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Winds of Wellness

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Cenpatico Helps Support Our Entrepreneurs

“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” ~ William Arthur Ward

Less than a year ago Sam was living in a field behind Wal-Mart.

Standing on a corner of the Sierra Vista store’s busy parking lot, he would hold up a cardboard sign asking for financial aid.

In those moments of need and desperation, he never imagined he would be starting his own business some six months later.

But thanks to the help of Wellness Connections, not only is Sam living in



The creative flow was interrupted, however, by Sam’s homelessness and did not begin again until he found himself referred to Wellness Connections.

With renewed access to a computer he was able to pursue his hobby, which caught the attention of employment and veterans program coordinator Mike Oswald.

“Sam makes this amazing art out of something that you just wouldn’t expect,” Oswald said. “Cenpatico had this grant money they wanted to reinvest back into the communities they serve. We had been working with Sam on ideas on what he could do with his art.”

Sam creates geometrical pictures from photographs he manipulates through a computer software program

his own apartment, he is about to enter the world of entrepreneurialism at the age of 61.

Sam is receiving a business start-up grant from Cenpatico, which manages behavioral healthcare services for vulnerable and underserved populations across eight Arizona counties.

As a member of Wellness Connections, Sam was eligible to receive funds to turn his passion for photographic art into a money making venture.

“I was homeless for a year,” said Sam, who is diagnosed with bipolar disorder. “I didn’t really like being homeless but it was an experience I learned from. Now I want to be an artist. Being a part of Wellness Connections has given me a lot of hope and faith.”

Two years ago Sam was given a camera as a Christmas gift. At the time, he was studying the work of Swiss psychiatrist Carl

Jung and his theories related to mandalas, works of geometric or circular art that are said to represent the universe and popular in Indian and Tibetan culture.

“I was looking to make sense of the spiritual experience I was having and Jung had talked about patients making mandalas as a way toward wholeness,” Sam said. “So I grabbed the camera, went outside and took some pictures. I then put them into this software program and found I was able to create my own mandalas with the photos. I got really excited about it and ended up doing that a lot.”

By manipulating his photographs on a computer, Sam started producing pieces of original art and eventually won a third place prize in a competition organized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Michele Bogan, a provider business coach with Cenpatico, worked with Oswald to choose members they thought would benefit from a business start-up grant.

“We work with all agencies that have members who are interested in or passionate about something. We brainstorm and talk about how they can turn that into a successful enterprise,” she said.

Sam said he plans to use the money to set up a booth to sell his art at local events.

“I’m ultimately grateful to Wellness Connections. They’ve just been fantastic for me,” said Sam, who has also completed training to become a recovery support specialist.



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Cenpatico Helps Support Our Entrepreneurs Pt. 2



When a hobby becomes a business it is a big step for anyone to take.

But as the first Sierra Vista recipient of a Cenpatico business start-up grant, Carol is leading the way for anyone with mental health issues who believes they do not have a brighter future.

All it takes, as she discovered, is for someone to have faith in you.

A member of Wellness Connections for several years, Carol has utilized the organization's programs to stay connected to other people.

"I don't isolate," she said. "If I didn't come here I would just stay at home and do nothing. The other people here know where you are coming from."

For the last nine years Carol has dabbled in making costume jewelry and her pieces have garnered many compliments.

What started with a simple do-it-yourself kit soon turned into an obsession and is now about to become a full-blown business.

"Mike came to me and told me about the business grant. But I don't have much confidence and so he said he would help me out," she said. "Mike has a lot more faith in me than I have in myself."

With Mike's encouragement, as well as her past experience running a business with her ex-husband, Carol agreed to move forward with a grant application.

"It's really scary, but it's also exciting," she said of receiving the first monies to be distributed in Sierra Vista.

Added Mike, "Carol has years of experience making jewelry and she's become really good at it. She was an easy choice when it came to deciding who should receive the first grant."

Carol's business will be called Carol's Creations and she will use a Facebook page under that name (no apostrophe) to market her wares.

