

Your Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation newsletter

the power of your giving



SUMMER 2018

HOPE WINS

PLAYING IT FORWARD

Grateful Hazelden alum Don T. puts the “fun” in fundraising

One day every year, Don T. goes on an all-out, nonstop fundraising blitz to benefit patients at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

The tradition started in 2006 when Don decided to celebrate his new life in recovery with an all-day walkathon. He raised \$6,000 from family members and friends who sponsored his 18-mile trek. Years since have involved a day of swimming, kayaking and even something Don dubbed “Calorie Inferno,” when he raised dollars per calorie burned. This year he expects to tee up \$30,000 in donations, which would be a personal record, by golfing 100 holes in one day.

Don jokes that he spends more time recuperating from his one-day whatever-a-thons than organizing them, but his minimally planned annual escapades tally up to a lot of good. With this year’s golf-a-thon proceeds, combined with a generous endowment in Don’s honor that was established by his brother in 2015, Don will have raised more than \$210,000 to help more people access addiction treatment and recovery support—the kind of help he desperately needed in order to turn his life around 14 years ago.

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**MISSION
POSSIBLE**

Like Don T., you can turn your hope into help.

Pay it forward by giving at HazeldenBettyFord.org/PowerOfYourGiving today.

"I was pessimistic about rehab, but I recognized what I needed to do to keep my family on my team."

CALLING HIM ON HIS NONSENSE

Don arrived at Hazelden in Center City, Minnesota, in the summer of 2004, at the urging of his family. He was 33 years old, living in Los Angeles, in debt, single, unemployed, and drinking to excess on a regular basis. "Things were not trending in a good direction," Don deadpans.

The week before he was scheduled to join his father and siblings for what had become the family's annual version of an executive retreat, Don lost his job due to drinking-related absenteeism. (Side note: Don and his siblings gather once a year for a family meeting to discuss health, career, money and relationships "with people who can call you on your nonsense," as he puts it.) For years, Don had been honest with his family about his out-of-control alcohol use and his efforts to curtail his drinking. They knew about his attempts to get sober on his own, and they supported his decision to go to outpatient treatment—twice. The lines of communication were open. In fact, Don encouraged his siblings to hold him accountable, invited them to check up on him at any time and even gave them permission to order random urine screens if they suspected alcohol use.

So there was a lot of history in the mix when Don headed to the family meeting in 2004—plus a brand new issue. Don was arrested for driving under the influence while on his way to the gathering.

"I spent the night before our family meeting in jail, pretty much erasing any doubt my siblings might have had about the extent of my problem."

The annual meeting became an intervention. With everyone gathered, Don's siblings laid it on the line.

"They told me our relationship would be reduced to exchanging Christmas cards unless I turned things around. They promised to help me in every way possible, but if I was only going to give treatment a half-hearted effort, they were done. They had their own lives to lead."

GETTING HIS BREAKTHROUGH

Don knew he was an alcoholic, and he realized inpatient addiction treatment was the logical next step for him. He just didn't believe a solution was possible.

"I was pessimistic about rehab," he shares, "but I recognized what I needed to do to keep my family on my team."

At Hazelden, Don was assigned to the Silkworth Unit "with a really good group of guys" and tried his best to get with the program.

"Everything was great—the program content and structure, the counselors, the facility—but there wasn't a breakthrough happening for me."

That is, until Don heard a lecture on the neurobiology of addiction.

"My aha moment came during a lecture called 'Your Brain Is Trying to Kill You,'" Don recalls with a smile. "The clinician talked about how, with addiction, the different parts of your brain work in opposition to each other. His explanation made so much sense to me. One part of my brain knew I needed to go home after work, and the other part of my brain needed to go to the bar, and those two parts of my brain were always fighting it out. No wonder I felt so conflicted."

The lecture stirred up a spirited discussion back on the Silkworth Unit. Don's takeaway was, "I'm good now. I get it! I'm cured. I can leave now." But several of his peers had the opposite response. "They did not like the idea that their brain was fighting against them," Don relates.

The discussion was memorable enough that, when he completed treatment, one of the men from his unit gave Don a sketch of a cartoon brain chasing him with a knife and the caption, "Holy crap, it's trying to kill me!"

Five years later, in grateful long-term recovery, Don memorialized his breakthrough moment by getting a tattoo of the knife-wielding cartoon brain.

RAISING DOLLARS AND AWARENESS

Today, through his involvement in the recovery community, volunteer work with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, and fundraising for patient aid, Don takes every opportunity he can to help others understand alcoholism is a brain disease—not a matter of weakness or willpower or morality—and that lasting recovery is possible.

"It's been embarrassingly simple to raise funds for patient assistance," Don says. He encourages other alumni to come up with their own version of a fundraiser, and he predicts that loved ones will rally around the effort, just as his family and friends have done time and again.

With a grateful heart (and a knife-wielding brain), Don is determined to help more people reclaim their lives from addiction—one walkathon/swimathon/golfathon at a time.



This summer, grateful alum Don T. will take to the links to raise \$30,000 for Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation patients through his 100-holes-in-one-day golfathon.

INSPIRED GIVING

DO GOOD BY DOING YOUR THING



Like Don T. and his annual fundraising escapades, many Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation donors come up with creative activities to raise funds and reach goals together.

From running marathons as a team to organizing bake sales to hosting talent shows, donors contribute to the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation in ways they find most meaningful—with the common goal of helping more individuals, families and communities heal from addiction.

THE POWER OF WE

Crowdfunding via Facebook, Twitter or other social media sites has become a favorite way for Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation donors to raise dollars, too, especially among alumni celebrating special recovery milestones and families paying tribute to a loved one. And companies such as Amazon (through its AmazonSmiles program) make giving extra easy by donating .5% of customer purchases to the charitable organization of their choice.

Last year, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation was even listed on the “gift registry” of a couple who, in lieu of receiving traditional wedding gifts, invited guests to contribute to the Foundation or other charitable causes close to their hearts.

Take it from grateful alum Don T., it’s easier than you might think to help a lot of people.

For a one-day activity he describes as “embarrassingly simple” to pull off, Don expects to raise \$30,000 in contributions to the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation this year.

Like Don T., you can turn your hope into help. Pay it forward by giving at HazeldenBettyFord.org/PowerOfYourGiving

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POWERED BY DONORS LIKE YOU

YOUR GENEROSITY IS A LIFESAVER

Thanks to the generosity, involvement and compassion of our donors, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation provided lifesaving care and support to 20,993 patients last year, helping more people than ever before find freedom from addiction.

As a nonprofit organization, we rely on donors like you to contribute the absolutely essential dollars needed to sustain our lifesaving work.

Your support helps us uphold the quality of our programs and services, and ensures that the care we deliver and the resources we develop are the very best they can be—all so that we can help more people reclaim their lives from addiction.

You won't find another organization the world over that devotes such resources, creativity and passion to addiction prevention, treatment and recovery. It's a mission played out every single day across the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, a mission made possible and advanced only through the support of donors like you.

"THE HAZELDEN BETTY FORD FOUNDATION HAS SAVED MY LIFE, PLAIN AND SIMPLE."

-Travis, a grateful alumnus

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Please give generously at HazeldenBettyFord.org/PowerOfYourGiving because your dollars save lives.

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We are a force of healing and hope for individuals, families and communities affected by addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

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