



AFTERwords

A Newsletter from SIERRA TUCSON®

Fall/Winter 2009

An Earth-Based Spirituality

By Sonnee D. Weedn, Ph.D.

The great psychologist, Carl Jung, said that most people would have little success healing from alcoholism (and other compulsive/addictive behaviors) without a “spiritual awakening.” But, what is a spiritual awakening? How can we know if we have had one? Does it mean we have to change our religious beliefs or our basic values?

These are questions I am frequently asked by patients in my psychology practice when I inquire about their own spiritual practices, feelings of connection to the Divine, and beliefs in this regard.

My patients want to know if this means they “have to” go to church every Sunday, or if this means I am a promoter of some “weird” dogma. The answer to both of these questions is “no.” But, we do explore what a spiritual approach to life might mean for them and how to go about finding a path that supports the recovery process, be it from addictions of all kinds, or other mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, or trauma. It is an exploration of the invisible world of mystery, where nighttime dreams, prayer, metaphor, ritual, and ceremony speak to the deep unconscious to promote healing and wholeness.

Sometimes people already have identified a religious institution or a particular spiritual practice that suits them, and they simply need to re-invest and re-connect to that path to re-awaken to their spiritual life and to be able to rely on it for comfort and direction.

But sometimes my patients have been injured by or disappointed in formal religious institutions and cannot utilize that particular form of spiritual seeking for themselves. In these situations, I often suggest that the person investigate the spiritual understandings and practices of indigenous people, who find their spiritual awakening in an intimate relationship between themselves and the natural world. I introduce them to a central aspect of Native American spirituality and healing, the Medicine Wheel. I explain that it is not a religion, but a blueprint for life, that when followed brings clear direction, deep learning, and increasing peace.

The basic concept of the Medicine Wheel is that all of life takes place in a circle and that all humans travel the wheel of life and stand on every spoke of the wheel over and over again during the course of a lifetime. Because there are many different groups (tribes) of Native Americans, the particular teachings may vary from group to group, but the essence is the same. It is a practical tool to support healing.

What follows is a general overview of the Medicine Wheel and its four cardinal directions as it was taught to me by several teachers:

Albert Sombrero, Navajo Spirit Guide and also the person who performed the dedication ceremony for Sierra Tucson’s labyrinth; Lench Archuleta, Yaqui Medicine Man; and Angeles Arrien, cultural anthropologist; among others.

According to the teachings, when we are born, we enter through the “golden door” of the East direction of the wheel, carrying our life’s dream and purpose with us. In other words, we carry our spiritual intention for coming to Earth with us when we are born. Then come the challenges to fulfilling our purpose. Growth and development are a necessary part of life, so we need challenges to stretch us.

We quickly move to the South direction of the wheel where we learn the lessons of early childhood. We learn the social skills, morals, and values of our community, and we learn

