

Media Information Sheet  
Aaron J. Meyer Foundation and The Aaron House Program History

*Key points: Aaron's House was **not** created to commemorate Aaron Meyer's life, nor is it a memorial to Aaron. Aaron's House and The Aaron House Program are a way of sharing what Aaron, his friends, his family, and others learned from Aaron's life situation. Aaron's House grew from a seed of an idea which belonged to Aaron Meyer. In a relatively short time many people in the community and from around the country have given time, talent, money, expertise to this project.*

- Aaron Meyer May 6, 1987 to May 10, 2005 (18 years old)
- Deforest, WI High School student until December 2, 2003 (Junior)
- Aaron began experimenting with marijuana summer 2003
- Mount Bachelor Academy, Prineville, OR, (Student) December 3, 2003 to January 20, 2005 (Emotional Growth Boarding School <http://www.mtba.com/>)
- February 2005 to date of death, Aaron was a student at Horizon High School in Madison, WI <http://www.horizonhs.org/>
- Aaron was planning his life for after the upcoming June graduation. He described his plan as "Go back to Oregon. Attend Bend Community College. Live with friends in recovery. Visit his mentors at Mount Bachelor as necessary. Get a job. Living with friends/peers in recovery was a key part of the plan as Aaron saw it because, "No one knows what we go through like we do. We'll keep each other clean and sober."
- Cause of death: One car accident on Vinburn Road, Town of Windsor 12:20 PM Tuesday 5/10/05. Aaron was on his way to pick up a friend to give him a ride to a job interview. The friend was a 19 year old convicted drug dealer who was trying to stay clean and trying to get on track. Aaron was helping him because he knew how important it was to have friends on your side in recovery.
- Aaron was clean and sober when he died.
- Analysis of the vehicle and accident scene proved Aaron was not speeding
- Aaron J. Meyer Foundation Inc. Established July 7, 2005

- Friends of the Meyer family who knew Aaron created the Foundation to do something to use Aaron's experience to reach out to other young people
- The Board of Directors of the Foundation sought out ideas for the Foundation's purpose
- Fall of 2005, Tom Meyer was sitting in with Aaron's former counseling group sessions at Connections Counseling, Madison, WI.  
<http://www.connectionsounseling.com/> Young men in college describing their challenges to early said the biggest challenges were living with people who were not in recovery, because they were not changing their activities, and living at home because although they love their families, the family members don't understand.
- The Connections Counseling students were describing challenges Aaron had identified and had planned to address by living with guys in recovery.
- Tom reported to the Aaron Meyer Foundation Board that Aaron's plan might be something the board could investigate
- The Aaron House Program grew out of the seed of an idea Aaron had for himself
- Aaron's idea would never have included a House Mentor, a Clinical Director or a full program
- The Program was created by professional social workers and recovery counselors hired by Aaron Meyer Foundation
- Spring 2006 HERO House in Atlanta, GA  
<http://www.theherohouse.com/index.php> creator, Randy Haveson met with members of the Aaron Meyer Foundation and provided insight
- October 2006, 850 E Gorham St identified as suitable house
- January 2007, Foundation Purchased 850 E Gorham St for \$225,000
- March 2007, National Association of the Remodeling Industry – Madison Chapter (NARI-Madison) began total renovation of 850 E Gorham St
- Aaron House Program was written between January '07 and July 07
- Clinical Director Tami Bahr hired in summer of '07
- House Mentor John Blaha hired August 07

- August 13, 2007 House dedicated with special guest Gary Fisher of Gary Fisher Bikes present for the dedication. (Gary's son was a student with Aaron at Mount Bachelor Academy)
- August 15, 2007 first Student Residents move in to the house
- September, all four rooms are occupied
- December 2007, one of the first students completes his degree
- January 2008, James Sauer takes over as Clinical Director
- January 2008, Aaron House program connects the graduate with a Foundation supporter in Hollywood, CA who hires the former AH Student Resident to work for his television show production company