

Wellness Center West Newsletter

Sept. 2019 Edition

Vietnam Memories by Lien T.

“My name is Lien Tran; I immigrated to the USA in 1992. I went to school in the first few years and became a citizen after that. I dropped out from school due to my health conditions and I was diagnosed with a mental illness in 1999 until now. I became a member of the Wellness Center in 2017 and I have participated in many groups here, especially Viet Media and Karaoke.

“Since 1975, I did not have the chance to listen to Vietnamese songs. Coming to Viet Media helped me have those back that reminded me about my own country and the memories of it. Besides, Karaoke also made me feel relaxed, comfortable, and emotional because I could sing Vietnamese songs with all my heart.. I also received the rewards of joining and contributing to groups and activities. I feel so thankful to supervisors and staff members here who took their time and effort to creating a friendly environment for all the members, including me. I also want to give special thanks to Thuy and Quinn, who contribute to group success. Since I have been here, my mental health has improved a lot and I have more confidence to do everything by myself. I wish the Wellness Center will grow eventually and have more people sign up to be members.”

IF by Kevin N.

If I am the Prince, you would
be the princess.

If I am the Eagle, you would
be the mountain.

If I am the boat, you would
be the river.

If I am the True man, you
would

be the dreamer.

*Thank you everyone for all your ongoing writing contributions to Wellness Center West Newsletter. We are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing platform for each individual to share their creative writing, stories, poetry, and more. —
Wellness Center West Staff*

Emotions Anonymous by Tommy P.



“I attended a group called Emotions Anonymous (EA)... It was my first time attending. I didn't know what to expect but I had scheduled myself to attend one more group before leaving Wellness Center West (WCW) for the day. It's odd how the chips fall, that I happened to be there at that time, and decided to try a new group and it turned out that I would get more than I bargained for. I had come to the WCW that day to cool down after some domestic stress; I was seeking to learn coping skills to accept what I cannot change.

“The group has a definitive structure and it starts with each person doing a little reading on the rules and regulations of the group session. One was to stay on topic and another was no cross talking. (I am a frequent violator of crosstalk.) But that is the beauty of it. I began to crosstalk and was gently reminded of the rules. The structure works really well to create a safe space to share among the members of the group and get feedback or gust to get something off your chest. I also learned how to opt out of feedback from the group if you just want to share without anyone offering their opinion.

“So I had never attended EA before and I was offered the task of leading the group. I was nervous to be in charge but I saw there was a few of my pals attending so I decided this would be a good opportunity for me to practice leading a group comfortably. I am shy until I get comfortable.

“I began to read from the binder which contained the rules, proper conduct and also the regulations, just to make it official. Then we went around the room and people shared what was challenging for them recently. People shared and so did I. I can't mention specifics as part of confidentiality but I managed to get a lot out of it... One thing I can share is that I thought I was alone. Groups like Emotions Anonymous help me see that my problems are common and others face them. I used to feel alone and now with the help of Wellness Center West I have come to realize I am not alone.

“I shared during EA that it helped me a lot because I was carrying a burden all around with me and sharing made it easier to shoulder the weight. Some of the magic of Emotions Anonymous for me actually is in listening to others. For some unknown reason, hearing others going through the same issues that I do helps me. I realize I am not alone. Also, sometimes people share a big issue and my issues are dwarfed in comparison. It helps put my issues in perspective.

“So after the group, the most helpful thing occurred. Howard (the peer mentor) was in the group and he came to me and pulled me aside for a chat. He told me I led the group very well. He said the only thing I should work on is my speed. I am too fast. He gave me a few other tips like reading the handouts slower. I am guilty as charged. My mind moves too fast. But to hear it from Howard was niche because he knows how to give constructive criticism. He has been help me for months with useful tips when I see him around WCW.”

Mentor Spotlights by Piotr S.

“Lighthearted Jamie is also quite energetic. She tries to maintain her equanimity through a strict regimen of exercise routines. She may even lose sleep if her stringent schedule is disturbed, but that does not make her any less alert. She is one of the most thoughtful and thought-provoking peer mentors at the Wellness Center and she inspires discussions of the highest caliber. Although she is utterly superstitious (and sporting quite a collection of trinkets around her neck and arms) she can be resolute in her spiritual beliefs when the occasion calls for it. She may sometimes hesitate to assert herself, but who doesn’t? In her spare time she has chosen to explore new musical avenues of expression including learning guitar and singing. Although quite persistent, she knows when to admit that something is too difficult for her.”



