

**Released: 11/7/2024**

**Center Story #6**

**Solutions for Addiction Problems Among the Gay,  
Lesbian and Trans Communities**

Suppose you have a gay friend, male or female, and that friend has a serious drinking or narcotics problem. You have talked to them about getting help, but they say “no thanks”.

If that happens, you might strongly encourage your friend to go to the Lambda Alano Recovery House Website. Alcoholics Together (AA) and Addicts Together (NA) meetings at Commercial Center’s Lambda Alano Clubhouse are held daily and are specifically for gay, lesbian and trans individuals, although everyone is welcome. A big sign in the clubhouse says, “You are not alone anymore”.

Lambda Alano is not officially associated with AA or NA, but is a safe inclusive clubhouse that allows each recovery group to achieve its own goals.

Steve Nealand and Paula Sadler are both self-professed former alcoholics. Steve is on the Board of Directors of Lambda Alano and is the General Secretary for Alcoholics Together, and Paula is President of the Board of Lambda Alano. Steve says that gay people like him are often uncomfortable talking about their lives in front of a crowd that is not gay. Paula adds that individuals who are gay, lesbian or trans often are rejected by their families and find comfort in alcohol or narcotics and need specialized help.

Steve worked for First Bank in St. Louis for 30 years. He had joined AA there but needed the group's help again following his 2019 retirement (after 30 years with the bank) and after traveling in his RV for a couple of years. He came to Las Vegas in 2019 and luckily found the Commercial Center Alcoholics Together AA group. He's been sober for three years and joined Lambda Alano as a volunteer.

Paula started imbibing at age 12. She had known she was different since age five and only started transitioning to female at age 19. She has worked

since age 14, but lived a wild alcohol-filled life before getting sober 22 years ago. “I attended a meeting here in Commercial Center,” she says, “and I noticed a rainbow flag. I knew I was in the right place”. Paula says one of her gifts of sobriety was bringing out skills and talents she didn’t know that she had.

In addition to her work in this area, Paula has owned A Harmony Nail Spa in Commercial Center for all 22 years of her sobriety. She has also helped clean up Commercial Center and was instrumental in having it designated as a Historical District. Paula has also been a singer in the past and has completed 12 of 22 songs that she is putting onto a new CD.

Paula speaks freely about Lambda Alano Recovery Clubhouse’s history. The Clubhouse recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, noting that 40 years ago at the height of the AIDS crisis, many people in recovery didn’t want to be around gay people. Therefore, founders Mickey Carson and Coleen Fitzgerald had the first meetings in their home and

subsequently moved to their own buildings and separated the meetings from the Clubhouse itself.

Lambda Alano was re-invigorated as a Recovery Clubhouse in 2014 with Paula as its Board President. “Steve has been a tremendous help in recruiting the Board members we have today,” Paula says.

“The two groups who meet regularly in our clubhouse are not part of Lambda Alano,” Paula explains. “We are just the clubhouse, and they rent space from us. We have room for other groups with information available from our website [www.lambdaalanolasvegas.org](http://www.lambdaalanolasvegas.org).”

Their brochure says it all:

“Are you LGBTQ+ & do you have an alcohol or drug problem? We have a solution. We offer recovery meetings for the treatment of alcoholism & drug addiction with our AA and NA meetings daily. We are a safe and inclusive clubhouse for gay, lesbian and transgender people, where all are welcome. We are the only independent LGBTQ 12-step Recovery

Clubhouse in Las Vegas, and we have been here since 1984.”

For individuals who simply want to support the work of Lambda Alamo, clubhouse memberships are available and, of course, donations can be made.

With the holidays approaching, Paula noted that on New Year’s Eve, a special meeting of all the Recovery Groups will be invited to watch the local fireworks at Lambda Alamo.

Steve adds, “I know Lambda Alamo is 40 years old and we just had a celebration of that. But looking ahead, I feel we have only just begun.”

By: Diane Taylor