Jim Cusack Celebrates 80th Birthday (the new 60)!

The morning of Saturday, April 18 was business as usual for Jim Cusack. He had received news by 10:00 a.m. he was to oversee the disciplinary “Staffing” of a Villa client. Jim dreaded the task, but treated it as a necessary evil and part of his job to afford clients another chance to straighten out their lives.

Jim, who likes to introduce himself as “Sue’s husband,” and Sue didn’t let the news put a damper on their dinner plans with old friends and colleagues Fred and Pat Reihl, however. Fred and Pat, another husband and wife team who founded Freedom House in Glen Gardner, NJ and Jim and Sue reminisced and shared a lovely dinner before returning to Veritas Villa where Jim would excuse himself to deal with the troubled client. On entering The Villa, Jim was not greeted by one extremely nervous client, but by over 200 of his closest friends assembled to surprise Jim for his 80th Birthday party.

“Surprise” was the resounding cry heard over the applause from the crowd, and reports indicate it was the biggest “Gotcha” Jim had received in his life.

Sue Cusack had spent months planning Jim’s party. With the help of Fred and Pat Reihl and a promise to maintain a vow of silence from all guests, Sue was able to pull off the surprise. She also designed the invitation highlighting Jim’s renewed energy and enthusiasm for his life and his mission to help the addict. It read, 80 Is The New 60 and set the stage for a lively and entertaining evening. Guests included relatives, friends and staff from as close by as across The Villa lobby to as far away as across the country. It was a top notch affair, complete with catered food and beverage, including a full course dinner courtesy of “Villa Delight” and Jim Maloney’s The White Wolf in Napanoich.

A traditional Bag Piper in dress tartans kicked-off the evening’s entertainment with Ed Brocks providing piano selections during dinner. After dinner, guests were treated to the sure-footed maneuverings of young Irish Step Dancers to round out the evening’s festivities.

Special guests took turns behind the podium to honor Jim for his personal and professional achievements. The Villa’s own Ken L. emceed the speaker portion of the evening. Jim’s nephew, Kevin Cusack, headed the docket sharing amusing anecdotes from Jim’s past and heralding him as a pioneer in the Field of Drug and Alcohol Treatment. Sr. Maryann and Sr. Peggy, Dominican nuns who played a pivotal role in the start-up Veritas Villa when it was located in Monticello, were also on hand to praise Jim for his life-time commitment to his work with addicts. Finally, with signature humility and sincerity, Jim took the stage to express his genuine surprise and overwhelming gratitude for the love and support of friends and family on such a special night. Jim concluded his comments to all his well-wishers, “I’ve got plans…” he said.

As for the client Staffing…?

See the middle of the newsletter for pictures from the festivities.
Veritas Villa, Inc. founders, Jim and Sue Cusack were among the honorees recognized for their achievements in chemical dependency at the NY/Westchester branch of the NCADD (National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) annual spring luncheon held April 30, 2009 at the Lake Isle Country Club in Eastchester, NY. Guests of Jim and Sue on hand to add to their well-deserved accolades were Villa staff, including Les McCandles, General Manager, Lyn Rubin, Women’s Treatment Team, Ken Lavery, Men’s Treatment Team, Diane Dunn, Medical, Fr. Jack Hauser and Mary Andreasen, Communications & Marketing. Among the awards presented to Jim and Sue at the luncheon were an engraved plaque recognizing them for their contributions in the field of alcoholism and drug addiction treatment presented by Joan Bonsignore, Executive Director of NCADD-Westchester, a letter of Proclamation honoring them for their dedication to the community from Jeffrey Klein, NY State Senate, 34th District and a Certificate of Recognition from NY State Senator-35th District, Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Sue Cusack commented on the afternoon’s proceedings, making special mention of the respect and support Ms. Bonsignore, her daughter, Gina and the rest of the NCADD-Westchester staff showed for the 12-Steps of Recovery, calling their enthusiasm for the Program and the Steps as a way of life pervasive, “evident and catching.” Jim and Sue were in the company of other esteemed honorees from the White Plains Police Dept. and the White Plains Youth Bureau and other local organizations promoting healthy community relations. Distinguished hosts and emcees of the afternoon’s events included Keynote speaker, actor Joseph McBratney and Master of Ceremonies, Scott Clark, Sports anchor for WABC-TV.
SUE CUSACK RECEIVES
“THE FAMILY AFTERWARD” AWARD

Overcast skies didn’t dampen the spirit of Veritas Villa staff members invited to attend Freedom House’s The Family Afterward Women’s Awards Luncheon, May 6, 2009 where The Villa’s co-founder, Sue Cusack was presented with the C.R. Bard Outstanding Woman in Treatment Award for 2009.

