



WINTER 2008 - 2009

S I E R R A T U C S O N  
P R O G R E S S

**“What’s the Significance of 25 Years?  
Sierra Tucson: A Pioneer in Effective Treatment”**

What can happen in 25 years?

- ◆ NASA ~ began in 1958. Within 25 years NASA achieved human space flight, man walking on the moon (1969), communications satellites, and cutting-edge aeronautics research, with the first manned space shuttle flight in 1981.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Personal computers ~ became available in 1975.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five years later there were 68.4 million PCs in use in the U.S.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Sierra Tucson ~ began in 1983 treating chemical dependency. Twenty-five years later, Sierra Tucson stands as an international premier center of choice among clinicians for the treatment of co-existing addictions, mental/behavioral disorders, and chronic pain.

Do you remember when you first heard of the following modalities being used in the treatment of mental/behavioral disorders?

- ◆ Equine-Assisted Therapy
- ◆ Acupuncture
- Yoga
- Alternative/Complementary/Integrative Therapies
- ◆ EMDR
- ◆ Somatic Experiencing®
- ◆ DBT Skills Training
- ◆ Holistic Medicine

Although these are now commonplace terms, Sierra Tucson has been a forerunner in establishing these effective therapies and approaches in treatment. The treatment center’s leadership has always been responsive in implementing innovative yet credible therapeutic techniques that prove to enhance the process of recovery.

***Established with Passion and Humility***

From its humble beginning in a former dude ranch (Brave Bull Ranch) in December 1983, Sierra Tucson has grown in size and clinical expertise to become a world-renowned dually licensed psychiatric hospital and treatment center. During the last 25 years, the passion, diligence, and proficiency of Sierra Tucson’s staff have advanced the treatment industry in many realms, moving the center into the forefront as a leader and example of “Compassionate Care, Clinical Excellence.”

William T. O’Donnell, Jr., co-founder who became involved nine days after Sierra Tucson’s doors opened, likes to joke that, “In the beginning, we had more horses than patients!” Bill took the risk of bringing his family from Chicago to Tucson to develop a unique treatment program, saying, “It became the crux of my own recovery

and passion.” When asked to look back over the last 25 years, Bill acknowledged, “I am most proud that Sierra Tucson is known for its excellence in treatment. Development of the Sierra Model® in the early years as a bio-psycho-social-spiritual treatment philosophy is the fundamental basis for our success, and acquiring dual licensure as a psychiatric hospital enabled us to add depth in treating the whole person.” Bill also gives immense credit to all the staff who have contributed, cared, given themselves and their knowledge, and walked their own walk. “I was blessed to be a part of it,” concluded Bill.

Gayle Richter came to Sierra Tucson in 1985, working as assistant to the Controller and then to Bill O’Donnell. Having served in several capacities over the last 23 years including Corporate Secretary, Intake Director, Director of Central Clinical Services, and Director of Risk Management, Gayle is currently the Senior Director of Operations and Intake. She remembers when staff were housed in trailers that were grouped in front of the casitas. “We started treating Chemical Dependency with a strong family focus,” says Gayle, “and dramatic changes came about as the Eating Disorders Center and Adolescent Center were built. Beginning with basic therapies to treat these conditions and codependency, the psychiatric licenses we later obtained allowed us to expand treatment for trauma and mood patients.” Only 1½ years sober when she joined Sierra Tucson, Gayle says it has been a “real part of my journey in sobriety.” Working with the Intake team, she feels a big responsibility to those reaching out for help. “I know personally how hard it can be and how much courage it takes to make that call. This work makes me grateful for my recovery.”

Bertha Kenny, another long-time Sierra Tucson staff member since 1990, has filled many roles for the corporate office, from Executive Assistant to the CFO, to Corporate Secretary, to her current position as Sierra Tucson’s Director of Human Resources and Regional

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Human Resources Manager for CRC Health Group. She reports, "Sierra Tucson currently employs approximately 300 personnel who range from support staff, kitchen staff, maintenance/housekeeping, etc. who provide excellent customer service and maintain this first-class facility, to professional-level staff such as medical doctors, nurses, and diverse types of skilled therapists who provide the highest quality of care and support for our patients." Bertha continues, "It is clear that our excellent staff's personal caring, training, and expertise are what make us who we are and have led to our numerous achievements over the past 25 years. I see and hear the success stories and letters of appreciation from our patients and referring professionals... I hear of our outstanding reputation among others in the industry... and after 18 years, I still feel that passion because all of us who work here believe very strongly in what we do."

