

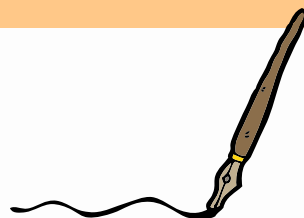


MAHALA'S HOPE

at Reilly's Ranch of Recovery

Fall 2018

A Word From The Director



During this time of year when we reflect on what we are grateful for there are so many moments it is hard to choose which to share. I wish each of you and your families a most wonderful Holiday Season.

It was a beautiful sunny day. The temperature was just right, aided by nice summer breezes.

Women were scurrying around getting ready for the event. Then one by one, the women who had once been residents began to arrive with their children. Families arrived to be spend the day with current residents. One at a time the tents began to go up, outside games were played, and all the tasty food arrived.

Women who had once been in treatment together began to reconnect and share their life updates. I watched as moms and their children played and children connected with other children as they ran and laughed together. One mother who is coming up on two years in recovery said to me while holding her little baby: "This child has totally changed my life."

These are just some of the precious memories I have from our first annual alumni camp out. The idea began when a group of women in the house joked about putting up tents up out back so they would not have to leave the safety of Mahala's Hope. That thought stayed with me and as we began to plan an alumni gathering, and a campout just made perfect sense. We had 49 people in attendance - laughter, good sharing and a reconnection to the land and energy of Mahala's Hope. Everyone was talking about making this an annual event and several agreed to be on the planning committee for next year.

These are the gifts I am blessed to receive each day as I come to Mahala's Hope. I'm blessed to experience so many heartfelt moments, that sometimes it feels as though my heart might just burst open with all the love and compassion I feel around me.

In deepest gratitude to all the women and families who enter our doors,
In deepest gratitude to all of the staff with your skills you so willingly share,
In deepest gratitude to all of the volunteers who put in hours each month,
In deepest gratitude to all the donors that make Mahala's Hope possible,

In Peace,
Sandy



Meet Our Staff

Kerri Bushweiler, Peer Specialist

I enjoy being part of the treatment team that assists our women in returning to being productive members of their community, utilizing resources, and enjoying this journey called life. It is my goal to be a role model of self-care and to show the women the effectiveness of using my recovery skills in my daily living. I have a beautiful 7-year-old daughter. Together Violet and I enjoy biking, reading, boating and going to the pool. My family, friends, and coworkers are a huge support in my daily living and with my sobriety.



"I chose the path of a certified peer specialist so other women could benefit from my lived experience."

Artist Corner

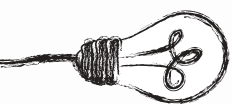


Patt Reiher, Art Instructor

These ceramic "Journey Jars" are a unique creation of each resident. The general structure is made from joining two pinch pots made from moist clay, and goes from looking like two shallow bowls to an egg shaped hollow form. Their shape can be manipulated further with texture, carvings, and added shapes. A lid is cut out. After firing, the jars are painted and

sometimes further decorated. Each resident's recovery has been a personal journey that is reflected in the symbols, words, textures and colors they have chosen to finish their jar. While most of the artists have begun with protests of certain failure, they are amazed and proud of their finished pieces. Opening up the doors to their creative energies, and witnessing their growth is a rewarding journey for me!





Volunteer Spotlight

Dennis Charapata, Volunteer Handyman

You have to thank Dani for having me volunteer for Mahala's Hope. I do many Fix-It jobs for family and friends and Dani thought I would be an okay fit. I had done work for Sandy before at Beacon house and I knew of the good work she was doing.

"To me the rewards for working at Mahalas' Hope are greater than the service I do. I enjoy the challenge of helping make the facilities run smoothly and help to keep the repair costs down."

I also enjoy working with all the wonderful staff of people at Mahalas' hope. You are all great!

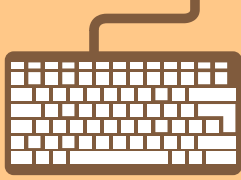
Stable Thoughts

A note from a past client:

Morning Star has made a huge difference in my recovery. When I first got here my confidences was at an all-time low. I could barely look people in the eyes and I felt horrible about myself.

Morning Star taught me that I have confidence within me and she showed me how to bring it out. By learning how to put a harness on and lead her, I learned that I am capable of grounding myself and tapping into my confidence because if I didn't she would not budge. If I wasn't feeling confident she would stand her ground until I was able to work myself up again. I am now able to listen to my intuition better. She showed me that I am persistent and patient. By working with her I am a stronger person. When she allowed me to put the harness on and lead her my self-esteem boomed. She made me feel confident and I am so thankful for my experience with her because she taught me how to reach down deep and drew out my self-confidence.





Guest Corner

Philip Chard, Psychotherapist

Philip Chard is a widely traveled speaker, a practicing psychotherapist, and an author of the award winning columns “Out Of My Mind” featured in “The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.” He is also the author of the books “The Healing Earth” and “Nature’s Ways.”

If you get the blues on occasion, as most of us do, or if mired in a dark pit of melancholia and despair, be aware of this ancient but oft-forgotten fact.

Nature is a powerful antidepressant.

Numerous studies show that interacting with the natural world effectively treats depression and cognitive disturbances (non-organic memory problems, "monkey mind," attention deficit disorder, etc.). What's more, it has far fewer potential side effects, as are common with antidepressant medications.

But there's a caveat. While going outside does elevate mood and mental acumen, one's state of mind while in nature determines the degree of benefit one accrues.

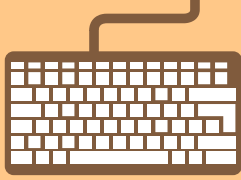
You see, we have to let the natural world in. To enjoy its emotional and cognitive perks, one must be fully present and immersed in the sensory experiences nature has to offer. That's not as common as it sounds.

While hiking the Ice Age Trail recently, I happened upon a fellow trekker who was interacting with his smartphone and had in ear buds. I'm not sure what this guy was absorbing, but it wasn't our surroundings.

Attempting to soak up the therapeutic benefits of the natural world without deeply connecting with it is like taking an antidepressant pill that passes through one's system without dissolving. Is being outside good for heart and mind? Yes, but only when your mind is there along with your body, rather than off mentally visiting the past or future.

As such, technology is not the only culprit here. While in nature, one can be physically present but mentally absent simply because one's thoughts are occupied with something "there and then" rather than "here and now."

The ticket is to turn down one's mental chatter while simultaneously turning up one's sensory acuity. Think less and sense more, focusing on sights, sounds, smells, sensations, etc.



Guest Corner Continued

This is where mindfulness proves essential. Clients I've suggested use nature for therapeutic benefit sometimes report struggling to turn off their thoughts while outdoors (or anywhere for that matter).

For them, practicing sensory immersion is helpful. In nature, this can be done in many different ways, including splashing water on one's face (or going for a swim), inhaling the scent of flowers or pine needles, watching waves or passing clouds or tall grasses in the wind, sifting sand through one's fingers, listening to birds, playing in the snow — the list is long.

The antidepressant and cognitive benefits of nature interaction occur even when one's immersion in the natural world isn't all that pleasant, such as slogging through a driving rain or enduring frigid wind chills. What's more, the impact increases when physical exertion is involved. Hiking, paddling, swimming and other vigorous pursuits, when done mindfully, boost the positive effects on melancholia while improving memory and concentration.

Naturalist John Muir said it best: "Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn."

**If you'd like to be a donor or volunteer, please
feel free to contact us.**



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