

OAKE TREE



HOLYOAKE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 2013

The end of one journey leads to the next

As we are well aware, there is no magic bullet to overcome substance misuse. It takes fierce determination, infinite patience, unconditional support, proven strategies, strength of character and much more. Over the years, countless people have discovered that Holyoake's holistic, non-judgemental and empowering approach helps make this journey easier.

Day after day our counsellors experience the privilege of helping people break away from the repressive dependency on alcohol and other drugs. The relief, freedom, and sense of achievement on completion of a program are tangible and rewarding.

However, is it really the end of the journey?

In many ways it is just the beginning of the next

phase. A crucial time when individuals will be challenged to practice the strategies learnt at Holyoake. To dig deep. To continue to believe in themselves. To resist the temptation to fall back into dependency.



This is when a strong support system can be crucial. Holyoake has always encouraged former clients to call whenever required. We have a wide range of specialised programs for people of all ages and circumstances, and we are always willing and ready to help. Now we are delighted to go one step

further by establishing the Holyoake Alumni. This is a membership group created especially to offer continued support to people who have completed a Holyoake program.

We have exciting plans for the Holyoake Alumni – including information sessions, group sessions, events, useful presentations, and much more.

The Holyoake Alumni will be your forum to stay connected to Holyoake. To share experiences, link into support services, enjoy a few laughs, inspire others by your journey, and much more.

We will be launching the Holyoake Alumni very soon – so look out for it. We will send you a special bulletin with all the details, and look forward to welcoming you as a member!



Welcome to another issue of our Oake Tree newsletter. A key focus of this issue is information about our Holyoake Alumni - a support group created especially for people who have completed a Holyoake Program. 'Support' is one of the four pillars of our Holyoake resilience model; the other pillars are Prevention, Engagement and Intervention. We are committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to remain connected with us as they continue their journey.

This issue includes our regular message tree with client quotes, an inspirational testimonial from a former client, and a thought-provoking interview with a resilient young lady who journeyed through our unique Childhood in Perspective program.

I hope you enjoy this issue and, as always, your feedback is welcome.

Angie Paskevicius
CEO

in this issue...

