

# THE REN REVIEW

*April 2021*

Introducing the Recovery Empowerment Network's first ever member-written newspaper! We are so excited to share with you all the exciting news stories, upcoming events, outings, an abundance of positivity, and all the excitement that REN has to offer.



## UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS

Spring has sprung and REN is ready to celebrate. Come and join us this month for our Annual Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt at that beautiful Sahuaro Ranch Park. Members and staff will enjoy time in the park to find colored eggs

with prizes inside. The fun doesn't stop there. On Friday, April 16th, REN will have our first ever Sock Hop Spring Fling event where we will explore music, culture, food, art, and the overall vibe of the 50's. Come shake, rattle, & roll with us and check out some vintage cars, enjoy a 50's diner-inspired breakfast and lunch, win raffles, and enjoy a rockin', boppin', doo-wop dance party! DON'T FORGET TO DRESS IN YOUR 50'S OUTFITS. FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO STAFF FOR IDEAS! REN will also be hosting an LGBTQ+ Retreat for any members who identify, support, or would like to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community and have fun!

## March 29th-April 2nd - SPIRIT WEEK!

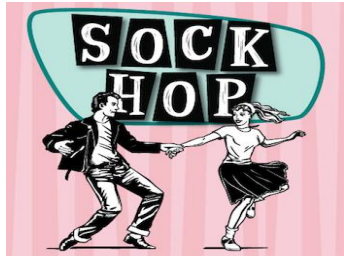
- **Monday 29th:** Pajama Day
- **Tuesday 30th:** March Madness - Sports Day
- **Wednesday 31st:** Western Wednesday (Dress like a cowboy/cowgirl)
- **Thursday 1st:** Dress like an April Fool - Silly Outfit
- **Friday 2nd:** REN Colors (Wear yellow & blue)

April 2nd, 2021 - Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt @ Sahuaro Ranch Park



**April 14th, 2021** -  
Member Meeting

**April 16th, 2021** -  
Sock Hop Spring Fling



**April 21st, 2021** - ALL  
STAFF - **REN CLOSED**

**April 23rd-25th** -  
LGBTQ+ Retreat



## **POSITIVE QUOTES**

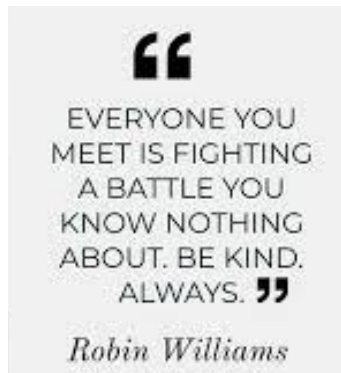
Uplift your spirit by checking out the positive quotes submitted by REN members and staff! These quotes are sure to keep you motivated and in good spirits here at REN & at home! Enjoy and be sure to share with friends.



*"Check yourself, before you wreck yourself."* - Ice Cube submitted by Chelsea, Peer Support Specialist



-Submitted by Jen, HERO Lead



-Submitted by Steven, Quality Administrative Assistant

## **QUESTION OF THE MONTH**

In this edition of *The REN Review*, we featured a member and her answer to this month's question.

In the future, remember to always fill out your check in sheets in groups. You never know when our next question will pop up & you can be featured, too!

**Question:** *Besides music, how do you cope with anxiety, depression, and stress?*



"Art! I learned that 'art is more than half of the heart'. For me, to express myself is how I cope."

- Tami R.

## **EVENTS & OUTINGS**

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

This month, REN explored Bearizona followed by an in-house REN sleepover. REN

also enjoyed an afternoon at Lynx Lake. One member wrote about the experience at Lynx Lake:

“Went with REN on an outing to Prescott and Lynx Lake. It was a lovely, cool day with the sun shining and a chill wind blowing. The dormant trees were quite striking as they stood boldly bearing the cold with no leaves to be seen except for the few small ones that refused to fall.

