

August 2009



COTTONWOOD  
tucson

# Alumni News...

the journey continues

## Cottonwood Alumni First On-line Newsletter!

Welcome to your first on-line Cottonwood Alumni Newsletter. In the past, the newsletter was mostly geared towards the Cottonwood staff and alumni had limited access. We decided that the newsletter should be for our alumni. Of course anyone is welcome to read it and we hope it will help the larger recovery community as well. The format has completely changed. You will read up to date information about recovery and more from the Cottonwood staff. This newsletter has been revised with you in mind. How can we educate and help you all the while keeping you interested in recovery and informed as well. Any [feedback or suggestions](#) would be much appreciated! Remember life is not in the destination but the journey. Be blessed.

## The Nutrition Rx for Recovery By Lisa MacDonald, MPH, RD

### The Nutrition Prescription for Recovery

The nutrition prescription for recovery is individualized and flexible. There are many “perfect” meal plans out there promoted for health, recovery, energy, weight loss and so on, but every person has different taste preferences, food traditions, biology and schedules. Any nutrition plan must consider these influences on eating in addition to the science of nutrition for long-term success.

Even though an individualized approach is vitally important, let’s start with the basic principles of bringing consistency and balance to eating. Consistency and Balance are the mantra for nutrition in recovery and works for both men and women. Consistency means eating three or more (hopefully at least 4, but as many as 6) times per day and balance means including carbohydrate, protein and fat each time. Eating in this fashion keeps blood sugar stable leading to stabilized energy, improved concentration, stabilized moods and decreased cravings for sugar, refined carbohydrates and chemicals. *(cont’d on Page 2)*

# The Nutrition Rx for Recovery, cont'd

By Lisa MacDonald, MPH, RD

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## **Energy and Concentration**

The best way to describe how foods behave in our bodies energetically is to use the analogy of a fire. Carbohydrates (grains, fruits and veggies) are the flame of the fire. Eaten alone, they are burned and gone pretty quickly. Sugar and refined carbohydrates behave like lighter fluid or kindling, very rapid effect, but short lived. Complex carbohydrates will last a little longer, but really need the support of protein. Proteins (meat, poultry, fish, nuts, seeds, and soy) act as the log in the fire. Protein consumed by itself is like placing a log in a fireplace without a flame to ignite it. Fats (fat naturally occurring in foods as well as added fats; mayonnaise, olive oil, salad dressings etc) create the quality of a waxy Duraflame log or a candle. Eating often (three or more meals per day) is equivalent to stoking the fire, keeping the fire burning consistently. The most sustainable energy and ability to concentrate is attained by eating often and eating a combination of carbohydrate, protein and fat each time a meal or snack is consumed.

## **Moods**

The mood connection with food is remarkable. Carbohydrates, specifically complex carbohydrates, are great contributors of the amino acid tryptophan which is a precursor to serotonin production in the brain. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter or brain chemical that boosts mood, curbs food cravings, increases pain tolerance and aids sleep, all of which are incredibly important to recovery. In addition to carbohydrate rich foods, turkey, lean meats, and dairy products are also good sources of tryptophan. Foods rich in vitamin B-6, B-12 and folic acid facilitate the creation of serotonin from tryptophan. Caffeine, sugar, high fat foods and alcohol deplete serotonin.

The amino acid tyrosine, with the help of folic acid, magnesium and Vitamin B-12, is the precursor to the neurotransmitter dopamine (the pleasure brain chemical) and norepinephrine (mental alertness brain chemical) production. Tyrosine is abundant in protein foods.

Choline, a fat-like substance found in wheat germ and eggs, is converted into the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. This nerve chemical is important in memory and mental functioning. By including carbohydrates, proteins and fats each time one eats, the brain is being provided with the building blocks for the formation of neurotransmitters positively affecting emotional well-being.

## **Cravings**

Food cravings and cravings for substances are influenced by how one eats. Inconsistent and imbalanced eating create imbalances in the above mentioned neurotransmitters and create blood sugar fluctuations that increase desire for sugar, refined carbohydrates, caffeine and other chemicals. With alcohol addiction, abstinence often leads to increased desire for sugar. Sometimes this desire is sneaky and shows up as a fruit, fruit juice or sugary beverage craving. Fruit is healthy, right? Yes, but it is still sugar and needs to be eaten in appropriate quantities. In addition to sugar, caffeine often becomes a crutch in sobriety. Caffeine feels like fuel in the body due to its stimulant effect. This effect facilitates the skipping of meals leading to increased desire for more sugar, caffeine and typically overeating at a later time.

