loran's wife's gift

After signing his vest as a participant at our Oklahoma Retreat in 2014, **Dr. Norm Tremblay** became a pivotal member of the Reel Recovery team in Texas, serving in all capacities from Retreat Coordinator, medical support, Fishing Buddy, fundraiser, outreach pro and special event staffer. His wife Cathy was a constant support to the RR family, as well, often serving as a photographer at Retreats and events. We will miss Norm's mentoring and leadership, and especially his easy, warm demeanor, smiling eyes, and constant joy and humor. Norm would tell us to take care of our families and keep Reel Recovery going strong. Of course, he always ended this with the words, "Doctor's orders...." You made a difference in all our lives, Norm, and we will keep your work moving forward. Be Well! Fish On!

For more than a decade, **Oregon Coordinator Loran Wiese** welcomed our Oregon participants to our annual Retreats on the Umpqua River, gracing them with his kind and caring heart, and irreplaceable good cheer. A great story-teller and the first to offer a helping hand, Loran always had a twinkle in his eye and smile on his face. He was an indomitable force of goodness, and despite a myriad of serious health issues that would knock most of us to our knees, he was a rock, a stalwart beacon of hope and light. His wife, Rochelle, made beautiful small quilts for every Oregon participant, and son Jake and brother-in-law Phil staffed every one of Loran's dozen Oregon Retreats. What a generous family, committed, as well, to carry on Loran's legacy in 2024 and beyond. Rest in Peace, friend.

If you look back at pictures from all the Utah Reel Recovery Retreats for the past 19 years, there is one person you will likely see, our friend and Fishing Buddy extraordinaire, **Bruce Phillips**. Bruce was with us from the start in Utah, and missed barely any of our 40+ Retreats there since 2004. His dedication inspired us all, and the dozens of men who had Bruce as their Buddy benefitted from his patience, wisdom and caring heart, along with his incomparable fishing expertise! He was a fantastic chef as well, treating the other volunteers to his famous Buddy dinners, and was the recipient of the first-ever Utah Volunteer of the Year Award back in 2010. We will sorely miss his strength of character and generosity of spirit, and his legacy will forever be linked to our Utah Program.

Sharing Their Stories....



“Cancer does not care who you are, your race, your religion, your age, your family and work obligations, your political party affiliation, your relationship with higher powers, or what’s in your bank account. Reel Recovery retreats are similar—it’s just a bunch of us guys who belong to a fraternity that we wish we were not members. But we can learn from each other, add more meaning and possibly time to our lives, and experience some great camaraderie along the way. At the end of the retreat I was physically and emotionally exhausted, but in a very, very good way!” Dennis, 2023 Virginia participant

“I went to the retreat wanting to challenge myself and get out of my comfort zone with something I had never done before, fly-fishing. What I left with was something much more than a fun weekend, but a renewed sense of purpose and a band of brothers I will never forget. The emotions flowed, including many tears. I’ve never been so open with my feelings. I shared thoughts with this group of men that I had never shared before; it was empowering! I learned that regardless of the type of cancer, we all shared the same emotions, including fear and hope. What a courageous weekend! Tom, 2023 Texas Participant



Tom (l) and Buddy Brian

“Thank you for taking away at least some of the fear we all carry about our futures. What was most profound to me was how gracious and compassionate the whole event was. It was a special thing to see a group of strangers turn into what in many cases will become lifetime friends. Through this weekend experience I am beginning to see how the Cancer event in my life can be a positive thing through growth in my compassion, empathy, desire to help others, and character. Oh, and the fishing was pretty good too!” Dan, 2023 Oregon participant

Dan and “pretty good” fish



“This retreat was an amazing experience with an incredible group of guys! Everything was top notch—from the Lodge, to the heartfelt welcome we all received, from the first handshake to the final goodbye hugs and tears as we all headed for home. I will recommend this retreat to any of my family and friends to help them cope with the massive emotional toll cancer takes on all of us that still are riding the Cancer Rollercoaster of life.” Tom, 2023 Montana participant



Tom (r) and Buddy Zach

Host Facilities

These are the wonderful facilities that hosted our Retreats in 2023. They are all exceptional places, very generous to Reel Recovery and hospitable and caring to all their guests. If you have a chance, please visit and say you’re a friend of Reel Recovery!