A brave woman, not in our group, dared to go for a swim in the lake. The lake is said to be contaminated by Copper runoff from the mines nearby. One REN member (Dawn P.) said, "She's gonna come out of the water with a tail." Funny comment !

Some of the members sat and enjoyed the environment. A couple went on a hike around the lake with staff, Anthony G., and some went over to an alcove to skip rocks!

As we drove up to Prescott, we saw Saguaro Cacti

standing proud along the hills of the towns and land between Phoenix and Prescott.

It was a lovely day! We had a treat of Hot Chocolate and Italian sandwich.”

- Dawn G.

Pictures from Bearizona & the 1st REN Sleepover



- Brian D. at Bearizona



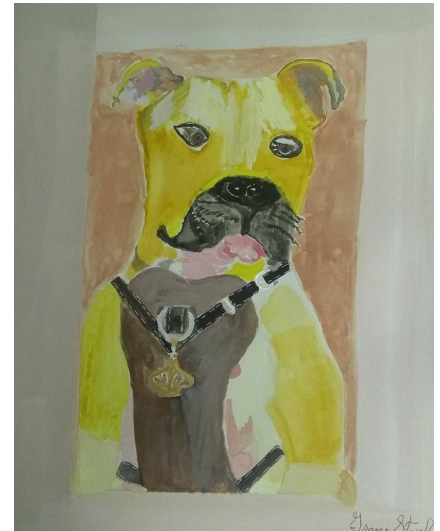
- Members having fun at the sleepover!

## **MEMBER CREATIVITY**

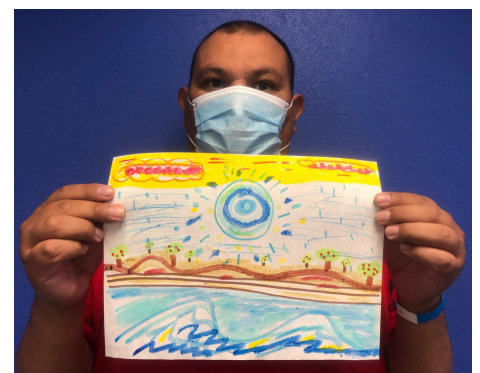
At REN, our members have a variety of talents and

abilities that we would like to highlight. This month, we will feature some member artwork, a poem, and a short story, all created by REN members.

### **Artwork:**



- Watercolor Painting by Stephen D.



- Art by Roberto R.

### **Poem:**

Love I Can't Have

Lost in lies just waiting to wake up but my eyes have been open for years! My body's breaking me and all I need is you. Can I wait any longer, will your door be open, will this pain ever fade? If love existed will you be there with me or will the pain leave me in pieces? If I ever figured this out will I find that golden key to fix my own heart? I've looked from afar for too long and I can't fill in these broken cracks alone. All I want is to change just to be closer but you keep pushing me further away. You've left me hidden and all I see is the dark side of the moon every day and watching you shine leaves me in ashes.

Crying drowned me every time and barely breathing under my own tears made me understand that if I focused my life on you, then I'd never make it to tomorrow! I realized I couldn't have you so, instead of fixing your heart I had to fix my own. Like a Bible, I wrote our love on a page and it never faded. My love story to me was just a faded memory but,

to others it was life changing.

Making it big still left me alone but to you it left you regretting the pain you gave to me. The old me would fall on my knees for you, cry until my eyes dried up, but now I put my heart back together. I would come back to you but, now my body has healed and I have to erase you from my life because now you're a love I can't have.

- Deion M.



### **Short Story:**

#### *Jack in the Box*

I walked home from the grocery store just after 11:00 AM. I was surprised to find a small box addressed to Jack Baxter on my front patio. I picked

it up and brought it inside my studio apartment. I had not ordered anything from Amazon recently, so the box was a big surprise to me.

The box was twelve inches square and made out of wood. There was a sticker that said "THIS SIDE UP". For a while, I wasn't able to open the box no matter how hard I tried.

