



May  
2016

# Winds of Wellness

A Monthly Publication of Wellness Connections Phone (520) 452-0080 • Fax (520) 452-0090

[www.wellness-connections.org](http://www.wellness-connections.org)

## Safford Wellness Connections is On the Move

**“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”**  
~ Alan Watts

**A group from Safford Wellness Connections admires their new center’s back yard which will be used for gardening, exercise and more**



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After an 18-month search the Wellness Connections center in Safford has found a new home.

The move means both staff and members will have more room, resulting in improved programs and services.

Effective June 1st, the center will be located at 1025 1st Avenue. The one acre property features two homes which will be converted into program/office space to support a variety of program offerings.

The property also includes a large yard with pecan trees,

providing shade for outdoor activities.

There is room for an outdoor patio area, a garden, and plans are being looked at for a basketball court.

Program members were an integral part of the search and selection process of the new location. Members are making plans on how the new facility will be designed an decorated.

When asked, nearly every member commented on the possibilities created by the large

back yard. Suggestions included, “gardening, having meals outside, and more outdoor activities.”

Safford Wellness Connection’s member Randy said he is excited about “privacy for groups and individuals (peer support).”

Program Manager Steve Nath explained, “Everyone is excited about the move.”



# Member Spotlight: Chris

Chris, known as a "great addition to the team" has fun while taking his role seriously



Chris, a member of Safford Wellness Connections for about a year, took part in the 2016 New Year Kick off which included an opportunity for members to be videoed while talking about their experiences with Wellness Connections.

"I thought doing the video would be a good thing, because I wanted to talk about Amanda," Chris said, referring to Amanda Thomas, who runs the Appliance Connections program. "We are very serious about what we do, but she also makes it fun."

Chris loves the social aspect of

being a member and believes he has become a better person as a result. Or, as he puts it, "It's made me more bearable."

"I've got quite a few friends outside of Wellness Connections, and I think they have seen a big difference," he said.

Chris, who is known for his smile and enthusiasm, has become a member of staff, and is responsible for helping to keep the center clean.

"My personal goal is to still be a custodian, but in the future I'd like to be a Peer Support Specialist," he said.



Sierra Vista Wellness Connections staff and members showing off the arch they made for the 5th Annual NAMI March for Mental Health

About a dozen staff members attend Cenpatico's 2016 Peer & Family Support Symposium



Sierra Vista Wellness Connections Staff: Sean, Annick, Fred, Anthony, Bobby Joe, Petra, Jody. Also Alma from MIKID at the PRAISE Ministry Banquet raising funds and awareness for the Halfway House Program for men. This faith based, non-profit organization assists men with community supports as they are transitioning back into the community.

Mike (staff), Anna, Marybeth (staff) & Ashly working in the SVWC kitchen



Our Executive Director, Deanna Bellinger, was honorary co-chair with Dr. Rottweiler, President of Cochise College, at NAMI's 5th Annual March for Mental Health



## Fun in Photos





# Staff Spotlight: Lisa - Safford Wellness Connections

After her first visit to the center in Safford, Lisa, found herself signing up for volunteer duties. Twelve months later and she is now a Peer Support Specialist.

“My case manager had told me about Wellness Connections,” said Lisa, who was hesitant about joining this new program. “It made me get out of the house and helped me not feel depressed or suicidal. Just being here, and being around other people with the same symptoms, made me feel better.”

After her first day of being made to feel so welcome, she asked if she could volunteer. Less than six months later she was interviewing for a staff position.

As a Peer Support Specialist, she likes to keep herself and the members busy, since boredom and down times have the potential to lead to moments of depression for her.

“I’m constantly doing something,” she explained. “I have to do something to keep myself occupied, and that’s how it is for a lot of the members too.”

Lisa is now getting ready to branch out into community outreach.

“I’ll be going out and seeing where we can volunteer, such as helping the elderly or cleaning yards for those in need,” she said.

When she looks back at the past 12 months and the path she has travelled, Lisa is amazed at her progress.



“It feels good,” she said. “I realized I really can do this, and I can help. I’ve also made some really good friends. This is just an amazing program.”

## Health Corner

May is Mental Health Month and events across the country will help to highlight what it’s like living with a mental health issue.

Here, we offer some tips from MentalHealthAmerica.net on dealing with anxiety.

- ☛ Call someone you trust. Let them know your anxiety has gotten the best of you and that you need their support. That may mean asking them to stay on the line with you until you’ve worked through your symptoms, or coming over to keep you company and help put your mind at ease
- ☛ Do something physical. Take a brisk walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks.
- ☛ Distract yourself. Try an adult coloring book, knit, crochet, or draw. Repetitive activities can have a calming effect similar to meditation.
- ☛ Write it down. Getting thoughts out of your head and onto paper can be helpful. This could be making a to-do list to organize your thoughts if your mind is racing and it’s hard to focus.
- ☛ Focus on things you can control and take action. Pick out your clothes for the week, or plan your meals for the next couple of days. Taking care of small things empowers you to take charge when it comes to larger tasks.

### Wellness Connections to be Awarded Funding to Support Program Enhancements in Douglas:

Wellness Connections is being awarded a Legacy Foundation Capacity Building Grant of \$89,000 for the renovation of our Douglas center. The grant will fund the expansion of the Douglas program to support a variety of health promotion activities aimed at improving health outcomes for behavioral health participants, as well as more opportunities for community integration. The project also includes establishing a peer-run health bar business which will feature healthy snacks, smoothies and health drinks. It will also provide a venue for job training and employment opportunities. Proceeds will be reinvested into the program. The project is a collaboration of the City of Douglas, Cochise County Health Department, University of Arizona (UofA) Camp Wellness, and The UofA Cooperative Extension Nutrition Sciences Dept.

In addition, Wellness Connections is receiving a \$3000 grant from the Community Food Bank of Southern AZ to support the replacement of the commercial freezer needed for the Douglas center’s commercial kitchen. We are proud to be receiving support from these two important funding entities, and greatly appreciate all they do to promote health initiatives in our local communities. ~ Deanna Bellinger, Wellness Connection’s ED



### MAY MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Amelia G	Savanha I	Laurel S	Hermina C
Cameron W	Christine D	David S	Timothy J
Portia L	Kaylena F	Gloria T	Teresa M
Leigh Q	Rosamber R	Hilda Ulloa D	Anthony P
Michael M	Joan B	Alejandro C	Delbert B
Marc Anton L	Carole B	ESunnie Zubia T	Judith S
Roberto M	Wendie D	Jeannette L	



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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](mailto: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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