

May
2014

Winds of Wellness

A Monthly Publication of Wellness Connections (Formerly SEACRS) • (520) 452-0080

www.wellness-connections.org

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."
~ Albert Schweitzer

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Business at Twilight

Wellness Connections showcased its services and programs to the business community during a successful networking event for local Chamber of Commerce members.

Attendees got the chance to tour the Sierra Vista location during the Business at Twilight.

It was also an opportunity for Comfort Café's staff to present their amazing cooking skills through the wonderful food provided. Rave reviews from our guests were directed at Chef Julianne Abbey who created the delicious menu and culinary coordinator, Sean Crosby, who worked closely with Julianne.

Wellness Connections is setting up a new business to offer catering services to local companies and organizations.

One of the highlights of the evening was a poetry reading by Adjoua Purnell.

Adjoua is one of our administrative assistants and she

wrote a beautiful poem called Come With Me To The Garden, which proved to be the perfect choice for the portion of the event that was



Chamber membership director John Hargraves enjoys the live music

held in our new Growing Well area.

Board chair Joe De Francesco welcomed the business owners and managers and told them how happy he is to be associated with Wellness Connections.

"It's something different," he said. "I did not appreciate what a wonderful organization this is, before I became

involved."

Executive Director Deanna Belinger went on to explain that Wellness Connections "offers the support necessary for any of us to maintain our wellness."

"We help people discover the talents and strengths we already have within us," she added. "We support them with their recovery and on their journey home."

Finally, business

development manager Tom Spinosa asked the Chamber members to consider partnering with Wellness Connections to help its members get back into the workforce.

"Finding a place to work and where you fit...that's huge,"



Wellness Connection's New Website



Wellness Connection's New Website

“Our organization is about lending support in a peer-run environment...”

Wellness Connections has had a facelift!

For the past few months we have been working to rebrand our organization, because we want Wellness Connections to be as relevant and meaningful as possible to our peers, members and the community.

An important part of this process has been re-launching our website www.wellness-connections.org

When you visit the site, you will find a more streamlined image, with easy to find information that tells our story both effectively and efficiently.

Still a work in progress, the

website will continue to improve in the coming months with the addition of more program information, up-to-date photographs and ongoing news and events.

“Since late 2013 we have been transitioning to a new and improved look,” said Executive Director Deanna Bellinger.

“For many years, we were known as SEACRS (Southeastern Arizona Consumer Run Services), but we wanted to simplify our name and change it to something that really says who we are.

“Our organization is about lending support in a peer-run environment, so we thought Wellness Connections was a good choice to go with.”

Wellness Connections has undergone many exciting changes in the last eight to nine months, including the introduction of a new logo.

New programs have been introduced, such as Appliance Connections – a peer run

business in Safford that sells reconditioned appliances.

Our Comfort Café in Sierra Vista is also set to expand to offer catering services to local businesses and organizations.

“We are really excited about the possibilities of both Appliance Connections and Comfort Café,” said Deanna. “Not only are we providing services to the general public, we are helping our members to learn vital new skills that will serve them well in the future, both in day-to-day life and in the work environment. That’s something we are very proud of.”

With the expansion of services in Douglas (announced in last month’s issue) and the Growing Well garden project continuing to blossom in Sierra Vista, Wellness Connections is well placed to move into its next chapter as one of the leading mental health providers in the region.

Anxiety: Symptoms & Coping Skills

Anxiety is common for many people across the United States. People can experience mild anxiety which may require some to seek treatment. Anxiety can be caused by many things including: finances, employment, housing issues, relationships, family and every day worries. If a person experiences a high level of anxiety it is referred to as an anxiety attack. Symptoms common to anxiety attacks are; a surge of

overwhelming panic, feelings of losing control or “going crazy”, heart palpitations or chest pains, feeling like you are going to pass out, having trouble breathing or experiencing a choking sensation, hyperventilation, hot flashes or chills, trembling or shaking, nausea or stomach cramps and feeling detached or “unreal.” There are many coping skills for anxiety or feelings of panic. Some are; writing a worry list, listen-

ing to music, meditation, deep breathing, and practicing mindfulness, using distraction techniques, therapy and medication. Like other mental illnesses, anxiety can also improve with the help of support from people who have also experienced these symptoms, peers. Wellness Connections provides that service at the centers in Sierra Vista and Safford and on through the Mobile team in and around Benson and Bisbee/Douglas.

HELLO
my name is
Anxiety

For more information on anxiety including links to informative websites check out our website ~ www.wellness-connections.org

May is Mental Health Awareness Month



Since 1949 Americans have been observing Mental Health Awareness Month, which lands on the calendar in May.

