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Winds of Wellness

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www.wellness-connections.org

A Success Story from the Mobile Team

“The joyful heart sees and reads the world with a sense of freedom and graciousness.”
~ John O'Donohue

For one Wellness Connections member, happiness is volunteering.

Robert, from Benson, likes nothing more than to help others and he is proud to serve his community.

Thanks to the help of the Mobile Services Team, in particular Kim Burk, the 56-year-old has started a regular volunteer 'job' with the local St. Vincent de Paul center in his hometown.

can be found sweeping the floors, helping to sort clothes, taking delivery of donations, or unloading and distributing food boxes.

“I love it,” said Robert, who landed the position after first being tasked by Kim to find the center's number and to call to make an appointment for an interview. “I just love talking to people and getting out places.”

A Wellness Connections member for about five

years, Robert has found the organization to be a great help in controlling his anger.

The staff and members, along with the group sessions he participates in, have had a calming influence on both his emotions and day-to-day life.

“I really enjoy myself and it has helped to calm me down a lot,” he said. “Being with Wellness Connections brings me happiness.”

Every Wednesday, Robert

can be found sweeping the floors, helping to sort clothes, taking delivery of donations, or unloading and distributing food boxes.



Robert loves to work in the garden at the Sierra Vista center when he visits from Benson



Robert likes learning to cook and working in the garden at the Sierra Vista center during his occasional visits there.

But his time spent volunteering with St. Vincent de Paul has really given him a taste for becoming even more active.

“I would like to do more volunteering,” he said. “I think I'd like to help in a soup kitchen because there's a lot of people that need help. I also love picking fruits and vegetables, so maybe I could do that somewhere also.”

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Staff Spotlight ~ Kimberly Burk



Wellness Connections has many success stories, and Kim Burk is certainly one that can be added to a growing list.

When she started volunteering with the organization to help with her mental health issues, Kim never dreamed she would one day be working full-time and helping to run a busy department of the non-profit.

She admits, when she looks at how far she has come, “it blows my mind”.

It was more than a decade ago when Kim first started working with Wellness Connections in Sierra Vista.

“My mental health had gotten really bad and I was living off Social Security, she recalls. “My dad was stationed at Fort Huachuca, so I came out here to live with him for a year. But I wasn’t content with not doing anything.”

So she started volunteering with Wellness Connections, helping to sort through donations during the days when the organization still accepted them.

Before long, she found herself transitioning from a volunteer into a part-time paid position. Not long after that, she began working with the Mobile Services Team.

“I just fell in love with it. I loved it because I liked going out and about and working with different groups of people,” she said.

Kim was instrumental in helping to get mobile outreach services up and running in Nogales and Douglas, which both now have permanent centers.

She also helped to set up the mobile program in Benson, which operates on a twice-weekly basis.

“I’ve loved being able to move around and to have had the opportunity to work in Nogales

and Douglas,” she said. “And during this whole process I have been able to move on with my mental health. That’s been thanks to my job, to God, and to the support I have had from my manager Kari Ferrell.

“I went from working 24 hours a week to 32, and then to 40 hours as the program coordinator. I never thought I would be able to work full-time again.

“I have anxiety and depression and I’d be in the hospital every six months. When I first came here I knew nobody, but when my therapist finally got me to come to Wellness Connections, this became my support. I had never been around people that I could relate to before.

“I just think I’m blessed and being able to see Wellness Connections grow as much as it has, has been a wonderful experience.”

Mobile Services program coordinator Kim Burk credits Wellness Connections with helping her in her ongoing recovery

Fun in Photos



Members and Staff of SV Wellness Connections and the Benson Mobile Program came together for the monthly Peer & Family Advisory Council Meeting hosted by Cenpatico

Jeff (member) & Amanda (staff) of Safford Wellness Connections working in Appliance Connections



Members and Staff of SV Wellness Connections with the Buffalo Soldiers of Fort Huachuca



Health Corner - National Kick Butts Day

March 19 is National Kick Butts Day, so here's some tips on how you can successfully quit smoking:

Start with a personal stop smoking plan

Set a quit date within the next two weeks and tell your family and friends. You will need time to mentally prepare for the challenges that come your way. To resist temptation, remove all cigarette products from your home, car, and workplace. Once you decide to quit, remain in touch with your doctor for any urgent help.