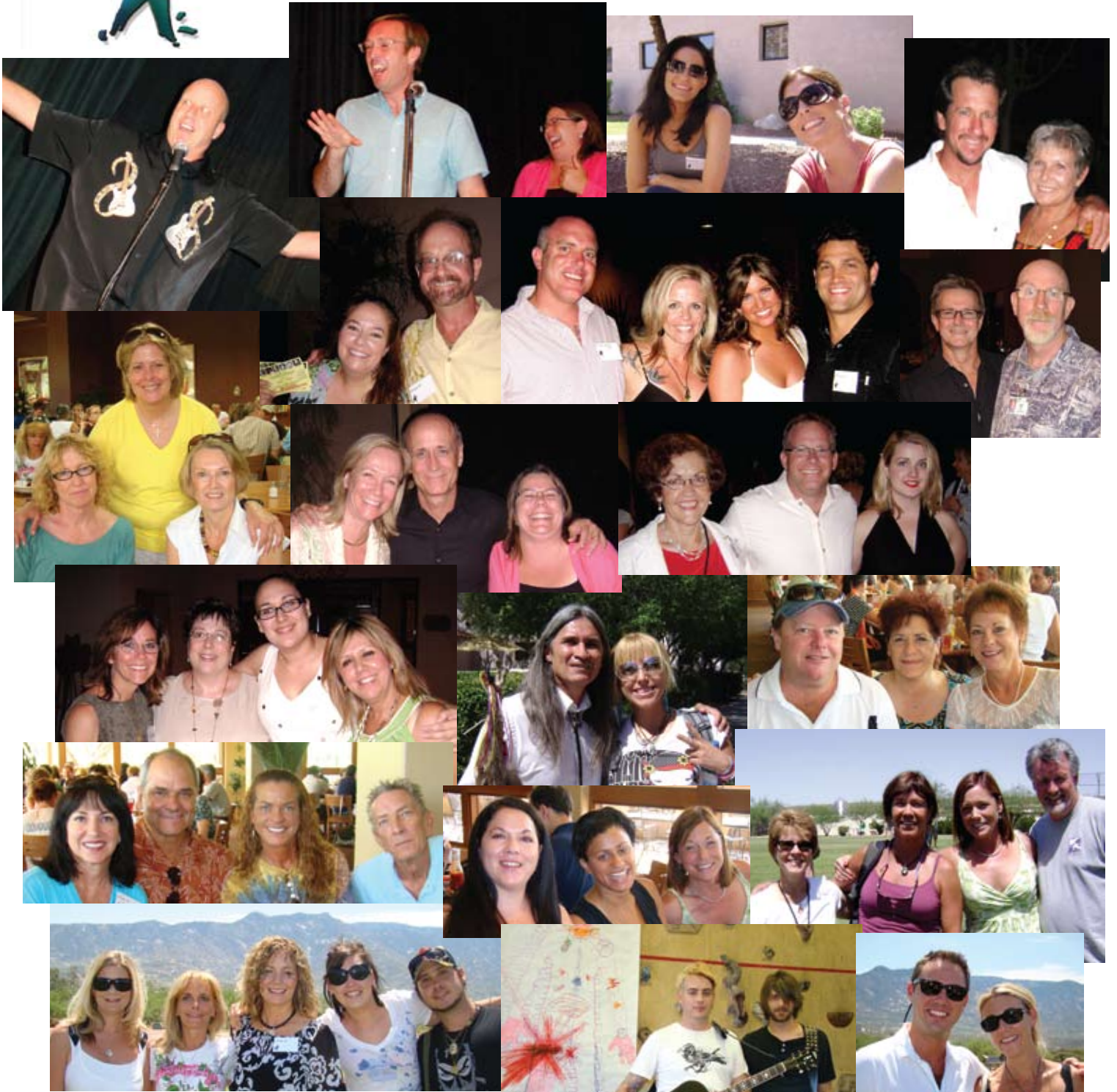
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S.T.A.R. 22 highlights



Save the Date for S.T.A.R. 23!
July 30 - August 1, 2010



Spotlight on Alumni - Marlene A.

I am a Sierra Tucson alumna and celebrated my anniversary on September 12, 2009. This is my third year and, by far, my best year yet in sobriety.

I left Sierra Tucson in June of 2006 with the beginnings of a solid foundation. It was there that I learned so much about myself and my past, thus beginning this long journey of self-examination, healing, and recovery.

Today my life has never been more full. Everything good in my life is a direct result of Alcoholics Anonymous. Staying sober and becoming the person God intended me to be has been my greatest achievement. I walk a path that continues to narrow the longer I'm sober, but I do it with other women in recovery who are seeking the same inner peace. I have dignity and grace today. I am a woman of integrity and self-worth. I am honest and accountable.

I have a purpose today, and that is to be of maximum service to God and women in recovery.

I know that today I am at my best when I am of service to others.

Everything I searched for, every high I chased, that thing I wanted to fill the giant hole inside me with I FOUND in Alcoholics

Anonymous. And sponsoring other women, giving away this precious gift, has been the greatest joy I've ever experienced. It is a high that is unlike any other and it is long lasting, leaves no hangover, and there is no come down. I am in the center of AA, and my life is devoted to this way of life and helping others.

I am breaking the cycle of alcoholism in my family, one day at a time. Today my children have a mother in recovery. They will see recovery in their family instead of just disease and pain. If they struggle with this disease, they will know where to go. The seed has been planted, and I will be an example of how one can recover, with the help of God.

I can never repay the debt I owe to Alcoholics Anonymous or to Sierra Tucson.

I can only continue to show up, clean house, trust God, and help another alcoholic.

