

Jake Summers

Development Director, Partner



Could we get some brief biographical information from you? Hometown, previous experience, education, etc.?

I grew up in Phoenixville (suburban Philadelphia) before heading to West Point for college. I started my personal recovery journey in 2010 after I was kicked out of West Point for alcohol abuse. I finished up my degree at Villanova University, majoring in finance.

I had a career in finance for a few years before I had a quarter life crisis and moved to Cambodia. I had always had a desire to work in Asia, and I found a job with a small investment company in Phnom Penh. I ended up co-founding a mango farming and export company, and spent some time living in a shipping container in the jungle. It was an amazing experience, but I determined it was unsustainable for the long term.

Since I moved back, I have been a full time entrepreneur. I own a real estate and a construction company in PA, and joined Green Hill to bring some fresh views on how to run and grow this company to ensure the mission came first. Working at Green Hill is my first stint in the recovery profession, where I oversee the finance department and some of our strategic growth initiatives. I am able to combine my personal knowledge of recovery with my early stage business experience. My role at Green Hill has been the most fulfilling and impactful position I have ever had.

Why did you become a partner at Green Hill?

Our approach to recovery. My story in recovery involves losing my academic and career footing, and I know how hard it is to lose your identity and find a new one. A platform to help young men navigate similar experiences sounded tailor made for me. Tripp invited me down to do some consulting on some projects, and I signed on to be a partner a few months later. His vision as a leader is one that has a chance to change the way this entire industry approaches young adult treatment. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of something like this.



Shorts

Undergraduate:
Villanova University

Colleague for a Road Trip:
Jay Bylund - that's easy. He's hilarious, a great DJ, and a caring conversationalist.

Dream Job as a Kid:
Fighter pilot

Favorite Movie:
Shawshank Redemption (I cry everytime)

Favorite Meal:
Bida Manda's breakfast baguette (I also cry everytime)

Favorite Album:
Wildflowers - Tom Petty

Karaoke Song:
Toto - Rosanna

Mountains or Beach?
Mountains

Favorite Book:
East of Eden - John Steinbeck

Sport:
Basketball

What keeps you coming back day after day?

The people. We have the most incredibly talented and driven staff. We have a sign in our house that says 'Give a damn', and that's my sense in every interaction with our employees. Every one of us wants to grow, help our clients, and help each other. A close second would be my interactions with parents and families. As the finance director, I have a lot of chances to show our families that we are a mission driven organization, and we approach finances with a lot of flexibility and mutual understanding. There is not a lot of clarity and transparency in this field when it comes to costs, and I love being able to show families that we prioritize that.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

My mentor / boss in finance sat me down and urged me to stop trying to fit my square self into a round hole in a corporate job. His advice was this - the best thing we can do is to start being our authentic selves as early as possible. My career has been a beautiful adventure ever since, I have zero regrets.

What does your ideal day look like?

My ideal day would start with a quiet half hour in the morning. When I lived in Cambodia, I spend thirty minutes outside on the porch with my coffee before I looked at my phone. It is amazing to see how we make a choice every single day to start our day in calm or chaos, simply by choosing if we look at that portable supercomputer right when we open our eyes. I would then go for a run on a scenic trail. I love running and I love nature. I have done multiple marathons, and I find it to be the most therapeutic experience I can take part in.

I would then jump right into work! I really enjoy working, I know that sounds crazy,

but my most fulfilling days are jam packed with critical problem solving and team-work. Prioritizing self care over work is an ongoing battle for me. I would end my work day with a short meditation and a call to my Grandma, a tradition started when I commuted home from my first job. Our little five minute chat each day keeps me centered and represents an 'end' to the day for me. I would then head over to my brothers house to play with my twin nephews before dinner. They make every problem in my life a heck of a lot smaller, and there is something so exhilarating about earning a laugh from an 18 month old child.

I would head back home and cook a nice dinner, I love to experiment in the kitchen. After dinner, I usually head to AA! The relationships I have built in sobriety are the most meaningful thing in my life. Ending the day with my people and my community is probably the best use of an hour I can come up with. I seem to enter every AA meeting obsessed with the things I didn't accomplish that day, and leave with a healthy dose of self forgiveness for doing the best I could. I usually tune out an hour before bed and 'shut down' with a book, the guitar, or a documentary.

What superlative would you have received in high school?
I did receive class clown, and I was proud! I was 99% humor, 1% school work. To be completely honest, I barely resemble my high school self after living a life in recovery. I can tell you that back then, I would not have been most likely to succeed, make a difference, become president, etc.

What's one message you'd wish our residents would always carry with them?
"Success is not final, Failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts." Recovery and life are long term games.

Everyday we have an opportunity to grow, and an opportunity to practice self forgiveness when we don't.

Who has had the largest impact on your personal/professional development?

Tripp Johnson. I have never seen someone approach personal development so deliberately. He has helped me discover and embrace my core values, and ensure that life, personal relationships, my career, my family, all tap their roots into the same soil (values). It is some really powerful stuff.

Anything else you'd like the community at large to know?
I work remotely from Philadelphia and spend a week per month on the ground in Raleigh.