Making History with Member-Driven Democracy

On Tuesday, September 3rd, Wellness Center West held its very first community led vote on organizational change. Recently, the Center has had the very special problem of too many members signing up for social outings. In order to keep participation fair as possible, the program director implemented a rotation and lottery system for our social outing attendees. All systems are subject to scrutiny, this case was no different. A few members expressed disapproval then suggested alternatives. In response the Center held a vote during the next Community Meeting to finish the matter. Two alternatives to the current procedure were proposed. All three proposals were discussed at length. By way of raising of hands with 27 voters present the final results were: 21 votes for the current procedure, one vote for alternative #1, two votes for alternative #2 and 3 people abstained. This member-only vote on organizational change was the first at Wellness Center West. Member participation and member-driven engagement are top priorities at the Wellness Center, this historic event is a great example of such. We thank every member who came out to participate and share their important perspective.



September

- Suicide Prevention Week
9th-15th
- First Day of Fall - 23rd
- National Recovery Month

October

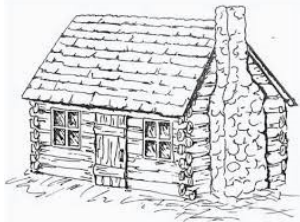
- Mental Illness Awareness
Week 6th-12th
- Halloween - 31st
- Domestic Violence
Awareness Month

November

- National Family Week
21st-29th
- Thanksgiving - 28th
- National Native Americans
Month

The Tales of Cabin 10 by Tommy P.

“Here I was, staring at a bed with my necessities for the next 4 days. I was going to summer camp and it centered on giving a break of respite to the camp goers.



“My dad got me over to the drop point where the busses would pick us up. The buses were professional, and tip-top they even had screens for a movie. We watched the tiger movie. The bus ride was long but I dozed while listening to tunes on my phone. I knocked out quick and woke up there.

“We all stumbled off the bus, fighting dead legs but being directed to the chow hall. First thing, I walked off the buses into an evergreen playground. I saw pine trees, pine cones, there were lizards scurrying about. There were structures but they blended into the woods. Our cabin was number 10.

“When I got to the cabin I was glad to see two people who I knew. I got a bottom bunk and I had purchased a sleeping bag for this camp. I also bought shoes because I wanted to be prepared. I brought two different flashlights to be sure.

“The first thing that I will say about camp is that you get to have a great time in your own way. You are free to head to your cabin, or hangout by the chow hall. The bishop cabin has activities if you’ve had enough of the forest. They also have ropes, archery and bird watching. I forgot about mountain biking and hiking. The lake was fun they had canoes.....I hung out on shore as they handed out snacks on dry land.

“There was a social dance and the theme was Superheroes. And me without my batman suit! I played Jumbo Jenga with a cabin mate. I almost won the game. The food was good I will warn you they depend on the mountain spring to provide real mountain spring water to all faucets and fixtures. It tasted very good and they gave us a steel thermos to fill up because they have water fountains scattered all around. But if you need Coca Cola or something best pack your own. I brought money for the vending machines, but there are none. The camp provided juice sometimes... apple and grape. Oh and punch too, but sporadically. A few times there was lemonade too, but not every meal.



“I want to close on my memories created at the Respite Camp by saying the pinecone dedication meant the most to me. I went up to the fire with my pinecone and tossed it in. I made a wish there, in the moonlight, and then I sang my song. Everybody clapped for me.

“In conclusion I want to thank the camp for putting this all together for people like me, to get a break from the maelstrom, This year especially. Thanks to Andrew, the boss of the camp, on down to the other staff.”

Dear Editor,

If you're itching to start or renew your search for purpose, **do it!** You'll generate positive energy through the search itself. Slow down to experience the process. Explore nonprofits, startups and interests outside of work, too. There's no formula and no magic. Purpose exists where it's least expected. Trust in serendipity, trying new things until something renews your energy.

Something I have learned to do to continue on my wellness at the wellness centers, both central and west.

-Unknown Member



Summer Road by David D.

You are winding down a road
and everything is alright today
you have found the way

I know that you someday learn of the
truth

that is inside you heart and soul so
please don't

go, away, away, because you are what
moves me

you are all that I see, and you are
what grooves me.

The Season's Lessons on Wellness

"I learned in one of Minnie's class to stay with the seasons. This concept will not only help you stay well but much, much, much happier. To know this all you have to see is Minnie at work.

"Here is how:

"Think about the farmers; spring time is his most active time. It's then when he must work around the clock, up before the sun and still toiling at the stroke of midnight. He must keep his equipment running at full capacity because he has but a small window of time for planting his crop.

When winter comes, there is less for him to do to keep him busy.

"There is a lesson here: Learn to use the seasons of life.

"Decide when to pour it on and when to ease back, when to take advantage and when to let things ride. it's easy to keep going from 9-5 year in and year out and lose a natural sense of priorities and cycles. Don't let one year blend into another in a seemingly endless parade of tasks and responsibilities.

"She concluded with "Keep your eye on your own seasons, lest you lose sight of value and substance."

- A member who cares

