

Winter 22-23

TNews

Newsletter by Sarah Harris



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Oxford House of Tennessee World Delegates in Seattle, WA



Oxford House of Tennessee State Association Meeting

Twass the weekend before Christmas, and Oxford House of Tennessee had its quarterly State Association Meeting. It was a holiday themed get-together with representation from every corner of our 600 mile-wide state.

The Oxford Houses of Clarksville hosted our meeting in a large conference space, with a catered burrito bar and holiday decor, which included custom-made Oxford House wreaths.

The wreaths were created by our new State Treasurer, Jason Goodman.

This meeting was full of bitter-sweet goodbyes and big changes. At the end of the meeting, we welcomed a new group of willing State Officers.

Thank you to all of our previous State Officers and all of the willing candidates that ran for office. We are better together!

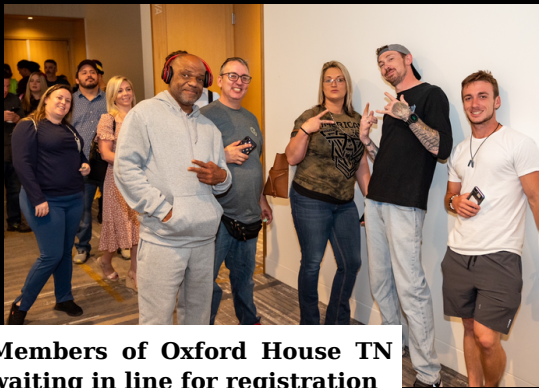


Oxford House World Convention

Seattle, WA - 2022



Approximately 50 members of Oxford Houses across Tennessee boarded the five and a half hour flight from Nashville to Seattle. For most of us, it was our first time attending a World Convention. For some others, it was their first time flying! The Convention took place at the Hyatt Regency, and the hallways quickly filled with tattoo-covered, vape-in-hand, Oxford House t-shirt-wearing, MIRACLES. To see a group of people who have defied the odds, take over this massive hotel in downtown Seattle was an unbelievable sight.



Members of Oxford House TN waiting in line for registration

Members attended educational seminars throughout the day. There were many interesting topics to choose from, with up to 5 breakout panels running at a time.

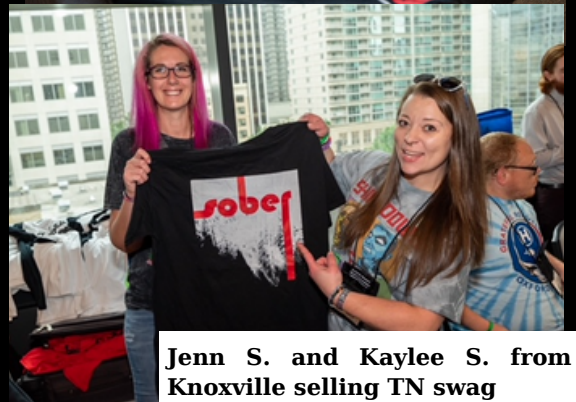
Between breakout panels, members were able to browse the nation-wide selection of swag. Chapters from all over the country brought their coolest gear.

Some topics included were:

- The Current State of Recovery in America
- Leadership vs Bossism - Practicing Democracy
- LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Oxford House
- The Four House Stage and Five Core Principles
- Having Fun in Oxford House
- Working with Parole and Prison Reentry



A breakout panel, packed with members eager to learn



Jenn S. and Kaylee S. from Knoxville selling TN swag

Oxford House World Convention

Women's Conference



The galaxy theme set a dreamy and exciting tone for attendees

Each year, at The Oxford House World Convention, OHI plans and executes a women's conference. This event provides the women of Oxford House with experience, strength and hope of other women in recovery.

During this conference, there was a luncheon, female speakers, and a fun and creative rock-painting project! There were also awards given out to recognize women in recovery who are leading the way and paving a path for many women to walk in the future.



Staff and members of OH TN with World Council, Propagation Committee Chairperson, Brandie B.



Kathleen Gibson, CEO of Oxford House Inc., presented the Myrna Brown Award to SC/TN Regional Manager, Lisa Londono, for her hard work and dedication in expanding Oxford Houses and for being an example to women across the country.



