



COTTONWOOD  
tucson

October 2009

# Alumni News...

the journey continues

## Recovery Marks a New Beginning

As October marks the beginning of fall, so recovery marks the beginning of a new life. As the plants shed their foliage to make way for new growth, we as recovering human beings shed our old ideas and behaviors to make way for healing attitudes and healthier behaviors. This month, one day at a time, represents a new beginning. Learning how to live life free from depression, addiction, co-dependence, and all dis-ease takes perseverance and patience. Hal Borden once said, "October is the fallen leaf, but it is also a wider horizon more clearly seen." That is life in recovery; fallen leaves making way for clearer horizons. I hope this month finds you happy, hopeful and free, always traveling toward your dreams.

Please support your alumni meetings and find strength and understanding as we journey into recovery together. If you have suggestions for future newsletter topics, please e-mail me at [shicks@cottonwoodrecovery.com](mailto:shicks@cottonwoodrecovery.com).

*Be well, Sally Hicks*

## Narcissism By Rokelle Lerner

Many people who come through InnerPath have parents who were narcissists. There are so many misconceptions about narcissism that I thought it best to define this term and how others are affected by this destructive disorder.

A pathological narcissist is characterized less by traits like grandiosity, arrogance, or hypersensitivity than by his or her severely disturbed relationships. The characteristics of entitlement, grandiosity, contempt, and even joyful cruelty make it literally impossible to have life-giving connections with others. Yet this state often goes unrecognized, even by therapists.

Many people mistakenly believe that narcissism is really about individuals who feel superior. But the truth is that a genuine narcissist has no sense of self. They're desperate for praise because it's the closest they'll ever get to unconditional love. Think of a narcissist as the equivalent of an addict when it comes to the need for adoration or attention. Without the adoring, attentive reflection of others, narcissists feel as if they don't exist. Worse, they feel intense humiliation and disgust for themselves. You'd never guess this by their behavior. In fact, it's because of their grandiose behavior that others eventually revile them.

## Narcissism, cont'd

By Rokelle Lerner

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A true narcissist cannot allow others to affect him in anyway. When you can't allow others to have any impact on you, the result is a disconnection from others and the devastating lack of wellbeing that a relationship provides. Narcissists don't necessarily think they're better than other people; they just don't think of people at all. (Bernstein, 2002) They behave as if the world exists primarily for their gratification, and people exist only as pawns that allow them to direct their self-centered dramas.

When the children and spouses of narcissists become aware of the dynamics of this devastating disorder, they experience both pain and relief. At last, someone recognizes what living in hell has been like. Many have a sense that they've been in prison, and it can take them a lifetime to comprehend how their captivity could have been so dangerous and yet so compelling. For those whose lives have been impacted by a narcissist, it's important to remember that the behaviors I've discussed here are related directly to childhood trauma. They are survival mechanisms that were formed in sadistic environments among other narcissists who learned the same survival skills in their childhoods. These defense mechanisms are passed down through the generations and systematically choke the life out of children. Narcissistic parents beget narcissistic children.

*Rokelle Lerner is one of the most sought after speakers and trainers on relationships, women's issues and addicted family systems. She has inspired audiences throughout the world with her ability to address difficulties with insight, humor, and astounding clarity. Rokelle has published the best selling books, Living in the Comfort Zone: The Gift of Boundaries in Relationships, Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics and Affirmations for the Inner Child. Her latest book is The Object of My Affection is in My Reflection: Coping With Narcissists. Ms. Lerner also facilitates the InnerPath Retreats for Cottonwood Tucson in Arizona.*

## Lindsey Alaestante: Family Program Coordinator



*We not only have a great clinical staff at Cottonwood but a great support staff as well. I would like to introduce you to Lindsey Alaestante, our Family Program Coordinator.*

Hello, I'm Lindsey Alaestante and I have been working at Cottonwood just a little over two years now. I began working here as a Behavioral Health Technician (BHT) on the Adolescent Unit and in time moved on to our Marketing Department. I am now the Cottonwood Family Program Coordinator. One of the things I really value is that even in my short time here I have had the opportunity to experience many different aspects of the treatment that Cottonwood provides. I have had opportunities ranging from working with patients at Cottonwood to working with professionals in the community, and now encouraging and helping the family members of our patients. Each experience has been exciting and rewarding. I value each opportunity for different reasons and have learned so much in this short time.

Some of my most memorable times at Cottonwood have been spent with the girls of the Sweetwater Adolescent Program. I have seen many patients come in and become transformed during their stay. It is amazing to be a part of this process. As a BHT on the adolescent unit I accompanied many of the girls through their family week. I had the opportunity to see changes occur in the family as healing began to take place. I miss working with our patients on a daily basis, but after experiencing the Family Program and seeing firsthand the impact it can make on the entire family I am thankful to be a small part of this process. Many of the families I encounter are anxious about coming to the Family Program, not knowing what to expect. I have the opportunity to become acquainted with them and make them more comfortable. Because I have faith in our hard working and dedicated staff, I can assure family members with great confidence what an amazing experience they will have at Cottonwood. Being a part of this team is by far the most rewarding part of working at Cottonwood.