I thank you for my sobriety. :-)

~ Marlene A. ★



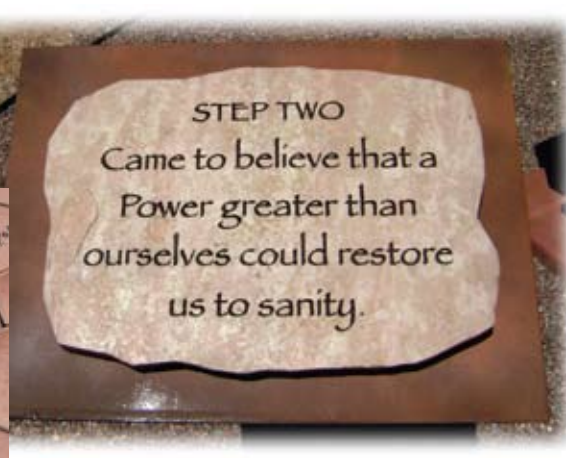
Giving Back - The Twelve-Step Path

Sierra Tucson's "Twelve-Step Path" is a place for our community to use for contemplation and meditation. The path is being lined with personalized pave stones and 12 benches honoring and remembering the special people who have already begun the recovery journey. Alumni and family members may purchase a pave stone or bench with your own personal engraved message. Many alumni have chosen to purchase a pave stone or bench as a way to celebrate their length of recovery. What a gift of hope for the patients and family members who walk the path.

The cost of each pave stone is \$150, and one Twelve-Step bench may be purchased for \$2,500. Many pave stones are available, but only four benches are remaining for purchase. To have your pave stone or bench installed prior to S.T.A.R. 23, you will need to order by May 1, 2010.



For information and ordering instructions, please visit www.SierraTucsonBricks.com or call 800-537-5579. ★



Progressions Program

Sierra Tucson's Progressions Program is now available to alumni of Sierra Tucson and other individuals who are seeking to further their recovery skills! This program was developed from feedback received from staff, professionals in the field, and alumni to more fully prepare individuals for the challenges of living in recovery.

In this intensive 2- to 4-week program, specialized treatment planning gives greater exposure to people, places, and situations that may trigger reactions and cravings. Balanced with expert therapeutic guidance, participants gain advanced recovery tools and are equipped for the many challenges to be faced in their journey.

The program's "experiential workshop" format teaches individuals to evaluate choices, become aware of self-sabotaging behaviors, and take responsibility for behavioral changes. This is an exceptional opportunity to focus on personal relapse prevention needs and work on deeper issues to enjoy a full and meaningful life.

Components of the Progressions Program may include:

- Develop specific, personal recovery plans
- Intensify participation in a Twelve-Step fellowship
- Expand intuitive skills to help individuals make healthy choices
- Individual Life Coaching
- Address vocational/career change issues
- Opportunities for outings (12-Step meetings, dinners, hike, etc.) within a safe setting to practice and process coping skills
- Specialized therapies such as EMDR, Pain Management services, and Integrative Therapies
- Two-Day Couple's Workshop & Parenting Skills Group

Those who need help with an active addiction or disorder typically require a minimum of 30 days for effective treatment. Each person is assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Progressions Program will meet his/her needs.

"Just over one year after spending 30 days at Sierra Tucson, I was presented with some situations in my personal life that could have jeopardized all of my hard work in becoming sober. I was NOT going to allow that to happen! I called Sierra Tucson and after speaking with an Intake counselor, decided to enter the Progressions Program. That was the best decision I could have ever made. The staff members are incredible, and they provided me with additional "tools" to use that allowed me to deal with and overcome my frustrations. The Progressions Program was the 'the tune up' I needed." ~Rick W.

Announcing EMDR Intensives™

The Progressions Program at Sierra Tucson is offering a new option: **EMDR Intensives™**.

Designed for individuals who are currently in therapy and want to "fast forward" the healing process, EMDR Intensives™ offer a unique opportunity to work intensely on the specific issues or unresolved traumas that prevent living at full potential, including:

- unresolved grief and loss
- unresolved adult and/or childhood trauma
- relapse prevention
- parental loss of child
- seniors' issues
- women's issues
- smoking cessation
- interpersonal relationships
- performance enhancement

The two-week EMDR Intensives™ offer participants individual therapy in four to five two-hour EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) sessions per week with group therapy support and containment as well as daily debriefing sessions with an EMDR therapist.

Participants receive a full complement of assessment services, as applicable, including full psychological assessment/testing, genograms, and consultations for grief, spirituality, and trauma.

Schedules can be tailored to the specific focus of the EMDR Intensives™, with additional therapeutic services available, including:

- Somatic Experiencing®
- Acupuncture
- Progressions Equine-Assisted Therapy
- Progressions Challenge Course
- Progressions Experiential Groups
- Day hike in the nearby Santa Catalina Mountains

Additional Integrative Therapies available:

- Somato-Emotional Release Massage
- Swedish Massage
- Reiki
- Zero Balancing
- Yoga
- Qigong
- Meditation

For more information about the Progressions Program or EMDR Intensives™, please call Sierra Tucson's Intake Department at 800-842-4487.