### ***Distinctive Therapies for Exceptional Outcomes***

Sierra Tucson provides many layers of therapy, a very labor-intensive process. Therapy is directed from all angles to body, mind, and spirit, combining medical and psychiatric services with 12-Step philosophy and experiential and integrative therapies. Complete teams are dedicated to both Grief and EMDR, helping to integrate these therapies as core components of treatment. As the first treatment center in the U.S. to develop a Department of Integrative Therapies, Sierra Tucson has introduced Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Massage Therapy, Qigong, Reiki, Shiatsu, Somatic Experiencing®, Yoga, and Zero Balancing to advance the recovery process. Two Naturopathic physicians also consult with patients regarding nutraceutical and herbal remedies that may aid their healing process. "Sierra Tucson continues to set an example in the treatment field," says Shari Stillman-Corbitt, Psy.D., Clinical Director.

"Sierra Tucson's structure overlaps therapeutic interventions to achieve the depth that effectively treats dually diagnosed patients. While patients do receive individual therapeutic consultations, many key therapies are accomplished with the primary group. For example, as grief work is integrated into the primary process group, it becomes an experiential method of healing for all group members. The primary process group replicates family functioning and helps patients work through their limiting family-imposed roles at deeper levels."

The use of EMDR is now widespread, but Sierra Tucson became one of the first facilities to use the therapy in the mid-1990s. Dr. Corbitt advises, "We recognize the multiple layers of trauma that many patients carry and the benefits that EMDR offers to so many. In a typical week, approximately 80% of Sierra Tucson's patients have doctor's orders for EMDR." Maureen O'Connor-Strout, M.C., LPC, EMDR Coordinator and Certified EMDR Therapist, reports, "Patients use EMDR to resolve trauma or symptoms of PTSD; symptoms of depression and anxiety; grief and loss; simple phobias; and compulsivity, i.e., gambling, shoplifting, over-spending, sexual compulsivity, and eating disorders. EMDR staff are trained in a variety of protocols and techniques to prepare patients for EMDR and to meet the complexity of case presentation."

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills Training is now a primary component in the Eating Disorders Program, Mood and Anxiety Program, and Pain Management Program. DBT helps treatment stay grounded by teaching the following specific black and white skills:

- ◆ Mindfulness
- ◆ Distress Tolerance
- ◆ Interpersonal Effectiveness
- ◆ Emotional Regulation

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## ***Letter from the Marketing Director, Christi Cessna, M.S. Introducing Patricia L. Ryding, Psy.D., Executive Director***

Dear Friend,


As we embark upon the New Year, this is a time to reflect and focus on the many blessings we each have received.

Despite an unstable economy, Sierra Tucson continues to thrive, helping patients and families restore their lives and relationships. In 2008 alone we provided over \$7 million in partial scholarships to families in distress. How fulfilling it is to help someone in need of treatment so that they can rebuild their life!

Sierra Tucson is enthusiastic in welcoming our new Executive Director, Dr. Patricia Ryding; please see her introduction at the right. I know that Dr. Ryding is eager to lead Sierra Tucson into another amazing year, and we are fortunate to have her join our team.

We are so thankful for the vast contributions that professional clinicians like you have made toward Sierra Tucson's success. We wish you joy and prosperity in the new year—both professionally and personally.



All the best,  
  
Christi Cessna, M.S.  
Marketing Director

### **Patricia L. Ryding, Psy.D. Executive Director**

Dr. Patricia Ryding is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with extensive experience working with families, adolescents, severely and persistently mentally ill, dual disorders, chemical dependency, eating disorders, and trauma patients. Originally from Syracuse, New York, she obtained a B.A. in American History from Boston University, attended Goddard College for her M.A. in Counseling Psychology, and later earned her doctorate in Psychology from Carlos Albizu University in Miami. Dr. Ryding's experience includes inpatient psychiatric, outpatient, partial hospitalization, and intensive outpatient settings. She has worked for nonprofit and for-profit facilities as a Program Director, Administrative Director, and Executive Director. Dr. Ryding comments, "I am delighted to be at Sierra Tucson, as my passion is in providing the best quality treatment to patients... and Sierra Tucson is a place where skilled clinicians love to work!"



