

DECEMBER 2020

THE CROSSWALK: BENILDE HALL'S NEWSLETTER

Benilde Hall—Safe Haven—Matt Talbot



DECEMBER'S ISSUE:

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Recovery During the Holidays Advice and Encouragement

December is a time of celebration and giving, but the holidays can also bring up difficult emotions such as stress and loneliness. The COVID-19 pandemic has added an extra layer of anxiety that can make the holidays feel overwhelming at times. However, it is crucial, especially to those in recovery, to be mindful of their mental health and physical safety. It is important to continue prioritizing your recovery journey during this time of the year.

Jenna Strickland, Benilde Hall's Mental Health Coordinator, recommends that those in recovery attend virtual 12-step marathon meetings and events since most in-person meetings and events are closed. She says the holidays, "can be difficult, so finding those outlets of where to go is really important." If you are struggling to find safe and sober events during the holidays, here are two virtual options.

1. Kansas City's Alcoholics Anonymous program will be hosting **Unity AA Christmas Alcathon on Zoom from December 24th at 6 PM until Midnight and on December 25th from 7 AM to 9 PM.**

2. Kansas City's Narcotics Anonymous program is hosting a virtual event called **New Year's Eve Freedom to Change Virtual Speaker Jam from December 31st at 9 PM to January 1st at 9 AM.** There will be speakers, a New Year's Eve countdown, a clean-time countdown, and a virtual dance. Marathon meetings will begin at 1:30 AM on January 1st.

For more information about how to participate in the events mentioned, please visit the following websites:

<https://kc-aa.org/event/unity-aa-christmas-alcathon/>
<https://www.kansascityna.org/freedom-to-change-speaker-jam-2/>

If you are struggling during the holidays, please remember that you are not alone and you are loved. Here are a few pieces of advice and encouragement for those in recovery during the holiday season.

"Avoid Known Risks- avoid family get-togethers/parties where you know that they are all about drinking or other drug use. If you must go, take your sponsor or a sober friend; make a brief appearance and leave; and have an exit plan."

-Anonymous

"Trust in the power of a higher authority. Seek to center yourself in that authority and remain in peace."

-Morning Glory Ministries in Kansas City, MO.

"The biggest thing is having that extra support...trying to be around people that are like-minded and understand the difficulties of what the holidays may be right now."

-Jenna Strickland

"People in recovery are brilliant, beautiful, and bright. Believe in yourself, you are a star."

-Kenneth Vick, Executive Director

John 4:4, ESV: "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

-In honor of Veteran William Young, deceased.

Benilde Hall Success Story: Yango Brooks

Yango Brooks was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, where he lived with his grandparents while he was growing up. Yango's substance use began at the age of 14, which continued into adulthood. Later in life, he experienced chronic homelessness while living in St. Louis. In 2008, he moved to Kansas City, Missouri.

His sobriety journey began at Benilde Hall after he was arrested around 2012. Due to his arrest, he served 9-10 months in the Jackson County jail and spent about a month at the Monty House, an in-patient treatment program. He was sentenced to Drug Court, where they sent Yango to Benilde Hall. He stayed at Benilde Hall for a year. However, after Yango left Benilde Hall, he fell back into a recurrence of substance use. "I stopped coming to meetings. I stopped talking to people that were like-minded people such as myself." Yango had a spiritual awakening and realized he needed to change his life. "It came down to either do you want to live, or do you want to die?" He decided to come back to Benilde Hall in 2016 to seek help.

While Yango was at Benilde Hall, he did a lot of volunteer work around campus. "I used to strip the hallway floors and the kitchen's. I put up desktops. I did a lot of things around here just to stay busy." Yango found that his calling was to motivate and inspire others. "My main goal and my main focus today in my recovery is as long as I can help another alcoholic or another addict, that's it. It's all I can do. I'm just here to take it one day at a time."

Around 2017, Yango and Darryel decided to form a recovery group at Benilde Hall called 12 Gates. The origin behind the name is because of the 12 traditions and 12 steps of AA and NA programs. For the first two years of running the 12 Gates group, they were hosting meetings three days a week at Benilde Hall. Unfortunately, Darryel passed away in 2019. Yango continued to run the 12 Gates meetings alone, but because of his work schedule, the meetings were cut down to two days a week. When COVID-19 happened, 12 Gates meetings were paused temporarily, but are now back in session at Benilde Hall.

Yango says that former Executive Director, Kent Jewell, "helped me out tremendously." Yango's faith in God has also helped him out along the way. "God has done things for me that I never imagined I could do for myself." He advises those struggling with substance use disorder to keep going. "It's a pace; it's not a race. And last but not least, don't give up until the miracle happens." Aside from running 12 Gates meetings, Yango also works as a merchandiser for Heartland Coca Cola. He lives with his wife and their daughter. Yango has been sober since February 3rd, 2016.



To read more Benilde Hall Success Stories, go to facebook.com/BenildeHall.

Past Benilde Hall Success Stories can be found on benildehall.blogspot.com.

The Holidays at Benilde Hall

A Message From Executive Director, Ken Vick.



Benilde Hall is proud to be able to serve Kansas City. The men that are part of this therapeutic community are gaining skills and tools that will make Kansas City even better. The staff and clients of Benilde Hall will be joining in a Christmas time of thanksgiving. Food will be great with many snacks and treats. Fellowship will be as close as Covid protocols will allow. Even with Covid putting a stumbling block in the way of plans, we will provide a chance to feel a common warmth and welcome. We are blessed with the chance to provide a real gift for each and every client that is in the program at Benilde Hall. It can make a major impact on a person in recovery when they are able to receive something that is theirs. The men we serve, whether it is the wonderful veterans here at Benilde or any of the rest of the incredible men from our community, we plan to do all we can to provide some peace and joy. Everyone at Benilde Hall deserves to have a chance to find peace, eat great food, and know they are loved.

Our community has gone through a rough year, to say the least. Covid has caused many disruptions in how many of us navigate the holiday season. We have been blessed with the ability to keep our beds open for those that struggle. The community has done a wonderful job of coming together to promote a healthier future. The staff at Benilde Hall are a team that is unified in the goals of our mission to be of service to others. They deserve all my thanks and gratitude.

Kenneth Vick
CRADC, CRPR, MARS, CTTs, LAC
Executive Director

HOW TO HELP



Want to help? There are many ways you can assist us with our mission!

Monetary donations are always appreciated, and we will provide a tax donation receipt.

You can go to <https://www.benildehall.org/how-to-help/donate.html> to make a monetary donation.

Are you hiring? You may employ one of our residents. Feel free to post your available positions on our job board, or email info@mail.benildehall.org with job info!

Is your employer or community looking to adopt a family for the holidays? Consider donating to Benilde! We always need socks, undergarments, basic toiletries, food, & clothing for 100 men.

Is your organization looking for volunteer opportunities? Call 816-842-5836 x 100 to register your volunteers to assist with needs around our campus.

BENILDE HALL'S WINTER NEEDS:

- MENS WINTER COATS
- GLOVES
- SCARVES
- WINTER BOOTS

Benilde Hall is looking for new or gently used winter items for our clients.

You can call (816) 842-5836 to set up a time to donate. You can also order items from our Amazon Wishlist: <https://a.co/aEnPvXI>.

Thank you for helping our clients at Benilde Hall.



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