PAGE 2

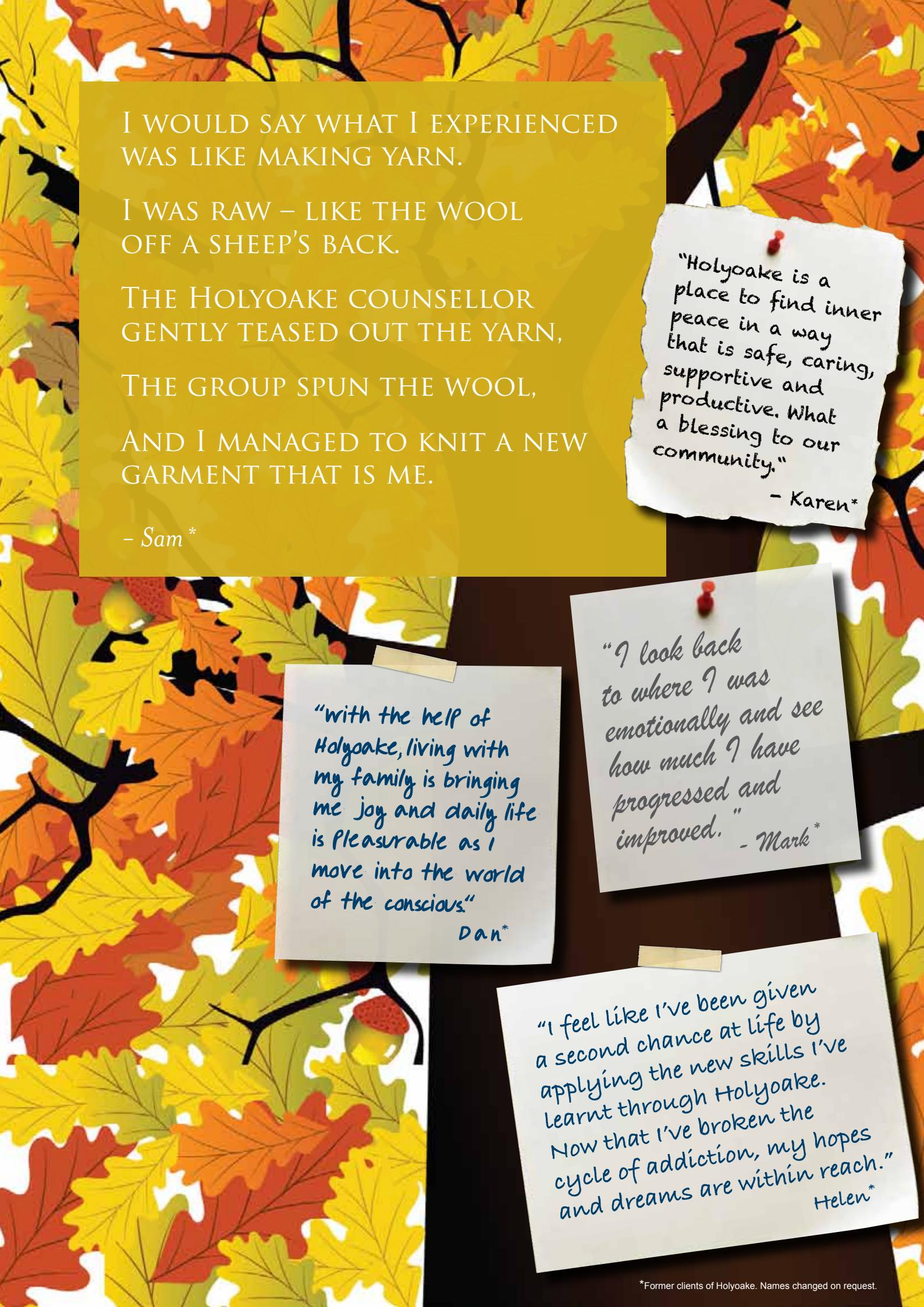
- Message Tree: Thoughts and feedback from former clients

PAGE 3

- Interview: Finding her voice in a traumatic childhood
- From substance misuse to a man of substance

PAGE 4

- Parent's Program
- Free subscription



I WOULD SAY WHAT I EXPERIENCED
WAS LIKE MAKING YARN.

I WAS RAW – LIKE THE WOOL
OFF A SHEEP'S BACK.

THE HOLYOAKE COUNSELLOR
GENTLY TEASED OUT THE YARN,

THE GROUP SPUN THE WOOL,

AND I MANAGED TO KNIT A NEW
GARMENT THAT IS ME.

- Sam *

"Holyoake is a place to find inner peace in a way that is safe, caring, supportive and productive. What a blessing to our community."

- Karen*

"with the help of Holyoake, living with my family is bringing me joy and daily life is pleasurable as I move into the world of the conscious"

Dan*

"I look back to where I was emotionally and see how much I have progressed and improved."

- Mark*

"I feel like I've been given a second chance at life by applying the new skills I've learnt through Holyoake. Now that I've broken the cycle of addiction, my hopes and dreams are within reach."

Helen*

Finding her voice in a traumatic childhood

Sarah* graduated from our Childhood in Perspective program recently. After enduring years of a silent struggle within, she found her voice...

How would you describe your childhood?

My father was a violent man who drank excessively. He then left us when I was just 13. My mother suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalised. My brother left home and turned to alcohol and drugs to numb his pain.

How did you cope with all of this?

I've spent most of my life pretending my childhood didn't affect me. Between my dad's dramas, mum's mental health and my brother's addictions, it didn't occur to me that I had needs. I invested my energy in sport and school work. To mask my shame,

I became a super achiever at school and university. I graduated from university and became a successful executive in a multinational company.

What was the turning point for you?

I had repressed my childhood traumas for too long. One day, my work colleague was rewarded for work I did. My reaction was swift and over the top. I resigned in anger and frustration. I cried often, felt anxious, confused, and worthless. My doctor recommended anti-depressants, but I refused and asked for an alternative. I was referred to Holyoake.

How would you describe your journey at Holyoake?

