

ATLAS of Osceola Co.

Attaining Truth, Love And Self-control

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From the Director's Desk...



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*"If one falls down,
his friend can
help him up.
But pity the man
who falls and has
no one to help
him up!"*

Ecclesiastes 4:10

She calls herself a cutter. When I ask her if the term "cutter" is bothersome she shakes her head. Probably has something to do with the amount of time she's been hurting herself—and 20 years is a long time. But when a harmful behavior becomes habit and habit becomes routine it can start to seem like a normal thing. She didn't mean for cutting to become part of her life. But she had internalized anger and frustration for so long. Something had to give. And it did.

She began cutting herself with a knife or a razor blade when she felt anxious, stressed or completely alone. Being careful to cut only in places she could easily cover-up was important. This wasn't something she wanted people to see or know about. The severity of the cuts depended on how stressed or alone she was feeling. She said, "Cutting made me feel like I had control of something because I didn't have control over anything else. It's kinda hard to explain but when I cut myself it's on the outside but it relieves what's hurting me on the inside. It hurts when you feel judged by your cover and nobody cares about what's under the cover. You start isolating yourself and not caring about anything. And when you feel like that you get desperate. You just want relief—something you can control. I controlled the cutting."

Another young man who cuts put it this way: "You feel like nobody cares or understands even when you're surrounded by people. You feel unwanted and worthless. It feels like you're stuck under a big rain cloud that goes wherever you go. Finally you've just had enough. When I cut/burn/hurt myself on the outside the inside relief is sort of like getting into a nice air-conditioned car when you're all hot and sweaty. It feels good. And when I hurt myself it's like I'm hurting the people who've hurt me only they don't even know it. I know that sounds messed-up but that's how it feels."

Both of these individuals have been able to find trustworthy people who will listen to them talk through the tough-stuff. They come to

ATLAS. When I ask her if she still feels like cutting she says, "Now I hardly ever cut, maybe once a year or less. It's not something that just goes away. The feeling or urge to cut is always there for me but it's all in how you deal with that. Every now and then it's the only thing that relieves the aloneness, anxiety and stress that piles up. But being able to talk about it with somebody helps a lot. I don't feel like cutting when I'm able to talk about this stuff. It's like getting the relief I want without having to cut." The young man happily reports he hasn't cut for 9 months. When I ask him what keeps him from cutting, he says, "Having someone to talk to who won't judge me or think I'm crazy. That's why I come here."

Here we listen without judging. They are safe to say it like it is—all of it. They and so many others realize when you talk through the tough-stuff with someone you trust completely, you are free to be yourself. That's when the cool stuff starts; trust is built and hope becomes real. And when there's hope, healing can begin. Yes, here we listen without judging. Here we tell them they matter. They matter to Jesus and they matter to us.

Clark

"What is ATLAS?"

**"A place to come when
you don't know where to turn."**

To put it simply, we are here to help those experiencing distress. Emotional, spiritual, physical or relational issues can turn one's world upside-down. ATLAS offers a safe, confidential place to let it all out and then talk it through. We will listen, encourage and pray with you. It's our mission and privilege to love each person, guide them in the right direction and walk with them on their journey.

If you are struggling with life—**anxiety, addictions, depression, relationships, anything**—come talk to us. We're ready to listen.



"I'm glad I'm not purple."

People of my generation may remember the hit song, One Eyed, One Horned, Flying Purple People Eater. It hit #1 on the charts in 1958 and tells about a creature that landed on earth and is out there somewhere. He eats purple people! Not long ago there were days I'd look in the

mirror and see tints of lavender—deep lavender coming through and I'd think, "Oh-oh, I'd better stay in today or that Purple People Eater is sure to notice that I'm turning his favorite color!" You see, after my husband, Spencer, passed-away I struggled with feeling adrift, afraid, alone and lost. So the threat of the Purple. . . you know, was a bit more intimidating.



But then about two years ago, I was asked to volunteer at ATLAS one day a week. I thought, well, I can manage to conceal my lavender hues with a little make-up and hide from the One-Eyed Monster in the ATLAS office. So I agreed and found myself feeling a part of something much bigger than me and the Purple People Eater. It feels like family here. The volunteers and staff mentors genuinely care about each other (even though they sometimes wear purple)! They care deeply about each person who walks through the door too. I can't say that ATLAS is a life-saver—I'm more of a Starburst-gal. No, Jesus is my actual life-saver. I will say that His gracious hand led me here. Jesus knew that being a part of ATLAS would give me a sense of purpose again. AND IT HAS!

Now I volunteer two days a week. My name, Geri, may be familiar to many of you. I am the new Thank-You Lady, thank-you very much! Oh, that One Eyed, One Horned, Flying Purple People Eater. . . well, he really didn't land on earth to eat purple people after all; he just wanted to be in a rock and roll band! And these days I'm not feeling so lost and lonely—lavender. I thank Jesus for that. . . and for the friends I have made at ATLAS.

Geri Howard

ATLAS Wish List

"Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young
Hershey's Kisses ~ Bottled Water
"Codependent No More" by Melody Beattie
Office Carpet Cleaning ~ AA batteries

Client Quotes

"Please don't give up on me like everyone else did."

"Arguing with a state trooper doesn't work."

"You'd better sit-down cause this will blow your mind. . ."

"Holidays always spell trouble for my family. When's the next one?"

"If ATLAS would have been here when I was growing up, I would have turned-out better."

"How come bad stuff doesn't happen to people we don't like?"

"Thanks for reminding me I'm not hopeless."

Letter from Prison



Hello there, Clark.

I hope things are well with you. I am ok. I have been trying to keep my head up, but it seems like every day is a battle. But I am still fighting with help from God. It is getting close to the day I will get out. It's getting so close to the end. It is scary. How will I be able to look people in the face after what I have done? Do people really forgive?

I can't wait to see my children. But I am afraid that I will never really belong. I fear I am destined to be alone and labeled a criminal—pushed away to be watched from the outside. But I have hope. It is all in God's hands.

Looking forward to seeing you real soon.

Your friend, Jason

"Clyde's Corner" A Bird's-Eye-View



Hey there friends, Clyde here.

I'll be honest; I'm struggling. I feel like the precious people who contributed to our newsletter. My Sweety and I aren't feeling up-to-par. Instead we're feeling unlovely and forgettable. We're molting. We molt once a year and it isn't pretty. We lose all our beautifully colored feathers while our new feathers are growing-in. It's a 6 week process that seems to take forever. During the molt we don't feel like singing or being social at all. Our colors are almost gone and we feel like sitting in the corner of the cage all day. It's tough when you feel ugly and unlovable. It's downright awful.

Thankfully, the staff here at ATLAS understands. They tell us we are still beautiful even when we don't believe it. They're able to look ahead and see our potential when my Sweety and I can't. It's funny, but when we hear that often enough it helps us through the tough times when everything seems hopeless. They don't give up on us—even when we expect them to.

So if something's rattling your cage, don't struggle through it alone. It's great to have a shoulder to lean on when you need to lean. The staff here are great leaning-posts. Stop on in. Hopefully Sweety and I will be lookin'-pretty by then.

Clyde



STATISTICS

2015 Appointments
to date: 982

BUDGET

Received to date:
40% of 2015 budget