Avoid common smoking triggers

People with the habit of smoking and drinking should go to places where smoking is prohibited. Avoid being around friends and family who are smokers. Smoking after dinner could be

replaced with a piece of fruit or (occasionally) an ice-cream cone or piece of chocolate.

Manage your cigarette cravings

Distract your mind from cravings by doing something active. Remove yourself from situations that trigger cravings. Finally, self-motivation through rewards is a positive way to manage cravings.

Cope with withdrawal symptoms

Symptoms include fatigue, insomnia, tremors, restlessness, and headaches, among others. However, it is essential to ignore them, as they will decrease and go away within a week. Encouragement and cooperation from friends and family makes a huge difference.

Stop smoking medication

Replacing cigarettes with nico-

tine gum or a patch helps to break the psychological barriers. Used as a short-term solution, medications of this sort can make the first few weeks more manageable.



EMPLOYMENT TIP - While many people want to have a paying job, volunteer work is another form of meaningful activity for many people with mental health conditions. Some people use volunteer work as a stepping-stone to paid employment. Volunteering can help them re-learn skills and grow comfortable working with other people. Others decide to volunteer instead of work. Volunteering not only gives you a sense of pride, but it can make you feel good about yourself to help out in your community.

News & Notes

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- Ramona Benta 2nd
- Luis Rios 2nd
- Jamiemarie Patterson 4th
- Arsenio Peraza 7th
- Elizabeth Monteros 8th
- Sylvester Sanchez 9th
- Carol Goupil 10th
- Gilbert Ramirez 13th
- Robert Romero 13th
- Freddie Bencomo 14th
- John Tanner 17th
- Michael Williams 20th
- John Hughes 21st
- Clarissa Bermudez 21st
- Margaret Bodine 22nd
- Josh Clonts 22nd
- Adele Kambitsch 22nd
- Teresa Shortsleeve 23rd
- John Thrasher 25th
- Melanie Rockwell 25th
- Chrystal Soto 25th
- Maxamillia Gitterman 26th
- Julie Stanton 26th
- April Will 26th
- BJ Bright 31st
- Donna Wright 31st



Garden Jargon

Big news for the spring! Thanks to the member's advice and input the vegetable garden will soon be producing tomatoes, scallions, cucumber, squash, radish, egg plant, okra and zucchini. In addition, the salsa garden will soon be producing much of the makings for Lorenzo's special salsa such as, Serrano peppers, jalapenos, hot peppers, sweet peppers, garlic and maybe even spices like cumin and paprika. High hopes also present the opportunity to grow herbs such as basil, cilantro, parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. The kitchen will be singing as some of Sean's needs are met (and that's the plan with many of items above) and the ultimate vision over time, is to continue to GROW, REEP AND SOW from the member's garden project marketable produce, salsa and herbs to the local community and farmer's markets. This could mean extra \$ and resources for the members and center, as well as fresh produce for the occasional take home basket.

The weather is just about right this month and we can all enjoy some outdoor garden activity during Garden Club on Mondays at 2pm. The focus for the first weeks of March will be to propagate seedlings and maybe plant a few vegetable starter plants according to the plan above. All help is welcome. Let's continue to GROW on together!!! **Fred Cleere**



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Michael Hardy Lake
Sharon Lake
Liz Monteros
Kim Dunn

If you are interested in becoming a part of the Wellness Connections Board, please contact us at:
admin@wellness-connections.org or (520) 452-0080.

Wellness Connections' Mission Statement & Overview

Mission Statement:

"Wellness Connections is committed to providing peer-led, life-enhancing opportunities for mental health recovery and wellness."

Overview

Wellness Connections is a peer-run organization providing peer-run behavioral health and addiction recovery services since February 2002.

Wellness Connections maintains a qualified staff of Peer Support Specialists and Behavior Health Technicians.

The expected outcome for all Wellness Connections' program members is a significantly improved quality of life. Programs are funded through service contracts with Cenpatco, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, Bridgeway and the DES Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Fundraising and grant funding are also pursued in support of Wellness Connections' mission.

Newsletter Editor: Kari L. Ferrell

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