



Fixer Upper

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



You may remember the TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. The premise was to surprise a family in great need with an incredibly and beautifully renovated home. Because the families had experienced a tragic event, significant loss, natural disaster, or debilitating illness, their home was damaged or had fallen into disrepair. They needed more than refurbishment, even more than a home tailored to their needs. They needed hope for a fresh start.

For those who have lived in addiction, their lives feel like the homes of families on *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. Trauma damaged their lives, and addiction left their souls in disrepair. Recovery is an *Extreme Makeover: Life Edition*! The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (and other Twelve Step fellowships) and a community of recovery support are like the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* team, ready to restore and renew.

Of course the Twelve Steps are calls to action for those in recovery. It's as if the families on the show help in their own home's renovation. Even more specifically, Steps Eight and Nine call those in recovery to make a list of those they harmed while living in addiction and those who harmed them, and Step Nine calls them to make amends.

Trauma leaves us afraid and often resentful. In addition, we harmed people we love and who love us as well as others. We lied to protect our habit or stole to get money for drugs. We were lazy about paying bills, showing up to work, and caring for children. We were selfish in seemingly countless ways. All those actions damaged not only our souls and lives but also those of others. Our choices were like a hurricane pounding wind and rain. Now that the storm has passed and we're enjoying a season of sobriety, we want to rebuild trust with others and begin a new way of living – one based on serenity, trustworthiness, goodness, and kindness.



Steps Eight and Nine are the “how to” of that relational renovation project. When we prepared our inventory in Step Four, we simultaneously made our amends list for Step Eight. Next time, we'll look at the different types of amends and offer guidance for how to make them. For now, I'll simply point out that making our amends – both those we can make in a single conversation and those that take years of living in wholeness to make – brings the same kind of joy families experienced on *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* when their new home was unveiled. This is not drudgery driven by guilt and shame to earn forgiveness or prove we're now good enough. No! Amends are the beautiful and joyous work of stepping into self-respect, regaining others' trust, experiencing love and forgiveness, increasing freedom from cravings, and feeling comfortable in our own skin and mind. Fully practicing Step Nine brings amazement and gratitude. It's an episode in our lives we should never miss!

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe in fixer uppers! The moms and children who come to our community find hope through making amends, and we support them to make those repairs and renovations in their lives. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.