This year, the theme is Mind Your Health, which serves as a timely reminder that the well being of both your mind and body are equally as important.

When did you last spend some quality time with a loved one or good friend? Just a friendly chat over a cup of coffee can make the world of difference to someone's mental health.

According to Mental Health America, social support can help combat stress, depression, anxiety and other health problems.

Of course, not everyone has a wide circle of friends they can instantly turn to in such times of need, so here's a few tips to help you get connected.

- ◆ Make a short list of friends and family members who are supportive and positive.
- ◆ Make a commitment to yourself to call, email or get together with them on a sched-

ule that's reasonable for you. Try and reach out to make at least one connection a day.

- ◆ Share what's on your mind honestly and openly. Keep it constructive and be direct about what you need – a sympathetic ear, help solving a problem, a fresh perspective, new ideas or just a good laugh.
- ◆ When you talk, also listen. Showing sincere interest in another person's life builds relationships.
- ◆ Make social plans and create opportunities to strengthen your relationships with fun things you both enjoy.

And don't forget, the peers and members of Wellness Connections are here to help. We have a wide range of activities for you to enjoy, and where you will make long lasting friendships and relationships.

Just a friendly chat over a cup of coffee can make the world of difference to someone's mental health.

Wellness Connection's Re-Entry Mission

The mission of Wellness Connection's Re-Entry Team is to reach out and establish relationships with individuals who are being re-integrated into society from a place of incarceration. We endeavor to assist these individuals by providing serviced that will empower the individuals as they transition back into society, to include but not be limited to connecting them with the proper agencies which can offer the needed assistance. Wellness Connections has partnered with mental health agencies, the Cochise County Re-Entry Coalition, local busi-

nesses, faith based organizations and other local businesses and organizations that provide educational assistance. The objective is to provide assistance in every area of the individuals lives, as we make full use of SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness which include; Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual. The goal is to successfully help individuals become productive and contributing members of society.

Currently we are working with individuals from Perryville Prison

who have been or will soon be released, assisting them with the removal of barriers they may have which will keep them from re-entering society and becoming a productive member of their community.



Derrick, part of the Re-Entry staff giving away plants at Business at Twilight

Where's the Calendars?



Adele, Greg (Douglas Mobile) & Nancy (Mobile Staff) at Cochise Stronghold

In every issue of Winds of Wellness we have included the calendar of events for each of our locations.

However, we want to include more news and stories about the amazing achievements of our members, as well as other articles of interest related to mental health and wellbeing.

Every month our members receive their own copy of the

upcoming events and programs, which is also available for download on our new look website www.wellness-connections.org

So, from this month we will no longer include the complete calendar in this newsletter.

If you need to get hold of a copy, and don't have access to the Internet, just call us and we'll get one to you.

Calendar Highlights

In May, our mobile team will continue taking their outreach to Douglas and Benson.

You can find our friendly team at the Douglas Ocotillo Village between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. every Tuesday.

Sessions and programs will include **one-on-one peer**

support, as well as our new **Life Skills 101** group.

Social get-togethers are an important part of improving mental health, which is why we've arranged a **lunch and movie outing** to Sierra Vista on May 21, and a **picnic at Turkey Creek** on

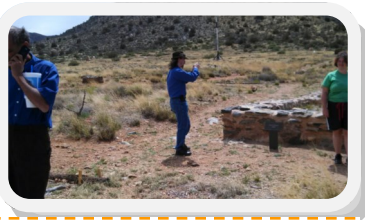
Members working on Growing Well (SV)



May 27.

Each Wednesday we'll be at the Douglas Visitors' Center, where you can learn how to improve your **communication skills**, as well as how to **set new goals** and achieve them.

Those same programs will run at Benson when we stop at the Community Center every Thursday. And be sure to sign up for what



Paul, Don and Lois (Safford) at Fort Bowie

promises to be a fun outing and **BBQ at Cochise Stronghold**.

Over in Safford, the month is packed with activities and classes designed to help

our members to be inspired, to flourish and to lead happier lives.

Learn vital business and workplace skills during our **Appliance Connections** program, join our session on building your **self-**

esteem or participate in a **crafts** class.

The road to recovery is never easy, so attend

the **Understanding Addiction** program, to help your path to success run a little smoother.

In Sierra Vista there will be two **VA support groups** – the women's group every Friday between 10 a.m. and noon, and the VA group every Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Come and check out the wonderful progress being made in our Growing Well program by joining the **Garden Club** every Monday from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. You will be amazed at what can be achieved by our green-fingered members in the lot behind our Sierra Vista building on Fry Blvd.