Oxford House World Convention

Fun in Recovery



My favorite breakout panel was Fun in Recovery. It seems like the importance of having fun in recovery is often neglected or completely forgotten. The room was packed. So many attendees were present for this fun and informational seminar. The panelists shared their experience with having fun and shared ideas on how members can bring fun and unity into their Oxford Houses and chapters.



Hot Bigfoot (Brandie B., World Council) demonstrated fun



TN Outreach Workers and State Officers during the breakout



SHAKE EM UP! There's no fun without raffles



(left) Two Oxford House members dressed in their funnest attire for the formal banquet.

(right) Stacy Hatfield AKA "The WOO HOO Lady" having fun speaking at the women's conference.



Cowboy hats, megaphones, T-shirt cannons = FUN

Camping Retreat

Oxford House TN Unity



Speaking of fun in recovery, Oxford Houses in Tennessee had their first annual camping retreat. The event was originally planned for Summer 2022, but we experienced a surge of positive Covid-19 cases in the weeks prior to the campout. The retreat was postponed til October, and we ended up having a Spooky Campout! This Halloween-themed event was packed with all of the holiday favorites; including pumpkin carving and costume contests!

STATE ASSOCIATION MEETING AND CAMPOUT : JULY 15-17 Negative COVID test required <48hrs prior

USA RAFT ADVENTURE RESORT
2 JONES BRANCH RD. ERWIN, TN 37650

\$40 REGISTRATION 3 MEMBERS, 1 CAR PER CHAPTER BRING YOUR OWN TENT, CHAIR FISHING PERMITTED

WHITE WATER RAFTING
Class III & IV Rapids Starting at \$90.00
Class II Rapids Starting at \$55.00

ROCK CLIMBING
4 People - \$85/each
5 People - \$75/each
6-10 People - \$65/ea

ONE WHEEL RENTALS
\$30.00/hour
Lessons - \$55

SUP
\$50.00/each

TUBE RENTALS
\$25 / person or BYOTube

CAVING
\$60.00

RAFFLES

SPOOKY SEASON CAMPOUT AN OXFORD HOUSE UNITY EVENT
OCTOBER 20TH - 23RD

USA RAFT ADVENTURE RESORT
2 JONES BRANCH RD. ERWIN, TN 37650

\$40 REGISTRATION 3 MEMBERS PER CHAPTER BRING YOUR OWN TENT, CHAIR AND PUMPKINI!

CHILI COOK OFF CONTEST
Bring your best chili for a chance to win a week of BEEF please cook for 10+ portions

COSTUME CONTEST
Bring your costume! Best dressed will be going home with a \$50 gift card.

PUMPKIN CARVING & MORE
Bring your own pumpkin and flex your carving skills! Carving materials will be provided.

Recovery speakers, food, bonfires and scary stories on the river!

RAFFLES



Welcome to Erwin, Tennessee



Our camping retreat took place in the small town of Erwin. Erwin is approximately 1,700ft in elevation and is known to be an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. It is located in the furthest east corner of our great state. The campsite, USA Raft, sits directly on the Nolichucky River. "Nolichucky" (named by the Cherokee Indians) means Rushing Waters.

The campsite was beautiful. Members were given the option of setting up their own tents on the river, or for us glampers, we had an abundance of cabin space, campers and bougie geodesic dome tents to choose from.



Camping Retreat

Continued



Through the hard work and dedicated planning of the TN Outreach Team and the TN State Association, we pulled off a memorable, exciting and eventful Unity Retreat. Members were able to participate in a pumpkin carving contest and a costume contest. Some members even participated in a surprising One Chip Challenge.

Throughout the day, the State Association raffled off prizes brought in from the 24 Tennessee chapters. The State Association also surprised attendees with many cash prizes of a week's EES.



The Pumpkin Carving Contest winner was Silver Spring native and Nashville resident, Rosemary S. Rosemary created a pumpkin camper - complete with spinning wheels, windows, and even curtains she created using the plastic from a bag of Wonder Bread.

Upon accepting her trophy, Rosemary was asked to tell us about her masterpiece. Her response was, "It's relevant."

(Rosemary and Tony, Nashville, pictured to the right.)



Outreach Worker Jason Hill brought his inflatable movie theater, projector and fog machine (left) so members could enjoy scary movies after dark!

