

# Building Togetherness

## Newsletter

June, 2021



## St. Helens, Here We Come!

On June 18, five members and seven volunteers from Recovery Beyond will climb Mt. St. Helens. This summit represents much more than a 5699 foot elevation gain. For our members this is part of a climb to a whole new life.

Along the way, they had to prove themselves repeatedly. Most had never done anything like this. They learned hiking techniques, nutrition, and fitness. They tested their mettle on Little Si, Poo Poo Point, West Tiger 3, Old Si, Mailbox Peak, Mt. Si, and West Tiger 1-2-3. To qualify for St. Helens, they had to make it to the top of Mt. Si in less than 3 hours.

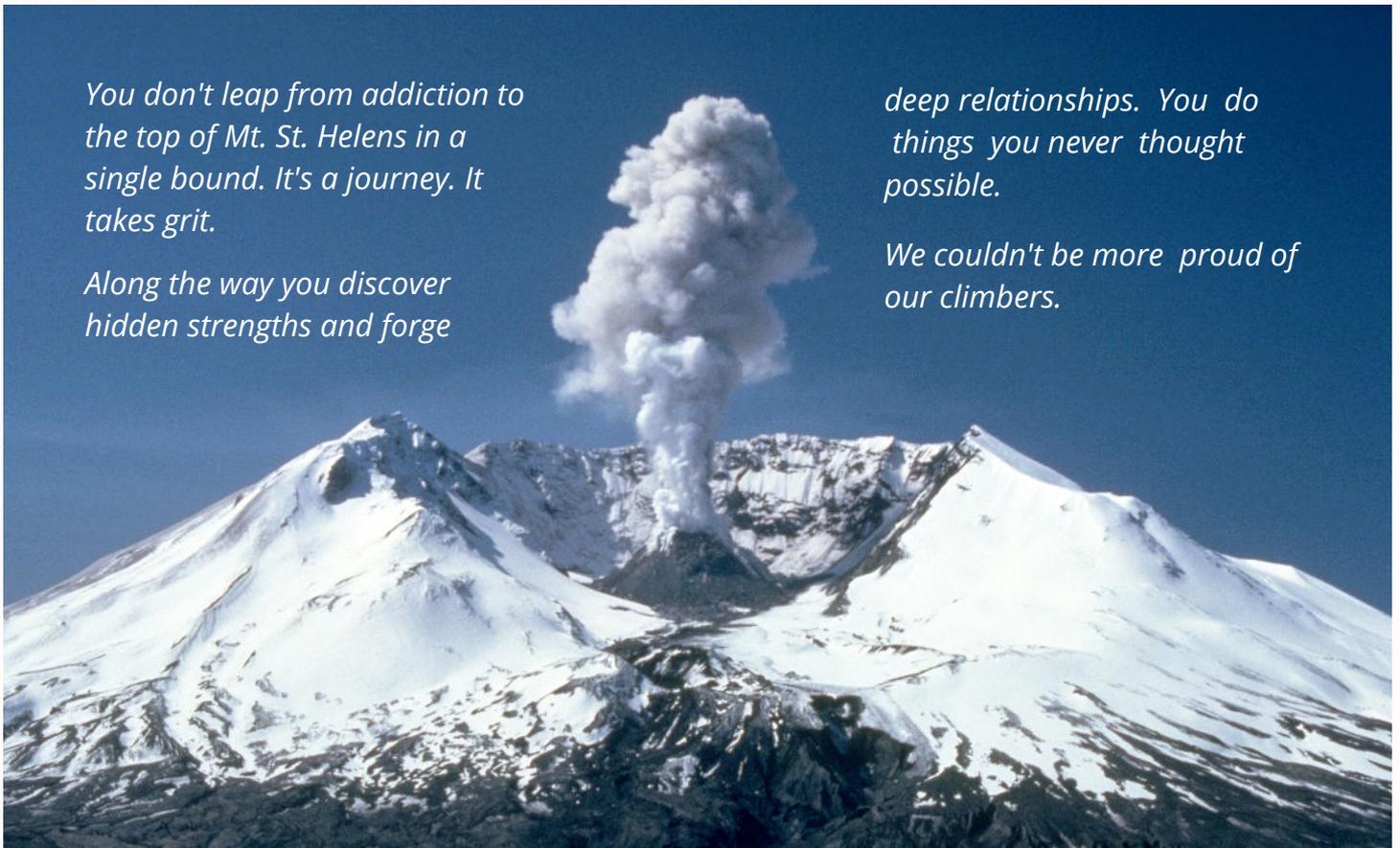
Their stories will inspire you to take on the mountains in your own life. Get a taste of what this summit means to our team on page 2, then read Jenn's story on pages 3-4. Happy climbing!

