Way to go MedHat Zekri!

“You never know what you can do, until you try.”

Hello all, I have many talents and hobbies. Truly, I have accomplished a lot over the years. I have an Engineering degree, and have worked in various professions. I am currently tutoring CIS at a local community college where I show students how to use computer applications and navigate the Internet. In my younger days, I played tennis and volleyball. Some of my pastimes are listening to jazz, watching TV, and spending time keeping up with technology.

I am a participant of CHEEERS, a place where I find it easy to keep busy. CHEEERS was the missing element that replaced a void in my life; one that was filled with severe depression, boredom, anxiety and stress. CHEEERS offers me a network of support that makes getting through the day just that much easier. In a way, it is kind of like a family, and like my real family CHEEERS also acknowledges my interests, encourages my education and supports my efforts.

My family thinks my accomplishments thus far are great. One thing they’ve taught me is that hard work is virtuous and yields many rewards. Although I am older, my journey is far from over. Fear and isolation have not been easy. I still have many goals yet to be revealed and challenges needing solutions. CHEEERS will be instrumental in bringing that change. I now stand tall and feel genuinely proud of myself.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

While moderate drinking, such a glass of wine with dinner, has health benefits, drinking too much alcohol can have devastating consequences. About 14 million Americans are addicted to alcohol or abuse alcohol. April is Alcohol Awareness Month and a good time to reflect on your use of alcohol.

Do you know how much alcohol is in a standard drink?

Are you binge drinking?

Are you concerned your child may be drinking?

Arm yourself with the facts [here](#).

The Behavioral Health Vision: All Arizona residents touched by the public behavioral health system are easily able to access high quality prevention, support, rehabilitation and treatment services that have resiliency and recovery principles at their core, which assist them in achieving their unique goals for a desired quality of life in their homes and communities.

DBHS manages Arizona’s publicly-funded, statewide behavioral health system. Learn more at [www.azdhs.gov/bhs/](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/).
OIFA Community Engagement Project Kickoff

The Community Engagement Kick-Off, led by the DBHS Office of Individual and Family Affairs, was attended by over 90 community members, including key stakeholders, advocates, and state agency leadership. Members of the Community Engagement Committee welcomed the group to STAR East. Kathy Bashor and Chaz Longwell, DBHS OIFA staff; Kim Rosello, community advocate and committee consultant; Jim Dunn, NAMI CEO; and Kristin Frounfelder and Kristina Cope, representing AHCCCS, each provided information critical to the project.

DBHS Assistant Director, Pat Benchik, and Teresita Oaks from the Office of Health Care Development were on hand to share the vision for the new Maricopa County Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) contract, and how recovery will be achieved through the concept of whole health.

The individuals in attendance were invited to become a Transition Team Partner to help ensure a smooth transition into the new Maricopa County Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) contract that will begin October 1, 2013. Transition Team Partners will play a role in bringing individuals, families, providers and the community into all phases of design, development, and implementation of an integrated health system of care.

The Kick-Off not only provided an overview of the project, the Committee also gathered questions, comments, concerns, and ideas on how to best communicate the messages to all individuals who will be impacted. Questions and comments will also be gathered weekly and then will be shared with the Transition Team Partners for them to share back with the community. Click here to view Frequently Asked Questions. Click here for the latest announcements. Recovery Works will continue to keep you posted.

PSA Art Awakenings Artist’s Reception at ASU Kerr Cultural Center

PSA Art Awakenings’ February art exhibition at the Arizona State University Kerr Cultural Center ended with a bang as musicians and poets from the program took the stage! Musicians performed an arrangement of original and classic works in this performance space which was voted the best in Arizona for live jazz by AZ Central. More than 40 works of art by 25 artists were on display for the event, which was catered by PSA’s Wellness Center, their first foray into providing for a party.

PSA Art Awakenings is a psycho social rehabilitation program for adults and art therapy program for youth with serious behavioral health issues and mental illnesses. Studios throughout Arizona offer therapeutic programs and expressive arts therapy in a supportive setting to promote mental health, personal growth, vocational training, and physical wellness through the performing and visual arts.

All forms of creativity can help those with behavioral health issues on their road to recovery. Writing, singing, dancing and painting are all valuable outlets. Visit a PSA Art Awakenings gallery or studio near you to see the inspirational creations of the artists in the program.
Focus on Eye Safety

Staying active is important to overall health and playing basketball or racquetball is a fun way to exercise. But many sports pose a risk to your eyes – a baseball may strike your eye, basketball players often get poked in the eye.

