

Winds of Wellness

A Monthly Publication of Wellness Connections (Formerly SEACRS) • (520) 452-0080
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Mobile Staff helps Bisbee Member Acquire New Shoes and a New Bicycle

**“Only when life is difficult, are we challenged to become our greatest selves.”
 - Jonathan Lockwood Huie**



Thanks to his membership at Wellness Connections, Craig is hoping to soon land a job and start leading a more independent lifestyle.

A member for the past four to five months, the 25-year-old hit some obstacles last year when he stopped taking his medication.

“I was going to Job Corps at the time, but things just started going down hill,” he said.

Time spent with the Mobile Services team in Bisbee, where he lives, has since allowed Craig to become more active.

“I also think I’m more driven now and more talkative,” he adds.

With the help of Peer Support Specialist Javier Garcia, Craig worked on his own healthy lifestyle mission statement. As a result he was approved to receive a new pair of walking shoes and a bicycle with funds that come from a United Way & Freeport McMoran grants.

“I had to write down a schedule of things I would do every day, fitness wise,” Craig recalls. “They also wanted to know what I would do if I got a bike and how it would benefit me.”

The bike will give Craig a lot more freedom, allowing him to get exercise as well as providing transportation.

His dream job would be to work in the music or computer industries, but for now he hopes to secure a position with the local grocery store.

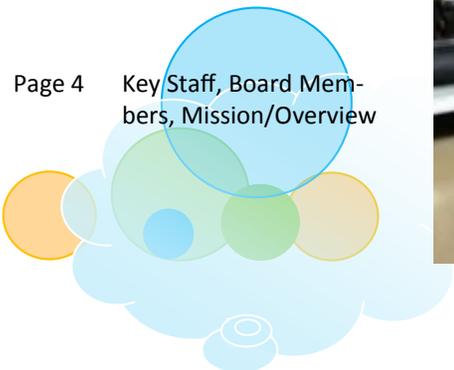
He is thankful not only for the United Way grant, but also for the help afforded to him by Wellness Connections.

“I like that they are getting me help with employment – more than I would be able to do on my own,” he said.



Craig with his New Bicycle & Shoes Thanks to United Way & Freeport McMoran Grants

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Staff Spotlight: Javier Garcia



Mobile Staff Member,
Javier Garcia

In the short time since his release from prison, Javier Garcia has proved to be a model citizen.

And he credits Wellness Connections for helping him turn his life around.

When his three year incarceration ended last November, Javier never imagined he would be working as a Peer Support Specialist just a couple of months later.

"It's been great," he said. "I met with Outreach worker, Annick Price, who got me connected to Wellness Connections and it's been a blessing ever since. They provided me with clothes and peer support and then put me through the peer support specialist training.

"And now I work with an incredible boss and incredible co-

workers."

The 39-year-old still can't quite believe how his life has changed in the last few months.

"I think what I've liked so much about Wellness Connections is that they believed in me and they gave me a second chance," said Javier, who is part of the Mobile Services team.

When asked about the favorite part of his job, Javier does not hesitate to say, "the members."

"To see someone like Craig and how he has bettered himself, and that I am able to help in some way, is a great feeling," he said. "This has allowed me to completely turn my life around and has given me a much better outlook."

Safford's Appliance Connections Blossoms



Amanda, Peer Support Specialist, Safford Wellness Connections

The launch of Safford Wellness Connections' first consumer-run business, Appliances Connections, was under development for several months and has recently begun to explode with success.

The idea behind the project was to provide skills training to members who in turn repair donated appliances which are then sold to the public. Proceeds from the sales are reinvested in the program.

The business is now in the position of trying to keep up with customer demand.

"We are at the point where we have a few appliances to sell, but a lot more to fix," said Amanda Thomas, Peer

Support Specialist overseeing the program. Blessed with a natural ability to fix things, Amanda jumped at the chance to oversee Appliance Connections, even though she was previously unfamiliar with Wellness Connections.

"I've come to love it," she enthuses. "My favorite part is being with the members and just working with them to fix the appliances."

Such is the popularity of the program, it has now increased from two to four days a week.

Member Alisha is a regular attendee of the Appliance Connections sessions, but restricts herself to cleaning duty. "If they had me try and fix something it wouldn't

work," jokes the 34-year-old. Alisha has just returned to Wellness Connections after a previous stint with the non-profit. "I just started back and I'm doing a lot better than I was before," she said. "I'm not into all the bad stuff I used to do." She also finds coming to the center a big stress reliever, she added.

Lance also likes helping out with Appliance Connections, but gardening is his real pleasure. "I love to garden and I've got some plants growing right now," he said. "Hopefully we can use them to cook with." A member since 2006, Lance enjoys the socialization of attending Wellness Connections. "I just needed to get out of the house and socialize with people my own age," he said.

Get informed.	Get screened.	Get help.	MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2015  Mental Health America B4Stage4
			

May is National Mental Health Month and Mental Health America is encouraging those who believe they or a loved one has an issue to seek help as early as possible.

The campaign this year is called B4Stage4, referring to the four stages of mental health as follows:

Stage 1 – Mild symptoms and warning signs.

At Stage 1 a person begins to show symptoms of a mental health condition, but is still able to function at home, work or school – although perhaps not as easily as before they started to show symptoms. Often there is a sense that something is “not right.”

Stage 2 – Symptoms increase in frequency and severity and interfere with life activities and roles

At Stage 2 it usually becomes obvious that something is wrong. A person’s symptoms may become stronger and last longer or new symptoms may start appearing on top of existing ones, creating something of a snowball effect. Performance at work or school will become more difficult, and a person may have trouble keeping up with family duties, social obligations or personal responsibilities.

Stage 3 – Symptoms worsen with relapsing and recurring episodes accompanied by serious disruption in life activities and roles.

At Stage 3 symptoms have continued to increase in severity, and many symptoms are often taking place at the same time. A person may feel as though they are losing control of their life and the ability to fill their roles at home, work or school.

Stage 4 – Symptoms are persistent and severe and have jeopardized one’s life.

By Stage 4 the combination of extreme, prolonged and persistent symptoms and impairment often results in development of other health conditions and has the potential to turn into a crisis event like unemployment, hospitalization, homelessness or even incarceration. In the worst cases, untreated mental illnesses can lead to loss of life an average 25 years early.

For more information, and to receive a free, confidential screening, visit www.mhascreening.org. You can use your results to start a conversation with your primary care provider to plan a course of action for addressing your mental health.

Fun in Photos



Alisha working on a refrigerator at Appliance Connections in Safford



Steve feeding a horse on Ft. Huachuca



Douglas Member Marisela and staff Linda Sterling baking pies for the program

Lance from Safford working in the garden





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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 Peer Support Specialists 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 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.

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