An Earth-Based Spirituality (Continued from page 1)

to play safely and to be joyful. In adulthood, we heal our childhood wounds, whatever they may be, in the South direction, so that we can be more whole.

Next, we move to the West direction of the wheel, where we learn the lessons of the adolescent or youth. We learn to be introspective and to listen to the still, small voice of intuition within. We learn to set and achieve goals and to delay gratification. We learn to manage our anger. As time passes, it is the place where we heal our addictions when we identify them. This is often the greatest work of our lives, as it may shift every relationship and assumption we have.

When we move to the North, we learn to be competent adults, always gaining in knowledge and wisdom, and being life-long learners. We increase our level of personal integrity and continue to elevate our moral development. We practice integrity, gratitude, and mercy in all our affairs.

Finally, we return to the East, where we seek our destiny and nurture our connection to the Divine. We identify the ways in which we are meant to serve and practice that service. We become Spiritual Warriors, praying for ourselves to do the will of the Creator, and for the well-being of the community. This is the direction of the elders and requires a demonstration of real maturity.

It's important to understand that the directions are archetypal and metaphorical, as well as practical. We can be any age, working on any aspect of our holistic healing, and we will travel the wheel over and over again. The circle of teachings and learnings is endless. In the Medicine Wheel tradition, we are forever evolving and bringing new truths and understandings to the walking of our life's path. Every lesson is equal and to be honored.

There is an understanding that no lesson is better or worse than any other, and all talents and abilities are equally valuable. It is a pathway to truth, peace, and harmony, where every member of a community is valued, as well as all aspects of nature.

In Native American spiritual tradition, every act is meant to be an act of service. The goal of prayer is always to find wisdom and guidance for a challenging problem facing the individual, family, or

community, be it human, animal, plant, or spirit. Prayers are never for individual gain or accomplishment, but for the health and welfare of the entire community, human, ecological, or spiritual. This tradition holds as a core value of harmony and balance and stands in stark contrast to more mainstream values of materialism, individualism, and an exploitive economic system.

The circle of the Medicine Wheel is never ending, life without end. Native Americans say that during our human life experience, we walk the Good Red Road and learn lessons of physical life, or of being human. This road runs South and North in the circle of the wheel. After the graduation experience of death, one enters the Blue Road of spirit. This is the world of the grandmothers and grandfathers. In spirit, we will continue to learn by counseling those remaining on the Good Red Road. The Blue Road runs East to West. The Medicine Wheel is life, afterlife, rebirth, and the honoring of each step along the way.

Native Americans speak of the desire to be Spiritual Warriors, bringing forward the good, the true, and the beautiful in our nature for the well-being of all the Earth's creatures.

The study of the Medicine Wheel is a lovely addendum to any other spiritual or religious practice, and I have taught its concepts in Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Little Rock, AR, the Sausalito Presbyterian Church, Sausalito, CA, and to various groups in retreat and workshop format and individuals. It also stands alone as a principal path of divine connection.

And so, I hope this overview has inspired you, the reader, to choose a path with heart and meaning for yourself. Be comforted and supported by your faith, whatever it may be, and count yourself as a Spiritual Warrior, each day bringing forward the good, the true, and beautiful in your nature for the well-being of us all.

Sonnee D. Weedn, Ph.D., is a clinical and forensic psychologist practicing in Novato, CA, since 1980. She will soon be opening a second office in Newport Beach, CA, where she grew up and where her sons and grandchildren live. She can be reached through her website at www.DrSonneeWeedn.com or at 415-883-7758.



*Women's Retreat ~ January 30, 2010
"Awakening from the Dream of Winter"
at the Institute for Noetic Sciences, Petaluma, CA*

Sponsored by Sierra Tucson

*For more information or registration,
call Dr. Sonnee Weedn at 415-883-7758.*

www.DrSonneeWeedn.com

Alumni Support Groups



Scottsdale, AZ

When: 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month
 Time: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
 Place: Valley Presbyterian Church
 6947 E. McDonald Drive
 Paradise Valley, AZ 85253
 Contact: Robby C. 602-799-8732
 (robert@orchidsound.com)

Los Angeles, CA

This meeting is open to anyone who has gone through treatment!