# The Nutrition Rx for Recovery, cont'd

By Lisa MacDonald, MPH, RD

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Eating often and including carbohydrates, proteins and fats will help the management of cravings, both food and chemical.

## **Moderation of Eating**

When nourishment is consistent and balanced we are able to respond to our bodies versus react. If blood sugar swings dramatically, the reaction is usually to overcompensate by over-eating or choosing sugar, caffeine and refined carbohydrates. This blood sugar roller coaster ride can create significant weight management issues. Again, by eating three or meals per day and including carbohydrates, proteins and fats each time blood sugar is stabilized, eating is more moderate and weight is more easily managed.

In closing, remember nutrition is supportive in recovery. Make consistent and balanced eating a priority, a vital component to self care.

*Lisa MacDonald MPH, RD is the director of Nutrition Services at Cottonwood Tucson. Her expertise is in eating disorders, nutrition education and weight management. She is committed to scientific integrity and the "non-diet" approach to weight management. Lisa encourages connecting with the body and making informed food decisions as processes leading to a healthy relationship with food and body.*

## Cottonwood Staff, Primary Counselor

**Here is another great Cottonwood staff member, Peter Biava IV, MC, LPC**



It's a pleasure to introduce myself on behalf of the primary counselors here at Cottonwood Tucson. I am Peter Biava and this last December I celebrated my tenth year here as a counselor. I've worked as an adolescent, young adult and adult primary counselor as well as facilitated family program both here and in London. I also worked in marketing for a year.

The most remarkable thing about the treatment here is the people. Talented, friendly, professional caring individuals that work together to make an impact on those in treatment and on each other. We all strive to make an impact on the lives of our patients so that they leave both supported and challenged to live a life of recovery. As the son of a social worker and a public school music teacher I was taught to be compassionate and creative in building strong relationships so that I could have an impact on the world. Cottonwood is a place that helps me to live those values as well as many others.

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*Peter Biavi, cont'd from page 3*

I've been humbled by the strength and courage that the patients access while in treatment and after they leave to face the same world but as a transformed individuals. To me growth and recovery is about facing your pain and fears and building the strength to live your life in accordance with your vision and purpose. So many patients and staff challenge themselves each day to do this with amazing results. I know for myself I have grown as a person and counselor by being here and experiencing the support and challenge of the treatment we do. One of the big lessons I'd like to share is about finding answers. So many of us try to find answers for our challenges in all the wrong places; drugs, alcohol, compulsive habits and hurtful relationships to name a few. I know for myself that I've thought almost certainly where or in what form the answer for a problem would be, only to realize later that the answer was somewhere else, thus learning that "you have to find the answer where it lies, not where you want it to be". This simple admission has saved me lots of struggle in the wrong direction and opened me up to possibilities I didn't consider.

"May Love and Courage guide you."

## Farmington/Durango Alumni Meetings

Hello all you beautiful Farmington/Durango alumni. I want to inform you that the Farmington Alumni Meeting has a new meeting place. It is located in the **First Baptist Church at 511 W. Arrington, Farmington, NM 87401**. Included below are the next 2009 meeting dates and times.

**September 28 • November 30  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

See you there!

## Phoenix Alumni Meetings

Just a reminder to everyone out there in the Phoenix and outlying areas, we meet every other Tuesday in Scottsdale at **6615 N. Scottsdale Rd., Suite 100, Scottsdale, AZ 85250**. The remaining 2009 meeting dates and times are as follows:

**August 18 • September 1 & 15 • October 6 & 20  
November 3 & 17 • December 1 & 16  
7:00 pm - 8:30pm**

## Tucson Alumni Meetings

Tucson...what's up? As always the Tucson alumni meet every Wednesday night on the Cottonwood campus in the Lodge (AKA Family Program Lodge.) The meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. and finishes at 7:30 p.m. What's so cool about the Tucson meeting is that you get to visit the place that helped you start you on your journey to wellness. On the **first Wednesday of every month** you are welcome to come and have dinner and attend a presentation by one of the Cottonwood staff. It is an awesome opportunity to experience recovery while continuing to educate and improve your physical, mental and spiritual being. As a bonus you are allowed to bring one guest to share in your recovery experience. I hope you will take this opportunity to come back and share your experience, strength, challenges and hope with everyone who loved you before you learned to love yourself.

## InnerPath Retreats

### Beginnings & Beyond

September 21—25 • October 19—23 • December 7—11

### Beginnings & Beyond II

October 26-30

### Developing Healthy Relationships

December 3—6

### Women's Retreat

August 31 • September 4 • November 16—20

### Developing Healthy Families

Five days: Monday 8:15am—Friday 3:00pm  
Contact us to schedule

### Contact

Jana Zeff for information and registration.  
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