



# 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)

## What's In a Recipe?

**“Once you choose HOPE, anything’s possible.”  
~ Christopher Reeve**



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It’s hard to believe when you meet her, but Kat Pence-Tucker used to weigh 100 pounds more than she does now.

After changing her lifestyle and shedding the unwanted baggage, Kat uses her experiences to help the members of Wellness Connections.

Every week she runs a recipe group at the Sierra Vista center, where members learn about healthy alternatives to various meals.

“I love cooking and that’s probably why I began this group,” Kat explained. “When I was losing weight I looked at how I could make the things I enjoy eating healthier. I was always looking for ways to lighten up a recipe.”

Now Kat, a Peer Support Specialist, encourages the members to bring their favorite recipes to the class and she looks at what can be swapped out to make them healthier.

“Today we talked about may-



**Carol (member) and Kat (staff)**

onnaise and someone suggested using Greek yogurt instead,” she said.

Group member Carol admits she is not a healthy eater, but feels she is starting to find inspiration by attending the recipe discussions.

“I’ve always thought that you only live once, so eat what you want,” she said. “But I guess if you eat what you want you won’t really live.”

“I’m definitely learning something in the classes...this group has really started me thinking about what I eat.”

She also mentioned she hopes by making changes to her diet and eating habits, she will begin to see improvements in

her health and the way she feels, to the point she may not need to take as many medications. Carol has been a member of Wellness Connections for about five years and during that time she has discovered the many benefits of attending the Sierra Vista center.

“If I didn’t come here I would just be isolating myself. When you don’t work, what else have you got to do?” she said. “You have to believe in something. I love it here and I feel bad if I miss anything.”



# Member Spotlight: Linda from Benson



Thanks to Wellness Connections, Linda Stoddard has discovered her inner artist.

It is the thing she loves to do the most when she attends the programs provided by the Mobile Services Team in Benson.

“I really like to do art. I think I’m an art person. I like to draw on everything,” she said. “When I write in my journal I always write a little story and draw something to go with it.”

Linda, who lives in Benson, has been a member of Wellness Connections since around 2008 – long before it was even called Wellness Connections.

She learned of the program while working as a custodian at SEABHS and has found it to be a great help for her high level anxiety.

“I like all the people that I’ve come to know,” she said. “I love the social programs and the fact that it’s hard work sometimes. They make you think about things, and that’s a good thing.”

When she attends the groups sessions twice a week, Linda feels much calmer and more in control of her anxiety.

“I think that’s because this is a very positive group,” she said. “And the staff are always willing to listen to what you have to say, or to listen to the problems you might be having that day. They always make time for us.”

## Fun in Photos



Douglas Members Adele, Rachel, Marta & Braulio visiting Ramsey Canyon



A few Nogales Members on a Bowling Outing



Michelle, Benson Mobile Member, shows off her art project, a calendar.



New Mobile Member, Della, at Color Me Mine



Douglas walking the dogs for the Bisbee Animal Shelter

# The Benefits of Friendship

Good friends add special meaning to life. They help you share the good times and overcome the difficult ones. Among other things, good friends can:

**Improve your mood.** Happiness can be infectious. Spending time with happy and positive friends can elevate your mood and boost your outlook.

**Help you to reach your goals.** Whether you're trying to get fit, give up smoking, or otherwise improve your life, encouragement from a friend can really boost your willpower and increase your chances of success.

**Reduce your stress and depression.** Having an active social life

can bolster your immune system and help reduce isolation, a major contributing factor for depression.



**Support you through tough times.** Even if it's just having someone to share your problems with, friends can help you cope with serious illness, the loss of a

job or loved one, the breakup of a relationship, or any other challenges in life.

**Support you as you age.** As you age, retirement, illness, and the death of loved ones can often leave you isolated. Having people you can turn to for company and support can provide purpose as you age and be a buffer against depression, disability, hardship, and loss. Staying socially engaged as you age keeps you feeling positive and boosts your happiness.

**Boost your sense of self-worth.** Friendship is a two-way street, and the "give" side of the give-and-take contributes to your own sense of value and self-worth. Being there for your friends makes you feel needed and adds purpose to your life.

Attention

*Are you interested in helping with the newsletter? Do you have something you would like to submit? If so, contact Kari at 520-559-7192*

Attention

## Staff Spotlight: Kat Pence-Tucker

Kat showing off a part of Wellness Connection's garden as it yields beautiful bounty.

Kat Pence-Tucker could be described as a very inspiring person, making her ideally suited to work as a Peer Support Specialist.

After losing her husband tragically in 2005, Kat turned to alcohol, drugs and food for comfort.

She hit rock bottom after landing a prison sentence, where she also learned her weight had ballooned to 240 pounds.

After finishing her incarceration, Kat decided she had two choices:

"I could either get my life together or I could go back to a prison cell," she recalls.

She decided to get a grip on her health and, after much hard work and determination, she shed an impressive 100 pounds.

"I've also been sober for five and half years," she adds.

Her father was involved with the prison re-entry program and asked Kat to share her story last year with others who have been through similar situations.

That eventually led to a job offer by Wellness Connections.

"I love everything about working here," she enthuses. "There is such an amazing support system here, from staff and members



alike. We are all here to help each other.

Kat, recently re-married and the proud mother of two; a 16 year old son and 20 year old daughter feels, "The best place for me to be is at work. It definitely helps me."



## Wellness Connections

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Articles submitted by Amanda Baillie,  
Freelance Writer

## Wellness Connection's Board Members

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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 Connection's Key Staff

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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 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.*

**Newsletter Editor: Kari L. Ferrell**

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