"I'll be working from home but I hope to have a farmers' market booth and to sell at all the events coming up," she said.

But she has no ambition to become the next Tiffany & Co.

"I don't want to be rich, I just want to make a little extra money," she said. "I don't really like that much attention."

Carol is the first person in Sierra Vista to receive a new business start-up grant from Cenpatico

Thanks in part to Mike Oswalt, a veterans and employment coordinator, Carol hopes to start selling her jewelry on a regular basis



Douglas Chef Leticia Silvas and Douglas program member Angelica at the Mexican Consulate Health Fair in Douglas



Nogales and Benson Mobile Programs at CPSA's Mental Health Art Show

Fun in Photos



Benson Mobile group learning how to make fajitas during Sean's Cooking Group at SV Wellness Connections



SV Wellness Connection's Staff & Members in the new group room



Cochise County Reentry Coalition Conference



For further
information on the
CCRC visit
www.ccreentry.com

One of the biggest challenges ex-offenders face is being fully prepared for the workforce.

Derrick Seawood, a Reentry Specialist at Wellness Connections in Sierra Vista, said he would rather find a former inmate employment that can be sustained, rather than finding someone a job just for the sake of it.

"It's hard to suggest to someone that's just been released that they are not really ready," he told the audience at the first Cochise County Reentry Coalition (CCRC) conference at Cochise College.

"A lot of times it's about the ability to sustain...It's about taking personal responsibility."

Derrick, one of a number of speakers, who aimed to bring together agencies and organizations interested in reintegrating newly released prisoners.

The conference was organized by CCRC founder Kathy Boston, who saw this as an opportunity to educate and inform the community.

"We hope this event will strengthen relationships and encourage collaboration," she said.

Providing inspiration were several former inmates who have gone on to lead successful lives.

Among them was Mike Cecil, who started his company four and a half years ago. He now hopes to help others who leave prison but are not sure where to turn.

After serving prison time following an aggravated DUI arrest, the 35-year-old decided to turn his life around.

With the help of a \$1,000 loan from a friend Mike was able to get his business, Big Bird's Carpet Cleaning, off the ground.

He told the audience of about 80 how he has a successful business, a beautiful wife and lives in a high-end neighborhood. And he never doubted he would get there.

"I knew I would be successful," he said, adding that finding faith while in prison played a large part in the belief

that he would prosper. "I saw it before I even got out. Having a vision is so important."

He plans to use his experiences to help others find business success and hopes to start teaching entrepreneurial classes, focused on starting up with little money.

"If I can keep just one dad at home with his kid, then I'll have been successful," he said.

Also speaking was Teresa Hopper, a local business woman who actively supports the hiring of ex-offenders.

"We will hire felons if possible," said the managing director of Military Bros. Moving. "I see the drive more in these guys because this is their second chance."

"We have one young man we hired through Wellness Connections who has been with us for three or four months and his drive is incredible. I see him as one of those people who will give their all."

Employment Tips - Dealing with Stress

Do you get easily stressed at work? Follow these tips to help take some of the anxiety out of your working day.

Create a balanced schedule. Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

Don't over-commit yourself. Avoid scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. All too often, we underestimate how long things will take. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

Try to leave earlier in the morning.

Even 10-15 minutes can make the difference between frantically rushing to your desk and having time to ease into your day. Don't add to your stress levels by running late.

Plan regular breaks. Make sure to take short breaks throughout the day to take a walk or sit back and clear your mind. Also try to get away from your desk or workstation for lunch. Stepping away from work to briefly relax and recharge will help you be more, not less, productive.

Prioritize tasks. Make a list of tasks you have to do, and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.

Break projects into small steps. If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.

Delegate responsibility. You don't have to do it all yourself. If other people can take care of the task, why not let them? Let go of the desire to control or oversee every little step. You'll be letting go of unnecessary stress in the process.

Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to contribute differently to a task, revise a deadline, or change their behavior at work, be willing to do the same. Sometimes, if you can both bend a little, you'll be able to find a happy middle ground that reduces the stress levels for everyone.



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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 Specialists, 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.

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