Other programs throughout the month will include lessons on how to be **smart with your money, computer skills** and a chance to learn **basic Spanish**, not forgetting one of our favorite parts of the week – **success stories**.

Linda (Benson Mobile) enjoying a ride at the Pima County Fair.



Director's Corner ~ Spring's Exciting



Some of the delicious food prepared by Comfort Café

Our budding garden and culinary efforts in Sierra Vista have taken root; our members and staff in Safford have developed a new job skills program, "Appliance Connections," which will become our agency's first peer-run business; and, the

development of our new center-based program in Douglas is well underway. Our ReEntry program is off the ground, serving men and women coming out of incarceration. In Safford and Sierra Vista, Wellness Connections is a partner in rolling out the region's first "Stand Down"s, focused on bringing needed support and resources to U.S. Military Veterans. These are just a few of the high-

lights! We've also reached a new milestone with now over 40 talented employees, supporting our growth and all of these efforts.

In addition, Wellness Connections was recently awarded a technical assistance and training grant for Peer-Run Organizations on "Trauma-Informed Peer Support and Trauma-Informed Organizational Change." Trauma Informed Care (TIC) best practices and protocols are driving a "revolutionary



News from Douglas Wellness Connections

Douglas Wellness Connections, a new site located at 661 G. Avenue, has grown from the mobile program established in 2004. Staff and members have been meeting twice a week in the Douglas Visitor Center or Ocotillo Village. The Mobile program has been successful in reaching members in the community and providing services in skill building. Working together they engage our members in local activities and offer groups in mental health awareness and recreation. The Douglas Wellness Connections will build on this foundation and offer these and other programs five days a week.

The on-site Douglas Wellness Connections will provide the eight dimensions of wellness. Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual Health informational and interactive programs will be offered. Our Peer Program will provide support in a system of

giving and receiving help. Our foundation is developed on the principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement. We promote empowerment toward recovery.

Our staff, Marisa Sanchez, Peer Support Specialist, Manny Cazares, Driver, McKayla Brekhus, Program Coordinator are Douglas residents and are committed to sharing their experiences and creating an environment of healing and hope. Our new building will offer a gym and fitness room. We look forward to the completion of our kitchen and the opportunity to provide breakfast and lunch to our members. Nutritional guidance and food preparation for healthy living will be offered in collaboration with the University of Arizona and the Sierra Vista Office of the Cooperative Extension Agency.

On May 16th, we will attend the Douglas Days Festival with the Mobile Team. Douglas Days fea-

tures Past, Present and Future events in the history of the City. Scheduled activities include games, a walking tour of Church Square and Historic Homes, ethnic food tasting and entertainment. Douglas's sister cities, Agua Prieta, Sonora and Nacozari, Sonora will participate with dance groups and marching bands.

We will celebrate with a Grand Opening when our renovations are complete and look forward to seeing you all there.

"Our staff ... are Douglas residents and are committed to sharing their experiences and creating an environment of healing and hope."



Kari cooking burgers and dogs at the BBQ at Cochise Stronghold

Director's Corner Continued

shift across a broad range of service systems providing mental health and substance treatment services, housing and homeless services, child welfare, criminal justice and education." We are thrilled to be one of only five organizations across the country to be awarded this opportunity, through SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care.

While many working in behavioral health may have attended a TIC basic overview course, this is a much more in-depth learning opportunity specifically focused on the application of TIC principles in peer

support work, and looking at ways trauma-informed practices can be implemented across all areas of an



organization. Between **Garden Preparation**

now and the end of the grant period (Sept. 2014), our members and staff will be engaged with our TIC core team in the process of program and agency self-assessment, looking at mission & vision, program environments, services, staff support, policies and practices. Our peer members will be instrumental in the process of identifying opportunities for improvement, and establishing measurable outcomes to be incorporated in our agency's strategic plan. We will continue to provide updates regarding this important effort.

Mobile Program On the Go

Wellness Connection's Mobile Program is on the go, as usual. Program staff is working closely with the new staff of Douglas Wellness Connections in order to ensure a smooth, seamless transition for Douglas area members.

We've been enjoying activities together including a barbeque at Cochise Stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains and a fun art project where members such as Adele (Right) made beautiful, original picture frames.

Kari and her team, Kim, Nancy and Kirby, are excited to see the Douglas Wellness Connection's site become a reality.

The goal of the mobile team is to eventually have site based centers staffed by Wellness Connection's highly trained peer support and recovery support specialists in most of the areas they do and will provide services in. Once the mo-



bile staff is no longer transitioning in Douglas it will leave 2 days each week for the program to provide

services in other communities. We look forward to serving other communities.