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“Teaching these basic DBT coping skills pulls together the depth work done in various aspects of treatment,” confirms Dr. Corbitt.

Sierra Tucson pioneered the use of Equine-Assisted Therapy as a regular part of the treatment process. In fact, since its inception Sierra Tucson has used horses as therapeutic tools. Initially an exploratory therapy, this has become a powerful modality used in the primary group process. Nancy Jarrell, M.A., LPC, EAP, Assistant Clinical Director who joined Sierra Tucson in 1996, adds, “Working with the horses gives incredible opportunities for the group to provide each other with useful feedback and help each other gain insight.”

One of Sierra Tucson’s distinguishing programs is the Pain Management Program. “Do you know what the most prevalent complaint is in any physician’s office in the U.S.?” asks James Flowers, Ph.D., Director of Sierra Tucson’s Pain Management Program. “Chronic pain,” he replies. “Many times we don’t know if pain resulted from organic or non-organic causes,” states Dr. Flowers, “but nonetheless, patients have pain complaints. The typical medical response is to send the patient for testing, prescribe medications, and then eventually strengthen the prescriptions... and because of unresolved pain syndromes, people often develop addictions.” Once again, Sierra Tucson is a pioneer in comprehensively treating the core problems of pain and teaching patients how to live without addiction. Sierra Tucson’s staff believe that we will continue to see truly miraculous results with our chronic pain patients. With such phenomenal outcomes, we anticipate that hospitals and universities will follow Sierra Tucson’s path to help pain patients re-engage in life.

At the very heart of treatment is Sierra Tucson’s Family Program, and every patient is strongly encouraged to invite family member participation. As Dr. Corbitt points out, “Patients have an opportunity to be with their family in a very different way than ever before—as an adult rather than a wounded child or adolescent. Often, the dynamic changes that occur in the Family Program solidify all the other work done in treatment.”

Alumni continue to feel support, compassion, and guidance from two very caring Alumni Coordinators at Sierra Tucson, Tim McLeod and Patty Reyna. Our growing Alumni Services are invaluable in helping former patients navigate the path of recovery.

Sierra Tucson’s Clinical Outreach Coordinators are placed strategically around the country to serve professionals in their region. These staff members, who are clinically trained and/or in long-term recovery, are available to talk with clinicians about their clients’ needs, assist with resources, and provide educational opportunities.

### **Future Developments in Treatment**

It is widely recognized that Sierra Tucson’s depth and breadth of programmatic resources, along with the quality and passion of its staff, generate exceptional success in psychotherapy and recovery.

Robert Johnson, D.O., Medical Director, has researched with our staff to see where the greatest transformational power lies for the future; the focus is directed to our neuroscience capability and four main initiatives for Sierra Tucson in 2009:

- 1) **Functional brain imaging** (SPECT scanning, which produces vivid, real-time pictures of brain physiology; a terrific motivational tool that can potentially enable more targeted pharmacotherapy)
- 2) **Pharmacogenetic testing** (helps anticipate how a patient will metabolize psychotropic medications, thereby enabling medical staff to make more personalized medication decisions, saving time and money and minimizing potential side effects)
- 3) **Biofeedback and Neurofeedback** (techniques to train the body and brain to improve health by reducing stress and anxiety-mediated symptoms)
- 4) **CNS Response** (by sending EEG data over the Internet and comparing it to CNS Response’s reference database, physicians receive a report listing probabilities of response to specific medication classes for that EEG pattern)

“Overall, we continue to make giant gains in our capacity to develop a truly personalized bio-psycho-social-spiritual treatment plan,” states Dr. Johnson. “When you combine neuroscience initiatives with psychodynamic, experiential, and integrative therapies specific to a patient’s coexisting disorders, plus nutritional and exercise plans and life coaching, you start to achieve quantum improvement in the treatment of chemical dependency, psychiatric disorders, and chronic pain. I am excited about Sierra Tucson’s depth of resources—its talent, humanity, creativity, its geographic beauty, and the staff’s passion for the work. The staff walk their talk and model effective, sustained recovery. It is a joy to be part of this team.”