The 'Childhood in Perspective' program helped me realise that unresolved issues from childhood can have a major impact



on life as an adult. Thanks to the gentle encouragement of my Counsellor, I went back into the past to resolve these issues. I cried tears of a young girl who is frightened; tears of a teenager who feels abandoned; tears of a young woman who is confused by relationships. The group sessions provided a place to feel listened to and validate my story. Now I feel I know myself better, I feel more real, I feel more alive. It has been a healing experience, and I can move on now. I would recommend this program to all adults who are battling with traumatic childhood memories.

From substance misuse to a man of substance

A few years ago, Michael* found himself living a precarious double life. This successful individual with a bright future was secretly struggling with a dependence on drugs. His journey to self-discovery is best described in his own words:

"On the surface, I was a highly functional adult and very successful. But when I got home, I was using dope to cope and burying things I really needed to address. It took me a long time to realise I had a major problem and then even longer to realise I couldn't handle it by myself. I heard about Holyoake but was scared about going into that building; but also

terrified every day of this thing I couldn't control. Also, a key person in my life had basically given me an ultimatum.

Finally I gathered enough courage, met with a Holyoake counsellor, and was determined to change my life. I started with one-on-one sessions that were raw, honest, confronting and inspirational. The non-judgemental approach made me realise that dope was just the tip of the iceberg. Thanks to gentle guidance and advice from my counsellor, I began to address the real issues.

My counsellor then encouraged me to join the group sessions because they usually had a kind of special effect. I trusted him and went to the group sessions and realised that he was right. While I was attending Holyoake, I also joined a really

good Men's Program. All this eventually helped me give up dope completely - something I was starting to feel might be impossible.

That was eight years ago and apart from two occasions where I got a bit daft with some old mates, I haven't touched it since and - more importantly - I haven't missed it. I reckon I avoided some major mental health issues down the line by stopping before it damaged my brain too much. I will always be grateful to Holyoake. I hope they can help you too."

Michael is now a very successful entrepreneur with a positive outlook on life. His transformation is testimony to the power of self-belief and the determination to change. Holyoake is privileged to have been with him on this journey.

Programs@Holyoake

We offer a range of programs not just for people with substance use issues, but for their partners and significant others as well because evidence indicates that an average of 5 people are affected by 1 person's dependency. If you've already experienced the benefits of our programs, perhaps you would like to refer someone else?

Parent's Program

(For parents and guardians affected by the problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs by an adolescent or adult son or daughter.)

Parenting can be one of life's most challenging but enriching roles.

Challenging as it is, parenting can get immeasurably harder when misuse of alcohol and other drugs by children starts to impact on family life.

This can occur during the adolescent and teenage years; as well as older children graduating to adulthood and perhaps living independently. Even after children have left home, perhaps with their own families, parents can still be engaged in their ongoing life issues.

The reality of increasing alcohol and drug use in society and the resultant constant media reports can leave parents and guardians scared, confused and alone when it impacts on their families.

The Parent's Program offered by Holyoake is specially designed for parents and guardians affected by the problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs in their family. The common issues faced by participants

include the feeling of powerlessness and loss of trust and communication. They can also be fearful of children's futures on a number of fronts.

The Parent's Program covers many practical aspects, including an increased understanding of the impact alcohol and drugs has on the family, strengthening skills in communication, relationships, coping, and strategies to assist the whole family.

Participants who have completed this program report a decrease in their own levels of stress, improved relationships within the family, and improved positive outcomes for their children of all ages who experience substance misuse issues. The most frequent feedback comment we get is: "I no longer feel alone."

If you are in such a situation, we can help. Please call Client Services on 9416 4444 or visit our website www.holyoake.org.au for more information.

For more information on any of our programs please go to

www.holyoake.org.au

Men's Program

Women's Program

Parent's Program

Relationships in Focus

Childhood in Perspective (for adults)

Couples Counselling

Young Adult's Program

Adolescent Program

Young People's Program

Art and Play Program

Prison & Justice Programs

Building Resilience Through Play



OAK TREE SUBSCRIPTION

If you would like free issues of our newsletter for yourself and anyone else please

[click here](#)

and send us names and contact details.