



Aaron's House Fact Sheet

Contact Information:

James Sauer, LCSW, SAC, ICS, LMFT
Clinical Director of Aaron House
P.O. Box 3146
Madison, WI. 53704
(608) 217-3529
(608) 442-0227 / Fax
sauerjamesm@aol.com

Mission Statement:

The Aaron J. Meyer Foundation serves college-age men and women in recovery through a unique peer-support modality, providing resident-students the opportunity to live and study in a chemical-free environment. Cultivating the natural supports within the community, this resident driven home relies on highly individualized programming and goal attainment. There are many options for mentorship and effective networking. Aaron House strongly promotes the building of healthy and lasting relationships critical to long term sobriety.

Aaron's House Project:

Aaron's House is a new 3-year pilot project that opened in August of 2007. It is spearheaded by the Aaron J. Meyer Foundation (AJM) in partnership with the Chris Farley Foundation and Connections Counseling, LLC. Each of these organizations is located in Madison, Wisconsin and are lending their particular expertise and talent to further the growth of this project. Other partnerships have also been discussed and may be pursued in a timely fashion.

Created after the tragic death of Aaron Meyer at age 18, AJM is comprised of family, friends, and professionals who seek to extend Aaron's vision for the community support needs of young people. In Aaron's memory and reflective of his spirit, *Aaron's House* will provide a supportive living environment for young men, ages 18-25, who are in recovery from chemical dependence, as they pursue college education, work, and strive to lead a healthy lifestyle. Likewise, the foundation recognizes a parallel need for college-age women in recovery and plans to establish a woman's home in the future.

Location of Aaron's House:

850 East Gorham
Madison, WI. 53704

- *Aaron's House* is a chemical-free home for 4 young men in recovery who live together as housemates up to 24 months with support of a live-in House Mentor.
- *Aaron's House* uses a peer-support service model. It is not a licensed residential or half-way house setting as all clinical needs are satisfied outside of the house.
- *Aaron's House* is designed as a point along the recovery continuum between half-way house and sober dorm living.
- *Aaron's House* operates as a least restrictive environment devoid of unreasonable limitations for our residents. General house rules and household responsibilities have been established by residents and AJM staff.
- Although future homes may be designated for full-time college students, *Aaron's House* is specifically for residents who work and study part time as they continue to build healthy lifestyle habits. Sober dorms are generally not an option for this population. Because of this, AJM has identified this category of residents as a first priority in the Madison area.
- Student-residents work up to approximately 20 hours per week while attending college or trade school. Academic loads are determined on an individual basis.
- Residents are required to participate in a formal counseling/treatment program and extend their recovery program with community support meetings or a viable alternative. Frequency of involvement is determined on an individual basis.

Eligible Applicants:

- Are committed to sobriety and a healthy lifestyle
- Have a minimum of 90 days sobriety at time of application
- Have no history of violent behavior or property damage (defined on an individual basis and with review of specific circumstances)
- Have not been diagnosed with a chronic psychiatric disorder beyond the support capabilities of the program
- Are dedicated to their continued education
- Are interested in active volunteerism, student leadership, and civic duty
- Demonstrate responsibility regarding work and school attendance

Residents Will:

- ❖ Pay rent/\$550.00 per month which includes utilities
- ❖ Pay their own educational costs through traditional means
- ❖ Be responsible for own food and incidental expenses
- ❖ Pay for their own counseling/treatment services
- ❖ Share daily/weekly responsibilities in maintaining the house
- ❖ Together create community through a cooperative and supportive culture
- ❖ Utilize guidance and support of AJM staff
- ❖ Engage in activities that build healthy lifestyles in many life areas

- ❖ Participate in opening Aaron's House to others in recovery

Aaron's House Will Offer:

- ❑ A fully furnished home
- ❑ Private bedrooms for each resident
- ❑ Minimum weekly check-ins, or more if needed, with House Mentor to address any/all life areas
- ❑ Assistance in connecting to community support resources, including adult mentors for support in both short and long-term goals
- ❑ Assistance in progression of Personal Lifestyle Plan that covers recovery, education, career path, work, recreation, spiritual, financial, and social network
- ❑ Opportunities to learn new skills through the help of community volunteers
- ❑ A comprehensive Personal Lifestyle Plan review and update at the start of each resident's new year
- ❑ A formal emergency response system to support residents in times of crisis

Long Range Plans Include:

- Internal AJM expansion of this program to other parts of Wisconsin and perhaps other states
- Utilizing the pilot project to create and market a duplicate model nationally and provide the technical assistance and a "how to" manual for other non-profit leaders
- Enhancing project impact by developing a city-wide Peer Support Network, influenced in part by *Aaron's House* student-residents and consumers of Connections Counseling
- Working with the Chris Farley Foundation in order to incorporate members of the Peer Support Network in preventative education programs in schools
- Special projects, such as the possibility of non-profit efforts of building things like dollhouses, doghouses, etc. for public sale. One such completed project was handcrafted Wood Duck houses which were donated to Madison's Arboretum. These efforts depend upon the individual interests of residents occupying the house