Some possible locations include; Nogales, Willcox and Sonoita/Patagonia.

Members of the Benson program continues to enjoy great groups including; Thoughts & Feelings, an emotions management group; a group on goals and successes; groups that focus on different cultures, individual peer support and fun events that encourage socialization such as going to the Pima County Fair (above).



Got Busy??? Safford Does!



As spring blooms here in Safford, we are blooming at the Wellness Connections site as well. We had some fun outings this past month, exploring Fort Bowie in Bowie Arizona which was a key outpost in the territory from 1868 to 1894. Along with Sierra Vista, Douglas and the Mobile Program we journeyed to Tucson to support H.O.P.E. at their grand reopening. Members really enjoyed the trip to Douglas, where they got to tour the Wellness Connections site and learn about some possible avenues for assistance coming to the area.

Our Appliance Connections Vocational training is moving right along! Tom Spinoso and our Members have been going full steam ahead, and learning about the different appliances we have to work on,

how to fix them, and where to find parts for those appliances. Learning how to properly clean the appliances and getting them ready to go onto the showroom floor after being repaired, has been a large part of our Vocational training as well. The Members have also been learning all aspects of running the business behind the scenes.

We have been working to create a community at our site made up of staff and members. The results of that are we have planned May's calendar with lots of member input. With the help of the Advisory Council meetings we will be starting a series of groups on Self-Esteem, Domestic Violence Awareness, Understanding Addiction, and Communication to name a few. We recently heard about community

action grants being offered in Graham County. We will pull together a team of members and staff, to present a proposal for a rolling garden effort, similar to Sierra Vista's program. They have been great pioneers and Safford would like to jump into the garden arena also.

A couple great success stories this month are; Safford's own Don St. Hilaire and Donna Wright! Don has worked diligently to save money while paying off his hearing aids and the older car he had been driving in order to get a new car. (Well, at least new to Don) Don got a great new to him car and couldn't be happier. Don feels he has been blessed the past few months and hopes other are blessed too. Donna has been enjoying learning the process of office management and inventory. Donna said "I think the information I'm learning is very important, and I look forward to seeing how everything runs when we get to open the doors." In the upcoming months, we will be working diligently, and preparing to open the doors of our Appliance Connections Peer run business. The Members are excited to see this get off the ground and to see all their hard work come to fruition.

"We have been working to create a community at our site made up of staff and members."

Come With Me...To the Garden Adjoua Purnell

Come with me to the garden at twilight
 And allow nature's aroma to soothe your very soul
 This fragrance makes one anxious to love...and to dream
 Come with me to the garden at twilight
 And see smiles that quench the stresses of the day
 Binding it so swiftly allowing joy to rush in place
 Come with me to the garden at twilight
 And hear words of encouragement

Wrapped tightly in love...touching the very heart
 Come with me to the garden at twilight
 And be among blessed ones dancing to divine rhythms
 Setting the example the community must hear....
 Great is the power of the human spirit
 Hmm...
 This must be why Heaven sings





Wellness Connections

1201 E. Fry Blvd. Suite #1
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
P.O. Box 2648
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636
Phone: 520-452-0080
Email: admin@wellness-connections.org

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Wellness Connection's Key Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEANNA BELLINGER

MANAGERS

REGINA AUTRY ~ Sierra Vista Program

KARI L. FERRELL ~ Mobile Program

STEVEN "STEVE" NATH ~ Safford Program

SCOTT REIN ~ Site Operations

RACHEL WATERBURY ~ Administrative Office

CANDACE WEINGART ~ Douglas Program

CLINICAL DIRECTOR

MARTHA NORDINE

NURSING CONSULTANT

LINDA VINCENT

CONSUMER RUN BUSINESS/JOB DEVELOPER

TOM SPINOSA

TRAINING COORDINATOR/PEER NAVIGATOR

ALBERT REGAIN

Wellness Connections Board Members

Joe De Francesco, Chair
Ruanda Dolak, Secretary
Lynette Land, Treasurer

Carol Goupil
Erik Heyer

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 has provided behavioral health and addiction recovery services based on a peer-led model since February 2002. Wellness Connections maintains a qualified staff of Recovery Support Specialist, Peer Support Specialist and Behavior Health Technicians.

The expected outcome for all Wellness Connections' program members is a significantly improved quality of life. Funding is provided through contracts with Cenpatico, 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.

*Wellness Connections is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization. Your gifts and donations are tax-deductible!
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