ARKANSAS

Cedarwood Lodge—*Flippin*

AUSTRALIA

Millbrook Lakes—*Gordon, VIC*

Sebel Pinnacle Valley Resort—*Merrijig, VIC*

CALIFORNIA/NEVADA

Hunewill Guest Ranch—*Bridgeport*

COLORADO

North Fork Ranch—*Shawnee*

IDAHO

Wild Horse Creek Ranch—*Mackay*

KENTUCKY/INDIANA

Lake Cumberland Resort—*Jamestown*

MAINE

Grants Kennebago Camps—*Rangeley*

MICHIGAN

Ranch Rudolf—*Traverse City*

MISSOURI

Westover Farms—*Steelville*

MONTANA

Madison Valley Ranch—*Ennis*

NEW JERSEY

Inn at Millrace Pond—*Hope*

NEW ZEALAND

Snowy Waters Lodge—*Raetihi*

Tongagiroti River Motel—*Turangi*

NORTH CAROLINA

Springmaid Mountain—*Spruce Pines*

OHIO

Rockwell Springs Trout Club—*Clyde*

OKLAHOMA

Lakeview Lodge—*Broken Bow*

OREGON

Big K Ranch—*Elkton*

PENNSYLVANIA

Allenberry Resort—*Boiling Springs*

TEXAS

Arrowhead Camp—*Glen Rose*

Camp Allen—*Navasota*

Camp Capers—*Waring*

UTAH

Falcon’s Ledge—*Altamont*

White’s Ranch—*Paradise*

VIRGINIA

Graves Mountain Lodge—*Syria*

Rose River Farm—*Syria*

WASHINGTON

Sun Mountain Lodge—*Winthrop*

WISCONSIN

Oxbow Hotel—*Eau Claire*



Generous Support in 2023

We thank these major sponsors, and hundreds of other individuals and organizations who have supported Reel Recovery in 2023. In these challenging times, we cannot understate our gratitude and appreciation for the financial support we continue to receive.

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| Friends of the Fly | Trout Unlimited—Chapters |
| Baker Gentry | Ultimate Rod Company |
| The Gilmore Family | VFW – Posts |
| Jim & Pam Grange | Washington Fly Fishing Club |
| Tom Grant | Foundation |
| Guadalupe River Trout | |
| Unlimited | |

Welcome Steve Ramirez

We are delighted to welcome Steve Ramirez to our Board of Directors. Steve is an accomplished author, educator and conservationist who brings a full-hearted appreciation for the healing power of nature, and an eloquent voice of care and compassion that fits perfectly with the Reel Recovery ethos: "Reel Recovery is a natural fit for me and my life's focus on helping to increase awareness of the healing powers of fly fishing and positive connections with nature. I am honored to be a new member of the Reel Recovery team."



Heading to the UK! Our 2024 Retreat Schedule is Here

We're expanding internationally with a Retreat in England and our 2024 Schedule is now posted on our website. We're planning our most Retreats ever—at least 35—and dates are now confirmed and open for Application. Please share information about our Retreats with any men you know who are living with cancer. As always, our Retreats are **completely free** and offer a powerful, life-changing experience! www.reelrecovery.org/programs/retreat-schedule.



Help us Grow!

Our 20th year was our biggest ever, but we're planning to serve even more men in 2024! Every one of our 410 Retreats since 2003 has been **completely free to the participants**, and our mission is to *never* charge them a penny. To do that, we need your support. Every dollar is important, so please join us today so we can continue this good work together. Use the form below or donate online at reelrecovery.org/year-end-giving-campaign.

Please Give Us A Hand!

DONATION FORM

- \$75 Please send me the Reel Recovery Mesh Cap
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- \$350 Please send me a Reel Recovery/Orvis 20th Anniversary Special Edition "Open Air Caster" Shirt
Circle size Men's Size: M L XL XXL
- \$700 Please send me a New Reel Recovery/Orvis "PRO Fleece Hoody" *Circle Size below*
Men's Size: S M L XL XXL
- Here's my gift of \$_____. No premium, thanks.

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Please make checks payable to *Reel Recovery* and mail to **Reel Recovery, 160 Brookside Road, Needham, MA 02492**

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