Dr. Johnson also notes, “We are forging new relationships with academic medical centers that will contribute to the development of the field as a whole.” Sierra Tucson’s staff has always acknowledged the value of our relationships with clinicians in the field. “Receiving feedback from professionals has helped to co-create Sierra Tucson,” affirms Christi Cessna, M.S., Marketing Director, “and continues to give us inspiration on a regular basis.”

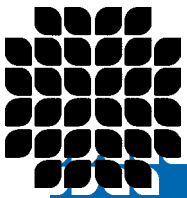
In addition to the distinctive therapies and exciting vision at Sierra Tucson, one of the most wonderful discoveries here is that the aesthetics of the hospital environment need not be compromised to provide the highest quality treatment for addictions, acute psychopathology, and pain syndromes. The peaceful setting—the attractive physical complex and the surrounding high desert and mountains—contribute to the life-changing treatment experience... to the beautiful restoration of body, mind, and spirit.

~By Kathy A. Steffens

<sup>1</sup> American Almanac, October 1998

<sup>2</sup> “Computers.” Collier’s Encyclopedia. Vol 7, 1992: 114, 129

<sup>3</sup> The Old Farmer’s Almanac



SIERRA TUCSON®  
39580 S. Lago del Oro Parkway  
Tucson, AZ 85739

800-842-4487

[www.SierraTucson.com](http://www.SierraTucson.com)

*“Compassionate Care, Clinical Excellence”*

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*Meet James S. Flowers, Ph.D.  
Director of Pain Management Program*

Dr. James S. Flowers joined Sierra Tucson as a pain specialist in November 2008. As a leading expert in the field of pain management, Dr. Flowers developed a multidisciplinary chronic pain program to control and reduce pain. Teaching patients to implement proper body mechanics and energy conservation techniques into daily life is part of a holistic approach that utilizes the body, mind, and spirit, resulting in patients' enjoyment of healthier, more productive lives.

Dr. Flowers earned his Ph.D. and his master's degree in Counseling from Sam Houston State University, in addition to a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Stephen F. Austin State University.

He previously founded HealthTrust, LLP, in Houston, Texas, where he served as clinical director and CEO. He has held the positions of clinical director and senior vice president of the Nobis Group, Pain Services, and clinical director at Center for Pain Recovery, working with Mark Barhorst, M.D. He is an adjunct professor at Sam Houston State University and University of Houston-Clear Lake. Dr. Flowers has been an active member of the Texas Association of Chronic Pain Management, the American Psychotherapy Association, the American Counseling Association, the Texas Counseling Association, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the American Academy of Pain Management, and the Texas Pain Society. Well recognized for his leadership in the pain management field, he was the 2007 recipient of the Jack Staggs Outstanding

Dissertation Award for most relevant research, studying chronic pain treatment theory for the Hispanic population. He is also a regular speaker at conferences and an accomplished author.

After referring and accompanying several patients to Sierra Tucson, Dr. Flowers held the treatment center in high regard. "I was extremely impressed with the facility, the Pain Management Program, and the direction of Sierra Tucson," he states. "I am enthusiastic about serving as Director of the Pain Management Program to strengthen the clinical effectiveness and outcomes, which are already exceptional." Noting the large percentage of people who live with chronic pain, Dr. Flowers wants to make the program accessible to a wider population.

Dr. Flowers was also pleased with the input he received about patients he had sent to Sierra Tucson. "It is so important that professional caretakers receive adequate feedback," says Dr. Flowers, "and I am committed to strengthening this practice at Sierra Tucson."



Moving from Houston (4th largest city in the U.S.) to Tucson, (32nd largest), Dr. Flowers is adjusting to changes. "Being a marathon runner, Tucson has a lot of hills, which will help my competitiveness," he comments. "Most of all, I welcome the relaxed and peaceful culture at Sierra Tucson and the opportunity to make such a difference."