

Hello,

My name is Stephanie. I am writing this letter to try to convey the deep gratitude I feel to Laura Jones-Swann and the Center for Students in Recovery (CSR).

I graduated from UT with a BA over two decades ago. I was in an alcohol and drug induced fog during my college days back then and still don't know how I managed to graduate. There was no CSR on campus in those days. At the time I thought I was just doing what "all college kids do". My story is no different than anyone else's. Things really do get exponentially worse in active addiction. By grace alone, I lived through it all to find my way to recovery from drugs and alcohol a little over 11 years ago.

A career change brought me back to the UT campus two years ago. It was really scary at first. I had never done school "sober" and I was now older than most of my professors! The younger students in my classes seemed to accept me well enough but I continued to feel disconnected from the "college experience". I continued to have periodic episodes of anxiety and depression and finally made my way to the wonderful mental health professionals at the Student Health Center. They told me about Laura and CSR. I was sober, but disconnected. Even in recovery, "disconnection" from others seems to be a not uncommon theme for alcoholics and addicts! I was a little reluctant at first, but as soon as I met Laura I knew it would be the place for me. Her enthusiasm is contagious!

I have been a member of CSR for over one year now. We meet every Wednesday night and Wednesday nights have become my favorite night of the week! I started out attending CSR to see what it had to offer to me – yes, that was rather selfish on my part. I continue to go to see what I can offer to others. Soon after I joined CSR that feeling of "disconnection" from others left me. I feel so at ease around others in recovery. Because we share such similar stories we understand each other in a unique way. There is also nothing more inspiring to me than seeing young adults in their 20's going to college, having fun with friends, and doing it all in recovery!

Thanks CSR!