*You don't leap from addiction to the top of Mt. St. Helens in a single bound. It's a journey. It takes grit.*

*Along the way you discover hidden strengths and forge*

*deep relationships. You do things you never thought possible.*

*We couldn't be more proud of our climbers.*



**Leroy**

"I want to see the volcano. My goal is to get through the New Life Program and stay sober so I can climb more mountains."

**Jason**

"It's awesome. Hanging around people who have longevity in sobriety, who have the same past, and who are sober make it enjoyable to have fun without doing drugs."

**Jenn**

"I am really excited to finish the time trial, it feels good. I feel really prepared. The extra workouts and stairs made a big difference - shoutout to Becky, Abi, and Amelia! It gets easier. I didn't think I would climb Mt. St. Helens but, after today, I guess I'm in."

**Fred**

"I was nervous before I came and started doing this. Having y'all there was cool. You motivate me. You are my family out here. All the rest of my family is in California. It was super fantastic. I can't wait to climb Helens."



## Summer is Here and Things Are Heating up at Recovery Beyond

With Covid restrictions finally easing, Recovery Beyond is realizing its dream of developing activities to reach many more people who struggle with Substance Use Disorder.

Current activities include hiking, cycling, bouldering, and fitness courses. But that's just a start. We are exploring soccer, tennis, basketball, martial arts, acupuncture, coffee hours, book clubs, and more. Have an idea? Let us know!

In addition to expanded activities, we seek to spread our footprint to cover the entire Puget Sound region. It's a Rainier-sized dream, but hey—That's kind of our thing!



You can always check on the latest activities on our web page. Just click on the [Community Calendar](#).

# Jennifer's Climb Out of Addiction

*On June 18, Jennifer Joy is planning to summit Mt. St. Helens. This is amazing, especially when you hear her story. She shared it with Recovery Beyond and it is paraphrased below.*



*Jenn at the top of Mailbox Peak*

This is my second go-around with addiction. I was hooked on meth when I was younger. When I had my daughter, I thought that would be the end of my addiction, and it was, for a while.

I was clean for 12 years. I graduated from University of Washington with a bachelors degree in interdisciplinary arts and sciences with a concentration in self and society. I had a great job with the state. I never dreamed I would live on the streets.

My slide back into addiction didn't happen all at once. When life got overwhelming I turned to alcohol. Nothing major. Just a little drink here and there. Pretty soon, I started missing days at work. Things began to spin out of control. I started taking meth again. One day, I just walked away from my job. It was crazy.

“ I thought he was going to kill me. I cried out to God. ”

For the next five years, I lived on the streets. At first it was hard. I didn't even have a sleeping bag. Then someone gave me one. Eventually, I figured out how to survive outside. Sometimes I lived in a tent, but I sometimes didn't feel safe in the encampments. I was attacked several times. I tried to find places to stay by myself. This is a challenge

because the police wake you up and you have to move. I got in a fight with someone at a meal site and was banned from living there.

Then, last September, on my birthday, a guy attacked me in a bathroom. I thought he was going to kill me. He just kept choking me. It terrified me. I cried out to God. A friend told me about the women's new life program at the Tacoma Rescue Mission. I applied and was accepted. Learning faith in God and Jesus has really made a difference for me.