Flamethrower guy (right) kept attendees warm and our fire pits lit while we enjoyed our outdoor movie theater.



Staff Training

TN/SC - Pigeon Forge, TN



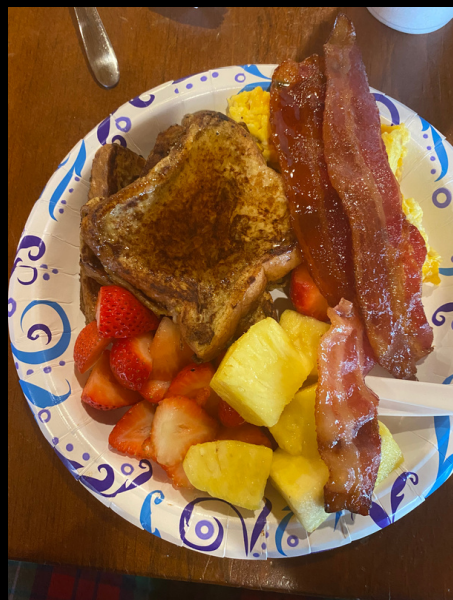
The Tennessee and South Carolina OHI Teams met in Pigeon Forge, TN for some team-building quality time. During this time, Outreach Workers from both states were able to support and guide each other, using our own personal experiences.

Between trainings and presentations, Outreach workers took turns preparing meals in the cabin's kitchen. The cabin provided a warm and cozy environment where staff could comfortably maximize their time, getting the most out of this educational and productive gathering.



Outreach workers from Tennessee and South Carolina gathered in the cabin's movie theater (above) to participate in presentations such as "Finding New Houses" and "New House Data" Staff members role played interactions between Outreach Worker & challenging landlord.

Breakfast prepared by Mike Howard (SC) and Sarah Harris (TN) (right)



The Bear Story

There was a surprise visitor and guest speaker! In Pigeon Forge, there are many signs warning of the presence of Black Bears. Residents and visitors keep their trash cans locked in cages to prevent bears from searching through the garbage. Never in a million years did we think we would actually see one.

Not only did we see a bear, it walked right into the cabin through the front door as Marty Walker unknowingly worked on his reports. After hearing something fall in the kitchen, Marty went to investigate. He saw a basket of Little Debbie snack cakes missing and could smell an odor best-described as a "wet dog smell". Marty closed the doors, as the mountain breeze rolling through the cabin no longer seemed necessary.

The bear, thoughtfully nicknamed "Big Debbie" crashed through a cabin window, and continued to torment the OHI staff for about an hour, disappearing just as the wildlife control workers arrived.

Expansion

Oxford House in Murfreesboro, TN



The first Oxford House in Murfreesboro opened on December 19, 2022. This 2,600sqft 6BR, 3Ba house is now home to 10 women serious about their recoveries.



The Heart of Tennessee

Murfreesboro is in Rutherford County and is nicknamed "The Heart of Tennessee" due to its central location in the state. It's about 30 minutes south of Nashville and about an hour and a half northwest of Chattanooga.

The House is named "Satu" which translates to "fairytale" in Finnish. For many of us, Oxford House has been the happily ever after our recoveries needed.



The women of Oxford House Satu enjoyed an in-house Narcan and Harm Reduction Training provided for free by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (left). Narcan and Kloxxado was provided to everyone in attendance.

Member Spotlights



Chelsea Payne



I live at Oxford House Tabula Rasa in Chapter 3 in Johnson City, TN. I'm the Chapter Comptroller and State Association Chairperson. Since living in an Oxford House, I've gained self-respect. I have my family and kids back in my life. I get to be the best mother to my daughters and the best version of me to my whole family across the country. It's been a roller coaster. I didn't even know how to grocery shop (other than commissary), let alone pay bills. I learned all of that here. I never expected to be where I am today. My life is full and happy, and none of it would've been possible without Oxford House and my Oxford House family.

My advice to the newcomer:

Don't mistake peace with boredom.

My goal this year:

Buy a house for my kids to call their own.