There are about 42,000 sports-related eye injuries each year and more than 78 percent of people were not wearing eyewear at the time of injury. Wearing protective eyewear can prevent 90 percent of eye injuries, says the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

April is Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month and a good time to use these tips when shopping for protective eyewear:

- Make sure any eyewear you buy is labeled ASTM F803 approved.
- Lenses should be made of polycarbonate, which can better withstand impact.
- Sports eyewear should be padded along the brow and bridge of the nose to prevent cuts.
- Don’t buy eyewear without trying it on to make sure it fits comfortably.

Healthy Recipe
Goat Cheese, Leek and Spinach Quiche
Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 1 hour 5 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

- 1 medium leek, thinly sliced
- 2 cups spinach, thinly sliced
- 4 ounces goat cheese
- 3 eggs
- 1 12 ounce can 2% evaporated milk
- 1 pre-made pie shell

Instructions:
1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Heat small pan over medium heat and coat with cooking spray.
3. Add leeks to pan and sauté until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add spinach and cook an additional minute. Set aside.
4. Crumble goat cheese on bottom of pie crust. Top with leeks and spinach mixture.
5. Whisk together eggs, evaporated milk, and salt & pepper. Pour egg mixture over cheese and veggies.
6. Bake for about 60 minutes, until top is golden brown and eggs are cooked through.

Makes 1 pie, 6 servings Serving Size: 1 slice (1/6 of pie)

Source: WebMD

Asthma and Mental Health

Asthma, a chronic lung disease that makes breathing difficult, has been linked with depression and anxiety disorder. Children with asthma are at increased risk for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression and learning disabilities.

The current Quarterly Health Initiative addresses asthma and mental health. Learn more here.
NAZCARE’s Supportive Housing Project

NAZCARE, Inc., a peer-run organization serving five counties across Northern Arizona, operates community wellness centers in Bullhead City, Cottonwood, Eagar, Flagstaff, Kingman, Prescott and Show Low. NAZCARE offers a variety of services, including career training, supportive employment and supportive housing.

The NAZCARE supportive housing program provides more than a place to stay. Residents have access to wrap-around recovery support services and life skills training, as well as safe and affordable quality housing.

NAZCARE operates four housing programs: Hope House in Prescott, Majesty Manor in Prescott Valley, Next Steps in Kingman and Serenity Circle in Cottonwood. Hope House and Serenity House are community-based transitional housing with single-person units, community space and shared kitchens. Majesty Manor and Next Steps are permanent housing. Majesty Manor has 10 efficiency units, common grounds and community laundry room. Next Steps also provides permanent housing in a campus-community style setting.

The NAZCARE supportive housing program is recovery based. The support and rehabilitative services include practicing life skills such as chores, cleanliness, budgeting, and cooking. In addition, wellness plans and transition plans are developed to include whole health goals and tenant/education/employment skills. There is also a focus on building the person’s network of support.

Supportive housing and recovery support services are a cost-effective way to help adults live more stable, productive lives. Hope House has an 83 percent success rate for people becoming stable, learning independent living skills and transitioning to permanent housing. Next Steps has a 92 percent success rate.

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Cenpatico’s Business Coach Program Trains Entrepreneurs

By: Maggie Kasparek
Business Coach

More than 14 million of the 18 million businesses in the United States are operated as sole proprietorships. Small businesses define America’s economic landscape and self-employment is increasingly recognized as a viable employment option for people with disabilities.

The Cenpatico Business Coach Program, developed in August 2010, guides members along the path to independence through self-employment. The program identifies a member’s passion and strengths, and helps them turn those into a money-making business.

The basics covered include developing a business plan, crafting a solid marketing plan, learning management skills development and lessons on how to raise capital. But, because every individual is different, the program is customized for each member. Some individuals need more assistance with startup activities; others need support with operations; still others need ongoing assistance using a variety of supports.

More than 359 members have attended the business coach program workshop and 182 of those have participated in one-on-one meetings with our business coach. While many members are continuing their journey to entrepreneurship, 44 are already making an income from their business.
Wellness means overall well-being. In each issue of Recovery WORKS we incorporate each of the Eight Dimensions of Wellness: mental, emotional, physical, occupational, intellectual, social, environmental and spiritual aspects of a person's life. Each aspect of wellness can affect your overall health and quality of life. This is especially important for people with mental and substance use disorders because wellness directly relates to the quality and longevity of your life. This month’s focus is on the financial dimension of wellness: satisfaction with current and future financial situations.

Spend Tax Refund Smartly

The deadline to file income tax returns is April 15 and most Americans expect to get a refund. The average federal tax refund this year will be just over $2,800 – a nice chunk of change. While it may be tempting to spend that windfall on a bigger flat-screen television, there are better ways to use that money.