When: 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month
 Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
 Place: Sha'arei Am: The Santa Monica Synagogue
 1448 18th Street
 Santa Monica, CA 90404
 Contacts: Bryan F. 310-201-0005
 Portia T. 213-840-8371

Northern CA

When: 3rd Saturday each month
 (Please inquire about location and time.)
 Contact: Tiffany S. 415-342-8285
 (t.spilove@gmail.com)

Washington, DC

When: 1st Sunday each month
 Time: 6:30 p.m.
 (Please inquire about location.)
 Contact: Jenny K. 301-793-3777
 (crewster@aol.com)

Atlanta, GA

When: 3rd Monday each month
 Time: 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 (Optional dinner at 6:30 p.m.)
 Place: La Madeleine Restaurant
 1165 Perimeter Center West, Ste. 330
 (Center West & Perimeter Center)
 Atlanta, GA 30346
 Contact: Richard R. 404-518-1220
 (rule62@rossboy.com)

Chicago, IL

When: 3rd Monday each month
 (Please inquire about location and time.)
 Contact: Jeff B. 312-656-7431
 (jeffbelmonti@yahoo.com)

Indianapolis, IN

When: 1st Wednesday each month
 Time: 7:00 p.m.
 Place: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
 526 E. 52nd Street (& Central Ave.)
 Indianapolis, IN 46205
 Contact: Ellen R. 317-709-6135
 (roberts0647@sbcglobal.net)

Kansas City, KS

When: 3rd Wednesday each month
 Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Place: Life Dynamics Building
 (on Shawnee Mission Medical Center Campus)
 9120 West 75th Street, Room 8
 Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
 Contact: Lana E. 816-561-4346
 (qponnie@sbcglobal.net)

Detroit, MI

When: 1st Thursday each month
 Time: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
 Place: Farmington Hills Community Library, Conference Room B
 32737 West 12 Mile Road
 Farmington Hills, MI 48334
 Contact: Gail P. 248-891-3304

Charlotte, NC

When: 2nd Monday each month
 Time: 6:30 p.m. (Optional dinner after mtg.)
 Place: St. John's Episcopal Church
 1623 Carmel Road
 Charlotte, NC 28226
 Contact: Scott G. 704-560-2130
 (scottgnc@yahoo.com)

New York, NY

When: 1st Thursday, 3rd Monday each month
 Time: 7:00 p.m.
 Place: Caron Foundation
 New York City Recovery Building
 244 East 58th Street
 New York, NY 10022
 Contacts: Frank R. 516-857-7106
 (first@optonline.net)
 Doug C. 718-793-7910
 (dou gla8282@aol.com)

Syracuse, NY

When: 1st Monday each month
 Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Place: Manlius Pebble Hill School
 Amons Building (Library)
 5300 Jamesville Road
 Dewitt, NY 13214
 Contact: David C. 315-278-5293
 (david.cortese@hotmail.com)

Portland, OR

When: Each Sunday
 Time: 12:30 p.m.
 Place: Whole Foods (Café)
 3535 NE 15th Avenue
 Portland, OR 97202
 Contacts: Chris S. 505-699-4032
 (sfpsobes@aol.com)
 Darcy M. 917-797-6058
 (darcym20@aol.com)

Philadelphia, PA

When: 2nd Thursday each month
 Time: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
 Place: Vito's Pizza and Sandwiches
 (Private room in back)
 580 Shoemaker Road
 King of Prussia, PA 19406
 Contact: Debbie R. 610-945-4837
 (debra.beth@yahoo.com)
 Bob R. 610-513-6090
 (brbball@aol.com)


Dallas, TX

When: 1st Wednesday each month
 Time: 7:00 p.m.
 Place: St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Room 131
 5801 West Plano Parkway
 Plano, TX 75093
 Contact: Donna C. 817-368-6424
 (donna.coach@yahoo.com)

Houston, TX

When: 1st Monday each month
 Time: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
 Place: The Woodlands United Methodist Church
 2200 Lake Woodlands Dr., Rm. 213
 The Woodlands, TX 77380
 Contact: Mandi R. 713-824-3052
 (chocoholicmandi@comcast.net)

London, ENGLAND

When: 1st Tuesday each month 
 Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Place: 17 Wimpole Street
 London W1G 8GB
 Facilitated by Max Cohen, BACP, UKRC, FDAP.
 Contact: Max Cohen 07973 167245
 (max.cohen@btinternet.com)

COMING SOON:

Boston, MA
 Southeast FL
 For information, contact Patty Reyna at
 888-535-8214 or PReyna@SierraTucson.com



From the Editor

By Tim McLeod, Senior Alumni Coordinator

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Hello, my Friend,

Patty and I hope you are continuing to enjoy the miracles that come by working a program of recovery.