I finally was able to pry open one corner of the box. I slowly pulled off the entire cover and I was shocked by what I saw. Inside the box was a replica of my small apartment. I looked in the bedroom and saw a miniature replica of me. He was alive. He was removing the lid from the small wooden box he was holding in his hands. I looked closer and saw another replica of me inside the smaller box.

I heard a loud noise and looked up to see what was happening. The roof of my apartment was lifted off. I saw myself looking down at me in surprise.



As I looked at the giant Jack above, I saw his roof pulled off and an even larger Jack was looking down. I counted forty replicas of me until I finally passed out. Unfortunately, the opening of the boxes, both below and above, went on for thirteen years.

- Monte M.



## **STORY OF** **HOPE**



Hello! My name is Angela Marie Sleeman and this is my Hope Recovery story. I am a 30 year old free-spirited woman who lives in Phoenix, Arizona. However, I did not always live here. I am originally from Chicago, Illinois where I was born and raised for most of my life until moving with my father when I was 16. As a baby, I had to undergo open-heart surgery to survive a ventricular septal defect. Thankfully I recovered from that, but as a child, I had other challenges. As I look back on my early years, I remember being very misunderstood and had a hard time making friends. At school, I endured bullying or made “friends” who didn’t really care about me. Kids would call me names and throw things at me, and I felt like everyone viewed me as being ‘different’. I was always a hyperactive, happy, super talkative kid that just wanted to make friends, but it seemed my quirky personality just had the

opposite effect. When I was in second grade, I was diagnosed with ADHD and a learning disability. The diagnosis helped to understand why I couldn’t make friends easily, why I struggled in different subjects at school, and why it was hard for me to focus on certain tasks. I ended up being put on medication which I did not like. This turned me from a hyperactive and high strung person, to a zombified uninterested person who still had trouble making friends. I didn’t like taking this medication at all and eventually stopped taking it. I did end up making a friend during this time named Nancy, who was my nextdoor neighbor at the time. She was my only friend up until 6th grade. Then she moved and I made more ‘friends’, but these individuals were way more toxic for my well-being. Pretty much every friend I had made after that hurt me in one way or another. This caused me to be extremely depressed and I suffered severe mental

distress that only got worse as I got older. Then when I was 12 years old, I lost the most important woman in the world to me, my grandmother, who died of lung cancer. After that, I became defiant with my attitude and started to act out. Despite my mom seeking counseling for me, I felt ashamed of what I was going through and it was extremely hard to voice out how I felt. So I kept most of what I was going through to myself. Things ended up getting too much for my mother to handle, so I went to live with my dad at 16 years old. During high school, I suffered the same bullying and meanness from people at school. At 18, I made my first suicide attempt. The next 5 years were spent mostly secluded from individuals around my age. I had no interest in making friends since I felt like everyone would treat me the same as before. I also used this time to figure out who I was deep down. This is when I came to terms

with my sexuality. I never realized that most of my life up until this point, I was primarily attracted to women. Far more than I was ever attracted to men. I was proud and confident in who I discovered I was, but didn't come out to my close family until 3 years later. Thankfully, all of my family has been super supportive when it comes to me being a part of the LGBTQ+ community. After that, I moved in with my sister to help her take care of her daughter. I felt like I had no real direction in life, nor any drive to do something different, so I made the decision to go to Phoenix, Arizona with my mom. In Phoenix, I began going to college at Glendale Community College. It was still hard for me to make friends so I mainly kept to myself. I did have an interest in gaming, so in 2017 I started to play a game called RuneScape. At that point I made a few friends playing the game that I met in person as well. These friends have shown me that people can and do