1) **Start an emergency fund.** About one-third of Americans don’t have an emergency fund and one study found half of Americans would struggle to come up with $2,000 for car repairs, medical bills or other unanticipated expenses.

2) **Pay off credit card debt.** Pay off earlier purchases instead of making new ones. The interest savings can be big. It’s like getting a 20 percent return in the stock market.

3) **Invest in your health.** Troll yard sales and Craigslist for gently-used treadmills, stationary bicycles and other exercise equipment. Maintaining a healthy weight is important to good health and lower medical expenses.

4) **Buy bonds.** Taxpayers can buy Series I Bonds from the U.S. Department of Treasury by selecting the amount you want saved when you fill out your income tax return. The bonds range from $50 to $5,000. The interest paid on I Bonds adjusts with the rate of inflation, making them a good way to save for long-term goals such as college or retirement.

5) **Make home improvements.** A check for $2,000 or more can go a long ways in making home repairs or improvements you may have been putting off. Some home improvement projects – adding insulation, for example – will save you money over the long run.

Painless Ways to Cut Spending

No one wants to spend more than they have to, yet we all overlook easy ways to save money. There are many ways to reduce your expenses without reducing your quality of life. Here are just a few:

- **Check it out.** The public library offers more than books. You can slash entertainment spending by checking out DVDs and CDs at the library. Movie night doesn’t have to cost a dime.

- **See the light.** Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use less electricity and last longer than old-fashioned incandescent bulbs. Replacing a 60-watt incandescent bulb with a CFL could save you more than $50 over the life of the bulb. APS and SRP have partnered with retailers to offer discounts on CFLs.

- **Pump it up.** The cost of gasoline is around $4 a gallon. An easy way to get more miles per gallon is to check your tire pressure. You can improve your gas mileage by more than 3 percent by keeping your tires properly inflated. That’s like paying 12 cents a gallon less for gasoline.

- **Some assembly required.** Pack healthy snacks such as nuts, low-fat cheese, celery sticks or apple slices in small plastic bags instead of buying more expensive – and less healthy – bags of chips and other processed snacks.
**Upcoming Events**

**“Healing Your Heart After Suicide”—14th Annual Arizona Survivors of Suicide Day Conference**

Conference highlights include a presentation on suicide awareness and the healing power of creativity by Thomas Brown of the University of Arizona’s Recovery Through Integration, Support and Empowerment (R.I.S.E.); a panel discussion to explore answers to questions about coping with survivor grief, and a workshop to create one’s own “vision board” as a way of generating hope and healing.

The conference is Saturday, May 4 at the Black Canyon Conference Center, Phoenix. For more information, email info@EMPACT-SPC.com.

**NAMI Peer to Peer 10 Week Course**

NAMI is offering their next Peer Support Specialist Training at the Disability Empowerment Center (DEC), 5025 East Washington Street, Phoenix, beginning April 24th and concluding June 26th. The training is conducted by two trained mentors who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness. Participants are provided a binder of hand-out materials and other tangible resources, such as an advance directive; relapse prevention plan; mindfulness exercises to help focus and calm thinking, and survival skills for working with providers and the general public.

To register, please contact Laura Shirling at 602-759-8177 or namimaricopaedu@gmail.com.

**Visions of Hope Peer Support Specialist Training**

Visions of Hope will roll out their next Peer Support Specialist Training at 6411 East Thomas Road, Scottsdale, in mid-April 2013. Requirements are that the individual must be receiving services from Magellan, have an SMI diagnosis, and have a high school diploma or GED. Individuals can be Title XIX or non-Title XIX. Please contact Gita Enders, Training Manager, at gita.enders@hopeaz.org, as classes fill up fast.

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**The DBHS’ Blog Connection**

**Maricopa County Integrated RBHA Contract Awarded**

March 25 marked a historic time in the delivery of behavioral health services in Arizona. For the first time we will have a system that is designed to look at the whole person when it comes to delivery of health care...not just what funding stream they entered the system using. This is important because accessing health care is critical to quality of life. The opportunity to bring a coordinated system of care to our behavioral health community will lead to fewer lives lost to preventable and treatable physical illnesses. On March 25, the Department of Health awarded the contract to manage the Maricopa County Integrated Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) to Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care.

Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care brings some exciting ideas to the table while building on the great things already happening in our system. They will grow integrated delivery sites from the current four (4) co-located sites to twenty (20) integrated sites. Read the full blog post here.

**Note:** this is part of a series of blog posts providing an overview of Arizona’s behavioral health system including the contract management process, financing and other key components of the system. Visit the blog at http://bhsblog.azdhs.gov. Hint: you can subscribe to receive the information as soon as posted!