*Abi and Jenn*

With access to a kitchen and healthy meals, I put on 30 pounds in a month. I have always tried to be healthy and knew I needed to do something. I heard about the hikes Recovery Beyond was doing and decided to give it a try. It started with a trip to Little Si. The hikes got much harder. On May 1, I made it to the top of Mailbox Peak, a 4000 foot climb. For me, that was amazing. It was snowing up there.

I knew there was a plan to climb Mount Saint Helens but assumed I could never do that.



*Jenn, Becky, and Abi*

Becky Vinson and Abi Brewer (long-time Recovery Beyond volunteers) don't take no for an answer. They kept showing up to work with me and encourage me and train me. They helped me understand that I could do so much more than I ever thought I could. On May 15 I successfully passed the time trial, making it to the top of Mount Si in two hours and forty-five minutes. There was no excuse not to go on to climb Saint Helens, so here I come.

Sometimes when I'm really tired going up a mountain I ask myself, "Why am I doing this?" I guess it's because I REALLY want my sobriety. Even though it's hard, in a weird way it feels good. It feels good not to give up. To just keep going. And to have someone encouraging me. It has changed my mental attitude. I have learned I can push myself and succeed and I don't need drugs to do it.

“ Why am I doing this? Because I REALLY want my sobriety ”

I'm learning trust and forgiveness. It's so amazing. I feel like myself again.



*Jenn (in blue) with the team at the summit of Poo Poo point*

# Volunteer Spotlight: Ginny Burton



*The difference recovery makes*

**Congratulations to Ginny for graduating from the University of Washington this year. What a transformation!**

*If you are on social media you may have seen this picture. It has gone viral, and for good reason. You can hear Ginny's full story on the [Loxtox podcast](#) or on [KOMO News](#). (Her segment begins at 18:40.) We are proud to have Ginny as a member of our Advisory Team and celebrate her life of service and recovery.*

My name is Ginny Burton. I am a recovering addict with more than 7 and a half years of recovery from drugs and alcohol. When I got clean in December of 2012, I was ready to change my life in ways I had never thought of before. It was during this time I was called to the mountains. I began having a desire to be close to trees. That quickly evolved into hiking and then backpacking. In 2017 I started alpine climbing. In 2019 I climbed and summited Little Tahoma, Mt. Adams, and Big Tahoma in a 4-week period. Mountains have become central to not only my recovery but also to my mental health and stability.

I have a past many people don't recover from. I went from being someone with 17 felony convictions, 3 prison sentences, years of drug abuse and domestic violence to a backpacking, mountain climbing, full time student heading to law school. I am an active member of a church and a successful parent. I give the credit to the mountains more than anything else. Without pushing myself to conquer them I would've never discovered what I am actually capable of. They've taught me more about myself than anything else in my entire life.

Today I am an active runner, cyclist, workout fanatic, hiker, backpacker, mountain climber, and an aspiring rock climber. I am very excited to be a part of Recovery Beyond and its life changing activities.



*Ginny, at home in her element*

# Why I Invest in Recovery

## Pat Simmons



Pat Simmons is the mother of Scott Brown, who has a recovery story of his own and now volunteers on hikes and serves on the Advisory Team. We asked Pat why she is a monthly investor. Her answer will inspire you.

## Thanks, Monthly Investors

- Jon Ruckle
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- Pat Simmons
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*Hi Trek Adventures*



*bouldering*



*not your average bootcamp*

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### Facebook Fundraisers

Special thanks to **Dan Andrews, Eric Vendl, Shelley Beck,** and **Ann Crumley** for celebrating your birthday by helping people beat Substance Use Disorder. Together you raised \$1796 and helped Recovery Beyond connect with 41 new friends.

## Corporate Sponsors



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*Thanks for  
making a  
difference!*