



BY SIMON KING

I've done a few things I'm proud of. Started a couple of companies, did well academically, won a few awards, run marathons, raised kids... Oh, I'm sure I could go on!

But there is something I am really proud of: Beating an addiction that had plagued me for nearly thirty years. It affected my quality of life, as well as those around me. It took over my waking thoughts and actions. I would even go so far as to say that it defined who I was and I planned every action and everywhere I went to accommodate it. It killed my father and for the majority of my life I was sure it was going to get me too. I was utterly dependent on it.

Until I quit. I endured withdrawal, mood swings, fought back moments of despair and aggression, and forced a complete change in my habits and behavioral associations. Quitting was the hardest thing I have ever done. It took sustained, unwavering will power. An iron will if you will!

That's what the residents of the Iron House have too. An iron resolve to overcome a problem that plagues modern society, rich and poor, black and white and all nationalities, faiths and persuasions - Addiction. It plagues Henderson County too, but



The Iron House in Eustace

we are fighting back.

The Iron House started as the Chapman House, with a focus on alcohol addiction. It houses men only. Rock Hill Baptist Church took it over a couple of years ago and has grown the services available to include support for other addictions, such as substance abuse and gambling, as well as mental health services. The staff there count the following qualifications among their number, including a Bachelors in Psychology, LCDC (licensed chemical dependency counselor), AADC (advanced alcohol and drug abuse counselor) and ICAADC -

an advanced international certification in alcohol & drug addiction counseling.

You don't just walk in to the Iron House. You have to want to be there and be prepared to do whatever it takes to succeed. There is a zero tolerance policy of relapse and it's a condition of residence that the men must submit to random testing and must all remain completely committed to overcoming their addiction.

The Iron House has men who have the willpower to stay the course.



Dan Hosch is the founder of Call to Recovery – a 12-step program that is practiced at the Iron House. 16 men currently live at the Iron House. It is full. 16 men is five times fewer places that there are on the Cowboys roster and yet it's the largest such facility in North East Texas. Think about that versus the size of the problem. Dan's priority is to make more places available and he is busy applying for grants, the latest being an application to the Edwin A. Blue and Janice Owen Miller Charitable Fund. He says his most urgent need is for "people who can get a sawzall out and know what they're doing".

He is also looking for work for the men. Most of the men have jobs. They are eager for work, and many have skills. They are also keen to volunteer. They are people on their way up and looking forwards, not back.

As for me? 40+ cigarettes a day for 30 years. Various studies have said nicotine is one of the most addictive substances there is. I'm not sure how much I believe that but thankfully haven't had much to compare it to. I never "lost it all" like many

at the Iron House. I can only wonder what must it be like to be so utterly dependent on something that you let your life hit absolute rock bottom?

Now quitting THAT addiction is really something to be proud of. We are lucky to have them here amongst our community and even luckier to have those with the strength to watch and help these men rebuild their lives from the abyss.



What does it take to get from here?

To here. Iron House residents volunteering at Uncle Fletch's festival in Athens.



If you believe in what the Iron House is doing, you can assist through a tax-deductible donation or by volunteering. Send donations to 308 Oak Street, Eustace, TX 75124. For more information, call 903-425-2061. You can also visit online at

<http://www.rockhillbc.com/IronHouse>