The luncheon was held at the Basking Ridge Country Club in Basking Ridge, NJ. Seated with Sue to help honor her were Villa management and staff including, husband and Villa co-founder, Jim Cusack, Joe Stoeckeler, Executive Director, Francis Lovell, Admissions Director, Lyn Rubin, Women’s Program Director, Eddie McDonnell, CASAC, Pat Cooney, Laura Startup, Barbara Murray and Luwayna Williams.

Sue was one of three women recognized by The Family Afterward for their contributions to women’s causes. The Family Afterward, a subsidiary of Freedom House, is a New Jersey-based resident network providing services for women recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. It also guides women through the process of family reunification while facilitating their ongoing personal recovery.

Executive Director for The Family Afterward, Pat Reihl was the Awards Luncheon hostess while WABC Eyewitness News Anchor, Diana Williams was special guest. Judith Heim, Freedom House Chairman, presented The Family Afterward Graduate Achievement Award to Cynthia William. Sue Cusack was the first of two honorees to receive special recognition for her work in the field of chemical dependency treatment. Christopher Ganser, VP for the medical supplies manufacturer, C.R. Bard and a chief sponsor for the luncheon, presented Sue with the Outstanding Woman in Treatment Award while Kent Manahan of the NJN network received the Outstanding Woman in Business award for her reporting on women’s issues.

At a Villa Staff Meeting following the luncheon, Sue graciously thanked her Villa “family” members for their support and commitment to The Villa, adding her Treatment Award “really belongs to all of us.”
Congratulations are in order for Ray Bajaba who has been promoted to Chief Financial Officer for Veritas Villa.

John Reed has been promoted to Clinical Director, replacing Denise Cusack who resigned her position to attend to medical and personal matters. Congratulations to John and health and happiness to Denise who has promised to keep in touch.

Jane Brown, CASAC-T, has been appointed Clinical Associate, reporting to Women’s Clinical Director, Lyn Rubin. Jane will take on additional responsibilities for the running of Women’s Program.

Bonnie Ab-Ale has taken on the role of Intake Specialist helping Admissions manage new client flow. Her increased responsibilities are in addition to her regular work in Medical administration and billing.

Gene Ricciardi and Darlene McMillan are co-Supervisors in charge of The Villa Kitchen and Kitchen Crew management.

New Arrival

Eric B. and wife Ashley became the proud parents of a baby girl, Mea Dora, born February 24, 2009. Mea was 7lbs. 9 oz. and 20" long at birth. Eric is happy to report she’s happy and has a healthy appetite.
Go West, Young Man!

It was a bitter, sweet good-bye for young Ed Sladek and his mom, Helen as their friends and Villa Family bid them God Speed on their move to Tempe, AZ. Villa staff members from every department were on hand for the Farewell festivities held March 31, 2009 in The Villa Sunshine Room. Guests enjoyed a variety of refreshments while they took turns reminiscing about Ed’s growing up as part of the Villa family and Helen’s successful road to Recovery and employment with The Villa in several capacities thanks to the love, care and guidance offered by Jim and Sue Cusack. Helen’s daughter, Kim who is returning to the States, having completed her tour of duty with US Armed Forces in Afghanistan, was applauded for her valiant peace-keeping efforts as her son, Cameron took turns bouncing on the laps of Grandmother, Helen and Uncle Eddie. A ceremonious cake-cutting topped off the party, as Ed and Helen shared their thoughts and thanks.

Kim’s return is the motivating factor for the Sladek relocation. The move is more than just a change of address for Helen and Ed. It means the reunification of a family. Family is a huge part of The Villa value system and their plan to rejoin Kim in her new home in Tempe, AZ is proof positive The Villa way of thinking pays off. Now Ed and Helen can say with certainty they have two families who love and care for them deeply. Helen and Ed, keep in touch. God Bless!
A year-long journey of hard work and dedication culminated with a graduation celebration on March 12, 2009, at Samaritan Village in Ellenville, New York. Completing 350 hours of classroom instruction required for CASAC-T certification were our very own Carlos Supak, David Sherbelle, and Ed Kelley. Their class also included staff from RECAP, Dynamite Youth Center, Renaissance, and Samaritan Village.

The course, which began on April 17, 2008, was extended an additional month due to snow days and other necessary cancellations. This is training essential to meeting the requirements of the CASAC certification for licensed/certified substance abuse counselors in New York State, working with people and their families dealing with the complex, multi-dimensional problems of drug and alcohol abuse.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Jim and Sue Cusack, other senior staff members from Veritas Villa, and numerous, very obviously proud family members. Jim Cusack’s presence was noteworthy in that he was involved in the establishment of drug and alcohol treatment as we know it today and in the founding of counseling credentials, such as the CASAC, helping to develop treatment standards both nationally and internationally.

Congratulations Carlos, Dave, and Ed!

THE JOURNEY

Where did this journey start?
How will this journey end?
Where did I go wrong
How can I fix this mess
The guilt I feel everyday; the hurt I’ve caused in so many ways.
All I want is forgiveness.
All I want is a second chance.
So, where do I go for help?
How do I start this life again?
Right now, I don’t know much, but I do know
I’ve been given another chance at life.
So at this moment, I feel so empty...
so empty and so alone.
The only thing I have is faith...
Faith in a journey called Recovery,
faith in a belief call Twelve Steps.

by Laura S.
The Villa Helps Students Prevent Drug Abuse

Middletown, NY. The Villa went to bat for teen-age drug awareness recently by co-sponsoring the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (ADAC) of Orange County’s 22nd Annual Countrywide Substance Abuse Poster Contest. The Contest is open to school-aged children throughout Orange County and the theme was: Ask Me, See Me, Be Me, I’m Alcohol and Drug Free. Sponsorship dollars help ADAC-Orange County publicize and promote its awareness and prevention program beyond the local level and The Villa will join other businesses and services in playing a part in creating a drug-free community.

Representing The Villa at ADAC-Orange County poster contest award ceremony held in March at the Paramount Theatre, Middletown were Clinical Director, Carol Waldron and Art Project Coordinator, Barbara Murray who have been running the Arts & Crafts Program for clients at The Villa since its formal inception in 2006. The two women agreed the keen understanding displayed by the community’s young people about the damaging effects of experimenting with drugs and alcohol is not only impressive, but impactful.

**Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>COST p/p</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Telephone #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 25th</td>
<td>Annual Veritas Villa Picnic in Kerhonkson</td>
<td>$10 - Single</td>
<td>Sue Heath</td>
<td>(845) 626-3555</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$20 - Family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1st</td>
<td>Day at Shea Stadium Mets vs Diamond Backs</td>
<td>$28.00</td>
<td>Joe McCauley</td>
<td>(718) 375-5787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 15th</td>
<td>Brooklyn Cyclones vs Oneonta</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>Joe McCauley</td>
<td>(718) 375-5787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4th</td>
<td>Friends of the Villa Golf Tournament Smithtown Landing Golf Club</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>Ken Lavery</td>
<td>(845) 626-3555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23rd</td>
<td>Annual Veritas Villa Dinner Dance</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>Sue Heath</td>
<td>(845) 626-3555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Mens Big Book Study</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>Ken Lavery</td>
<td>(845) 626-3555</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Veritas Villa
Annual

Saturday, July 25, 2009
11 A.M. ‘till sundown

“The Villa”
5 Ridgeview Road  Kerhonkson, N.Y.

$10 per person / $20 per family [Immediate Family]
Food, Games. Big Tent
*** Rain OR Shine***

For more information, contact SUSAN HEATH  [845] 626-3555

I WILL ATTEND

Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone:_________________________________________ Number Attending: ________________

Please make checks payable to:
Veritas Villa Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 610
Kerhonkson, N.Y. 12446
We are proud to honor
Claudia Peters Ragni, Director
The Kenneth Peters Center

Rick Ohrstrom, C- 4 Recovery
www.soberbulldog.com

Friday, October 23rd 2009

Hors d’oeuvres at 7 p.m. Dinner at 8 p.m.
Terrace on the Park
in Flushing Meadow Park Queens, New York 11368  Phone - 718-592-5000

Journal, Ticket and Table Order Form

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________   State:_____________ Zip: ____________

Phone Number: (        )___________  Email Address:________________________

Dinner Dance Tickets: $75 PER PERSON

Number Requested: _____________  Tables of 10 Requested:_____________

Reserved under the name of:______________________________________________

Gold Page: $ 1000
Silver Page: $ 500
Bronze Page: $ 250
Full Page: $ 150
Half Page: $ 80
Quarter Page: $ 40
Booster: $ 1

Please attach your ticket request along with journal ad and mail to:

Attention: Sue Heath
Veritas Villa Foundation, Inc
P.O. Box 610  Kerhonkson, N.Y.  12446
Deadline Line Date: September, 23rd  2009

Please place your journal message below or attach Camera Ready Art to this form, use extra page if necessary

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

For more information, please contact:  Sue Heath or Ken Lavery
Phone: (845) 626-3555    Fax:  (845) 626-0035 or (845) 626-3840
Email: Kenvilla@aol.com or Veritasvilla@hvc.rr.com