Member Spotlights



Charlie Heath



I live at Oxford House Madsion Manor in Chapter 14 and I'm the Chapter Chairperson. Since moving into an Oxford House, I have gained some really great friendships and I consider some of them my family. I've gained freedom and no longer have the desire to use. My life has changed in so many ways; financially, spiritually... Today, I wake up and go to sleep proud of myself.

My advice to the newcomer:

Take it one day at a time. Easy does it. Be open to suggestions.

My goal this year:

Excel even further in my recovery, keep helping the newcomers, and give hope to the ones who are still battling in active addiction.



Member Spotlights



Jason Goodman



I live at Oxford House Tango, Chapter 11 in Clarksville. I am the House President and State Association Treasurer. When I first got to an Oxford House I had nothing. I was living on the street, staying wherever I could. Today, I have my own car and money in savings. I'm sober, I have a roof over my head, and people I call family.

My advice to the newcomer:

People are willing to help you. When my House has a newcomer, I like to help by showing him around the house, introducing him to the guys, maybe even help him find an job and get him to a meeting.

My goal this year:

I want to continue to save money and get my own place.



Member Spotlights



Tia Huddleston



I live at Oxford House Thiel in Chapter 21, Nashville. I'm the Chapter Chairperson. Since living in an Oxford House, I've gained a family of people in recovery. I've learned how to be responsible and how to hold myself accountable. I've also learned healthy way to deal with conflict and to do what's right and not just what's easy. My life has changed in so many ways. Today, I actually want to live. I now appreciate my life. I'm a productive member of society and I'm a dependable employee. I'm able to give back in the recovery community and show others a new way of life.

My advice to the newcomer:

Get uncomfortable, take all the suggestions, get involved, be active in your life. You get out of it what you put into it.

My goal this year:

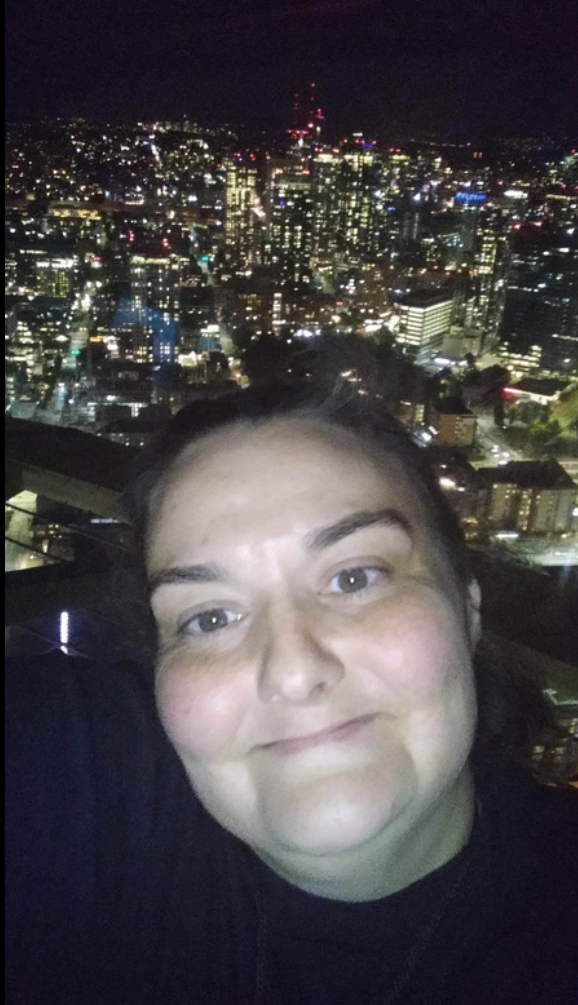
Maintain my recovery and take things one day at a time.



Member Spotlights



Jess Watters



I live at Oxford House Onyx in Chapter 9, Jackson, TN. I'm the Chapter Chairperson and the State Association Comptroller. While living in an Oxford House, I've gained responsibility, accountability and new life skills. I have a huge recovery family across the globe. They provide me with support and a safe home anywhere I go. I have 18+ months clean now, and recovery has been the biggest blessing. I used to be homeless, hopeless and suicidal. Because of Oxford House I have a life worth living. I have quality friends today.

My advice to the newcomer:

Get involved. Know that you matter and your voice is important. Don't use, no matter what.

My goal this year:

Strive for better balance, effective communication skills and healthy boundaries.