S.T.A.R. 22 was AMAZING! Thank you to all the alumni who attended from as far as London and Australia. We have already started planning S.T.A.R. 23, and we hope you will plan to attend next year.

Sierra Tucson continues to strive to become more green in its support of the environment by using less paper. If you are receiving the “Beyond the Miracle” Alumni eNews and would like to be removed from our postal mailings, please contact me. If you still need to subscribe, visit www.SierraTucson.com and click on “Sign up - Alumni eNews.” You’ll receive biweekly event updates, encouragement, and a link to the “Afterwords” Newsletter!

Patty and I recently had the opportunity to sit in on the Progressions Program at Sierra Tucson. Many times we receive phone calls from alumni looking to reconnect with the serenity that Sierra Tucson can provide, and Progressions has created an avenue for that. Here is what Patty had to share about her experience:

Each day I began my Progressions Program with the group for morning meditation, where we set our intentions for the day. From there we moved into honoring those intentions through Equine-Assisted Therapy, Psychodrama, Challenge Course activities, and hikes into the beautiful Catalina Mountains. We all worked and processed and then worked some more. As a group, we helped each other to grow individually and to dig deeper into those areas that have held each of us back from keeping those intentions that we set in our lives. And each day was closed with gifts and blessings.

My time in Sierra Tucson’s Progressions Program came when I did not think I could find the time to get there. I had too much going on, too many things that needed finishing. I was reminded that no matter how long I have been in recovery, I celebrated 11 years of sobriety while in Progressions; there will always be more work to be done. All I have to do is be willing to show up, and miracles will continue to happen daily.

What I witnessed amazed me. My group had a mixture of current Sierra Tucson patients who had extended their stay at Sierra Tucson to attend Progressions, an individual who had been through another treatment program who wanted a two-week tune up, and an alum who wanted help getting his feet back on the path of recovery.

What I witnessed is a program that will meet you right where you are, support you in the direction you are looking to go, and coach you on how to get there.


I share this with you because I care about you. If your path of recovery is starting to feel like a mountain road filled with pot holes and curves, I can only hope you will reach out and ask for help. Progressions is not for everyone, it is only for those who want to strive towards straightening their paths in the direction that will ultimately bring them a life of happy, joyous, and free. Progressions therapist Josie Collins said that she is more than willing, as Patty and I are, to answer any questions you have to see if this program is right for you.

Many of you have become involved in creating the Twelve-Step Path by purchasing a pave stone or bench. I can’t thank you enough. It is such a wonderful thing to look out across the field of miracles and see someone walking the path or sitting on one of the benches taking in the view of the mountains. I am looking for four people who want to purchase the remaining four benches to complete the path. It could also be multiple people going in on one bench. Each engraved bench has up to six lines of text (50 characters per line), so there is plenty of room for multiple people to share. Please let me know if you have any interest.

Patty’s Alumni Contact Database continues to grow. If you are willing to be a contact for someone coming out of treatment – or to answer questions from someone who is thinking about attending Sierra Tucson, please contact Patty.

Patty and I hope we will be able to connect with you in the coming year at an Alumni Support Group meeting or one of the many workshops taking place.

Please set aside time in your busy day for self-care; you deserve it!

Huge blessings,

Tim McLeod ★

■ “Our mission is simple: encourage the struggling, celebrate the miracles, and always bring the love.” ■



University of Sierra Tucson
39580 S. Lago del Oro Parkway
Tucson, AZ 85739

Address Service Requested



Recipe by
Chef Kevin A. Luft

"Serve this with a tossed green salad and some dark crusty bread, and you'll have a nice seasonal meal."
~ Chef "K"



Butternut Squash Soup

- 3 Tblsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 white or yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 fresh sage leaves
- 2 cans plum tomatoes
- 2-3 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, halved, and diced
- 1 quart chicken stock
- 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. sea salt
- cracked black pepper (to taste)
- parmesan cheese, grated (for garnish)

Heat the olive oil in a soup pot on medium heat. Add the garlic, onion, and sage. Season with half the salt and cracked black pepper. Cook until soft and translucent. Turn heat to medium high. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring until they break down (7 to 10 minutes). Add the squash, the remaining salt, and cook, stirring the squash until tender (10 to 12 minutes). Add the chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Cook uncovered 20 to 30 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender. Reheat the soup on medium high. Garnish with grated parmesan cheese.

Yield 6 one-cup servings
1 Serving = 1 vegetable, 1 starch