## Let's Talk Salsa Richard Serna and Mario Ledezma

On September 15, 2009 our very own Executive Chef Richard Serna and Sous chef Mario Ledezma won the People's Choice Award at Sysco's Third Annual Salsa Championship held at the Tucson Convention Center. The competition began in the "Top Chef Salsa Challenge." Eight restaurants were represented including Cottonwood Tucson. Richard and Mario had one hour to have the salsa completed and ready to serve. They made a delicious grilled watermelon and jicama salsa. It was a huge hit with the audience. Fifty guests had the opportunity to sample salsa from each of the contestants before picking who they thought created the best and most delicious salsa. That of course, would be Executive Chef Richard and Sous Chef Mario, our cuisine creators extraordinaire! We are proud of you Richard and Mario. Just keep those lovely and nutritious foods coming!

Richard and Mario also cooked for the Ronald MacDonald benefit last month. This was a wonderful service Richard and Mario did in Cottonwood's name. This benefit raised funds for the Ronald Macdonald House which accommodates the families of critically ill children while they receive treatment in the hospital. There were about three hundred people in attendance and there were fifteen restaurants participating in the benefit that was held at La Encantada at 2905 E Skyline Drive. As usual our chef's served a masterpiece of: a corn risotto with braised red chili chicken accompanied by a raspberry jus. My mouth waters just thinking of it.

Thanks again Richard and Mario for sharing your talents with the Tucson Community.

## Farmington/Durango Alumni Meetings

Hello Farmington/Durango alumni. I'm looking forward to facilitating you alumni meeting this September 28th. The topic for this month's meeting will be using the "Tools of Recovery." Please come and share with your friends from Cottonwood the experience strength, hope and challenges that we find in the rooms of recovery. The meeting will be held at the **First Baptist Church at 511 W. Arrington, in Farmington.** Included below are the next 2009 meeting dates and times.

**September 28 • November 30**

**7:00 pm- 8:30 pm**

## Phoenix Alumni Meetings

This month the Phoenix alumni meeting will be focusing our meeting topic on forgiveness. Inner health begins through forgiveness, not only the forgiveness of others but also for ourselves. It is through the steps that we can learn to forgive and in doing so help ourselves recover from addiction. I hope you will show up and share your experience, strength, challenges and hope with your friends from Cottonwood.

We meet every other Tuesday at **6615 N. Scottsdale Rd., Suite 100 in Scottsdale.**

**October 6 & 20 • November 3 & 17 • December 1 & 16**

**7:00 pm - 8:30pm**

## Tucson Alumni Meeting

At the beginning of 2009, I decided to implement a new feature on the first Wednesday of the month. Every fourth month, one of our alumni will share their story with the Tucson Alumni Meeting. On October 7th, Gary G. of Phoenix will share his story, he is looking forward to visiting the Cottonwood campus once again and sharing the miracle of recovery. Gary has four years of sobriety and is an active participant in the Cottonwood Phoenix Alumni Meeting held in Scottsdale twice each month. I hope you will come and share this time with friends and hear an amazing story of what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now.

The Tucson alumni meet every Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the Cottonwood campus in the Family Lodge

. On the first Wednesday of the month you are welcome to join us for dinner and a presentation. Dinner is served at 5:00 p.m. and meal tickets are \$5 each. We eat in the Lodge and the presentation starts promptly at 6:00 p.m. in Willson Hall. Please feel free to bring a guest.

Coming together, recovering together, sharing together, and succeeding together... that is the essence of the Cottonwood Alumni Meeting.

*Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.*

*~James M. Barrie*

## InnerPath Retreats

### Beginnings & Beyond

October 19-23 • December 7-11

### Women's Retreat

November 16-20

### Developing Healthy Relationships

October 15-18 • December 3-6

### Developing Healthy Families

Monday 8:15am - Friday 3:00pm  
Contact us to schedule

We offer some 4 and 5 day programs for individuals, couples, and families who want to focus on codependency, relationships, communication, grief and loss, trauma, and anger. InnerPath is like a mini-Cottonwood experience where you can come back for a boost to your personal recovery plan. All of our retreats are held at the Cottonwood Nash House, meals and lodging included, and are limited to 8 people. Rokelle Lerner who is a therapist, author, and codependency expert, is our facilitator. Please contact Jana Zeff at 520-743-2141 or e-mail her at [jzeff@cottonwoodrecovery.com](mailto:jzeff@cottonwoodrecovery.com) for more information about InnerPath.

For more information, click here [shicks@cottonwoodrecovery.com](mailto:shicks@cottonwoodrecovery.com)  
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