care about me without causing me harm. They were friends that I could relate to and friends who pushed me to seek more healing and recovery in my life. Despite how scary and unknown it was to me, from there I began seeking counseling and therapy. This is when I was diagnosed with social anxiety, general anxiety, and severe depression. Something I related to for most of my life. Eventually, my therapist recommended I join a day program called REN. I was super nervous and reluctant to join, mainly because I didn't want anything like my childhood to happen to me again. Today, I am so glad that I joined. I realized within this program that I may have been misunderstood and bullied when I was younger, but that doesn't mean I will be treated the same way throughout my life. Actually I have experienced the exact opposite. Mostly everyone I have met at REN I made friends

with, and nearly all have either complimented me in some way, greeted me with a smile, and engaged in pleasant conversations with me. Although I have a long way to go within my recovery in terms of healing my past trauma, within the confines of REN, I am able to be my true, unapologetic, and authentic self without fear or judgement.

- Angela S.

## **RECOVERY RECIPES**

**H**ere at REN, we LOVE food! The Recovery Recipes column is a space where we will share the fun recipes that we often try and share here at REN. The recipe that we are featuring this month is a REN personal favorite:

### **No-Bake Strawberry Twinkie Cake**

#### **Ingredients**

• 10 Hostess Twinkies

• 3 cups of sliced/diced strawberries

plus extra strawberries for topping

• 3.5 oz instant vanilla pudding

• 1.5 cups cold milk

• 8 oz whipped topping

#### **Instructions**

1. Slice twinkies in half lengthwise and lay evenly cream side up in a 9 x 13 inch pan.

2. Sprinkle sliced strawberries on top of twinkies.

3. In a separate bowl, combine instant pudding mix with milk.

4. Whisk together for about 4-5 min until combined slightly thickened .

5. Pour pudding mixture evenly over strawberries.

6. Last, spread cool whipped topping over pudding layer. Garnish cake with fresh

strawberries ( you will want to do this right before serving, after the chilling process. )

7. Cover and store cake in the fridge. Let it set for at least 1-2 hours.

## **RECOVERY COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
1-800-273-TALK(8255)

National Substance Use and Disorder Referral and Treatment Hotline:  
1-800-662-HELP(4357)  
or

Text Text the word "HOME" to 741741

Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County

- Maricopa County: • Served by Mercy Maricopa:  
1-800-631-1314 or 602-222-9444
- Central Arizona Warm Line:  
602-347-1100
- Pima County, call the HOPE Warm Line at 520-770-9909. The

warm line operates  
daily from 8 a.m. to  
10 p.m.

- Dial “211” - Arizona  
Crisis Hotline

### FOOD RESOURCES



Produce On Wheels With - Out Waste (P.O.W.)  
7th Annual Produce Season

[www.facebook.com/borderlandsmarket](http://www.facebook.com/borderlandsmarket) @borderl

The Original \$12 for up to 70  
No Income or Residential Qualifications Re

 **Fresh Produce**  
Every Saturday

@borderlandfb

[www.borderlandsproducerescue.org](http://www.borderlandsproducerescue.org)

\*\*\* IF YOU WOULD  
LIKE TO BE PART OF  
THE REN NEWS TEAM  
- PLEASE MEET WITH  
JEN A. OR CHELSEA.  
WE MEET IN THE  
COMPUTER LAB ON  
THURSDAYS FROM  
9:00AM-11:30AM.

THANK YOU TO  
EVERYONE WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN  
THE FIRST  
PUBLISHING OF THE  
REN NEWSPAPER! WE  
HOPE TO SEE YOU  
AGAIN, REMEMBER  
TO BRING YOUR

FRIENDS. THE MORE  
THE MERRIER :)



# RECOVERY *Empowerment* NETWORK

## HOURS OF OPERATION

### MONDAY - FRIDAY

7:30AM - 3:00PM

### SATURDAY SERVICES

7:30AM - 3:00PM

MAKE SURE YOU CHECK THE CALENDAR TO SIGN UP  
FOR ANY EVENTS ON THIS DAY

### SUNDAY

CLOSED

[WWW.RENAZ.ORG](http://WWW.RENAZ.ORG)

**602-248-0368**