

Retrieving Young Lives on the Brink of Ruin

Addiction counsellor treats troubled teens at idyllic rural facility

By Bruce Stapley
Stouffville Free Press

Sitting down to talk with Yonah Budd about his 39 years of experience turning around the lives of addicted teens, one could find himself thinking of the unorthodox but tuned in psychiatrist played by Robin Williams in the movie Good Will Hunting. He's even got the beard.

Yonah 'gets' young people. He knows what makes them go off the rails and fall into the seemingly bottomless pit of addiction, the 'at risk' environment that can cause them to use drugs, alcohol, online gaming, sexting and other crutches to help deal with the pain brought on by life.

He also knows that standard treatment methods often fail to pull teens out of the abyss. That's why he has opened a unique addiction treatment centre called The Farm, nestled in 15 acres just north of the village of Stouffville. His approach includes daily one on one and group therapy sessions, personalized physical fitness and nutritional regimens, massage therapy, artistic expression, and an exposure to the wonders of nature that contribute to spiritual awareness.

"It's an effective therapeutic recovery environment, peaceful and quiet with no neighbours" said Yonah, who is founder and clinical director of The Farm. His credentials speak for themselves. He is an addiction counsellor, a faith-based prison

chaplain and a licensed criminal investigator. He is also the founder and volunteer CEO of Hope House Youth Charity, a Toronto drop in facility that feeds, mentors and empowers young people from socially at risk environments.

The Farm is housed in a renovated 6,000 square foot log home that was once used for raising boxer dogs. The surrounding land is partly treed with gardens and some open space. "The Farm is actually an extension of my practice. My therapy style includes everything from canines to acupuncture. I use doctors, psychiatrists, nutritionists, Eastern and Western medicine. And at The Farm they are all in one place."

The recently opened facility houses a maximum of 10 male teens living in residence for 30 days after which they engage in a three month follow up period. Yonah pointed out that residents are non-violent individuals who do not require restraints and have no severe mental health issues such as schizophrenia. He said parents often send their teenagers to him when all else has failed. "Parents come to me when they are at that point people call rock bottom."

He uses his past successes to justify a belief that he can help any young

addict regain control of his life. "The majority of the kids have already been through some form of rehabilitation. This isn't their first stop but it will be their last. It's a place where an 18 year old who has been struggling since 16 will finally get the therapy he needs."

His approach begins by convincing his patients of their ultimate worth. "We treat our residents like a success waiting to happen, not a failure.

Everyone else is tearing them down - that's why they are a mess. They have no self esteem, they are saying 'Why bother getting better?'"

Yonah sets out from the start to convince the patient that he can be trusted.

"I get dirty. I sit down with them, laugh with them, cry with them. I get their trust right away. It's a very personal relationship."

In the end, he says the young addicts who come to him for treatment are the same as anyone else with a crippling condition; they are just looking for a way to make the pain go away. He sets out to convince them that they can actually use their adversity to help them grow in a way they never thought they could. "Yes, you have a disease. I tell them. But overcoming it makes you stronger."

For more information on The Farm visit www.wesave.life

I get dirty. I sit down with them, laugh with them, cry with them. I get their trust right away.

It's a very personal relationship.



The Farm founder Yonah Budd has treated just under 1,100 teens with addictions in his 39 years as an addiction counsellor. Bruce Stapley photo

OPEN HOUSE & JOB FAIR

Ski Lakeridge

OPEN HOUSE
Sat Oct. 24 & Sun Oct. 25 • 10am to 4pm
FINAL WEEKEND TO SAVE ON SEASON PASSES!
 Beat the rush & sign up for
 Ski or Snowboard Lessons now!
 Gift Certificates available

JOB FAIR
Sunday Oct. 25 10am to 3pm
 Full & part-time employment
 opportunities for students and adults
FLEXIBLE HOURS & GOOD PAY

P: 905-649-2058 ❖ F: 905-649-3752
 info@ski-lakeridge.com www.ski-lakeridge.com
 790 Chalk Lake Road, Uxbridge, Ontario L9P1R3

BUTTON, ARMSTRONG & NESS

BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

- Real Estate • Wills & Estates •
- Family Law •

Eric R. Button, B.A., L.L.B.
 Kenneth C. Goodbrand B.Comm., L.L.B.
 Monica Farrell, B.A., J.D.

Practicing in Association

6361 Main St., Stouffville • 905-640-3530

Est. 1895

ELECT



JANE PHILPOTT

Vote for **REAL CHANGE** on October 19th

www.janephilpott.ca

905.640.1221 @JanePhilpott

Authorized by the official agent for Jane Philpott

Liberal
 MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE