



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE STAIR PROGRAM WITH DENNIS HARVEY

FROM ISOLATION TO CONNECTION

BY WENDY SIMMONS

I had the opportunity to connect with Dennis Harvey, our veteran peer, to discuss the STAIR program and the new round of classes that began in early January. STAIR is a specialized program aimed at empowering veterans to strengthen their skills in mood regulation, relationship building, and social functioning.

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS IN THE STAIR PROGRAM LEARN?

The main thing that they learn is how to communicate with other people. So in the beginning, it's basically everybody learning how to engage with one another and developing a comfort level as a group. It's as simple as that.

HOW DO YOU THINK THAT THE PROGRAM HAS IMPACTED VETERANS IN WALLOWA COUNTY?

Well, just knowing that there is a program out there like this. That is a big deal. Everybody needs help, but most of us would never ask.

DID ATTENDING THE CLASS MAKE YOU FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes! From where I was before to today, I'm a totally different person. I'm naturally very introverted. Before STAIR, I only went to town if I had to. The program has allowed me to open up more.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM?

I am here to support Sandra and the program, and to do anything that needs done. The program has been truly successful because of Sandra! She makes you learn stuff without realizing you're learning, it's really her approach that makes the difference.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM?

I'd like to see more and more veterans know about the program. It's people talking about STAIR. People join mostly because this person knows this person. The person that could really benefit may just need to hear it from someone they trust.

YOU DELIVERED THE BLANKETS FOR OUR DECEMBER FUNDRAISER. WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE FROM VETERANS WHEN YOU GAVE THEM THEIR BLANKETS?

The reaction from every one of them was positive! I checked in on someone the other day and when I knocked on the door, a retired disabled veteran was lying in this lounge chair curled up with that blanket. I asked, "How do you like your blanket?" And they said, "it's my buddy now" with a smile on their face.

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GETTING BACK TO LIVING THE DREAM JOB

THE STORY OF MAX LORELLE

BY RUSTY WATTS, SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISOR

We are thrilled to share the uplifting story of Max Lorelle, whose longstanding partnership with Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness has paved the way for a remarkable transformation in his life.

Over the years, we have fostered a strong alliance with Max. Through collaborative efforts Max has transformed his life into one that is not only manageable but also incredibly fulfilling. Despite facing significant setbacks, Max's decision to strengthen his community ties became a pivotal moment, propelling him toward realizing his full potential.

Max's passion for vinyl records and CD sales traces back to his childhood when he immersed himself in the family business alongside his father. Describing it as a 'treasure hunt looking for gold, and then finding it' Max cherishes the valuable lessons learned. As an adult, he focused his entrepreneurial spirit on a career in rare vinyl albums and CD sales.

Max has found success in applying his expert knowledge in buying large collections at wholesale prices and selling premium items to collectors. Guided by his father's wisdom, "volume is the way to go," Max



has successfully marketed rare vinyl albums and CDs on platforms like eBay, Amazon, and to private collectors.

Some of Max's notable treasures include selling a rare Beatles Butcher Album, a Frank Sinatra collection with signatures and a bronze bust, and a rare Humphrey Bogart Caine Mutiny album, among many others.

“It's a treasure hunt looking for gold, and then finding it.”

MAX LORELLE



Currently working as a part-time in-home caregiver, Max is diligently saving for his next venture—building a rare vinyl records and CD sales business called 'Wallowa Trading Post.' With the first step complete, Max has purchased a vehicle to transport and store these treasures that he has found all over the U.S. His unwavering dedication to following his passion makes him a true asset to our community.

With the support of our supported employment program and a network of organizations across Oregon, Max is laying the foundation for his dream job in the coming years. He is well on his way to achieving success and we look forward to witnessing it.



WHY I GIVE BACK

A CONVERSATION WITH BOARD MEMBER TED THORN

BY AMY BUSCH

TED, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

I joined the board in the summer of 2018 and have been on the board ever since.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO JOIN THE BOARD?

It is my duty. One reason is my role in the community. I am the Veterans Service Officer for Wallowa County. When I asked Susan Roberts about serving on the board, she also reiterated that it was my duty to serve on the board and be a voice for Veterans in our community. And two, I have benefited greatly from the services at the Center for Wellness and felt I needed to give back. I continue to serve on the board because I believe in the mission work of the Center for Wellness and how accessible you all are for our community in getting into services.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH US?

I enjoy working with you all and being on the board. Even when I have used services, it was welcoming and no stigma attached. I continue to recommend you all to family and friends. I tell them to just go have a conversa-

tion with them. They have a wealth of knowledge and see what ideas they might have to help you. It could even be around life skills, not necessarily mental health.

WHAT ABOUT WHAT WE DO EXCITES YOU?

How intentional you are in serving Veterans. You do not forget about us Veterans and make sure we are seen. Your Veteran programs, like STAIR, are accessible and you are creative in reaching out to our community and meeting them where they are at in their lives. As a Veteran, I feel seen. That is why I continue to serve and I want to support Veterans and them having access to these resources.

WHY DO YOU GIVE BACK?

It is the right thing to do. I believe everyone should give back to their community. We need each other to get through life. I hope to instill that sense of duty in my kids and others by leading by example. I also know whatever I give will be multiplied whether it is the blankets for veterans or youth suicide prevention. You take each gift and do so much with it. And, finally, I want to give back so you can help someone else, just like you have helped me and my family.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH GRATIN

A COZY FAVORITE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHANTAY JETT

1 (2 1/2 LBS.) SPAGHETTI SQUASH
2 GARLIC CLOVES (MINCED)
3/4 C. HEAVY CREAM

9 FRESH SAGE LEAVES
2 1/4 C. GRATED GRUYERE CHEESE
SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

PREPARATION

MICROWAVE - PREHEAT WHOLE SQUASH 1 MIN. HALVE LENGTHWISE AND REMOVE SEEDS. PLACE CUT SIDE DOWN IN 1 INCH WATER FOR 12-15 MINUTES, OR UNTIL FORK TENDER. REMOVE PASTA-LIKE STRANDS WITH A FORK. IF YOU CAN NOT MICROWAVE SQUASH, BAKE AT 375 DEGREES WITH CUT SIDES DOWN IN BAKING DISH WITH ENOUGH WATER TO COME UP SIDES OF SQUASH. COVER WITH FOIL AND BAKE UNTIL FLESH IS SOFT, ABOUT 1 TO 1 1/2 HOURS.

RUB THE BOTTOM AND SIDES OF A BAKING DISH WITH BUTTER. FINELY CHOP 6 OF THE SAGE LEAVES AND TOSS THE "SPAGHETTI"

WITH THE CHOPPED SAGE, GARLIC, 2 CUPS OF THE GRUYERE CHEESE, THE HEAVY CREAM, SALT AND PEPPER. SPREAD MIXTURE IN BAKING DISH. SQUASH LAYER SHOULD BE ABOUT 1" THICK. SPRINKLE ON THE REMAINING CHEESE AND ARRANGE THE SAGE LEAVES CUT IN TO THIN STRIPS ON TOP. BAKE ABOUT 45 MINUTES. IF THE TOP OF THE GRATIN DOESN'T TURN GOLDEN BROWN IN THE OVEN, PLACE UNDER BROILER ABOUT 1 MINUTE TO BROWN IT.





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Benefit Concert
February 2nd
 I.O.O.F Hall, Enterprise

MY FUNNY *Valentine*



PURCHASE TICKETS

Doors Open at 6:00 PM
Tickets \$30

Sponsored by St. Patrick Church

Please join us on February 2nd for an evening of wonderful music from PinkFusion. After establishing successful solo careers, Leslie Mauldin and Sean Rogers have now happily joined as PinkFusion. The duo known for their eclectic jazz and blues style are slated for a dynamic performance in Enterprise.

To learn more or to purchase tickets, visit us at wvcenterforwellness.org/events.

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 For more information, please contact us at 541-426-4524 x1031.

wvcenterforwellness.org
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