



# MAY NEWSLETTER



Innovations Community Center is a peer-staffed mental health program that supports the wellness and recovery of individuals from underserved communities. The Center promotes collaborative relationships between recipients of mental health services and mental health and wellness practitioners throughout Napa County.

## FOREWORD

Hey everyone! Before we jump into this month's newsletter, I thought I would share a bit about myself, the man beneath the mask. I am a Peer Mentor here at the Center but I'm also considered the "tech guy" because of my background with computers (and mostly video games). Many participants come to me with their tech issues either on their phone, laptop, or any other device. I help them in any way I can, but I don't just offer tech support. I'm also a person who lends an ear or assists with personal developments and needs, like with job searching, being a support pillar.

Writing this newsletter has been a fun creative outlet that I haven't tuned into since I was making websites and blogs in college. Managing this, along with the ICC website and social media, has been an awesome learning experience and I'm glad there are people who have enjoyed what we have created. I am apart of an amazing team and we are constantly trying to make the best for people here at the center or for our audience online.

- Carlos "Los" Rodriguez

## SUMMARY

### Last Month's Highlights

- First ever Volunteer Appreciation Event
- ICC Field trip to the Napa Bowling Center

### Groups & Events

- Bowling & Volunteer Event: How it was received by participants
- New Peer-led Group happening in Garden

### Upcoming Events

- Center Closure for Memorial Day, Monday 27th
- ICC celebrates it's 8th Birthday!

### Mental Health

- Mental Health Awareness Month: Self-Care

### Volunteer Spotlight

- Top 5 volunteers at the center

### Final Thoughts

- More fun on the horizon
- A Thank you



# LAST MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS



Two first's in one month, who would have thought that would happen this year but it did! Yes, our volunteer appreciation event and our bowling field trip were two things we haven't done before.

Firstly, we have been wanting to organize an event for all the volunteers that we have at the center for the longest time, mulling over the details on how we can best express our gratitude to participants. So for our first annual volunteer appreciation event we held a ceremony where we expressed how much we valued the support of our volunteers and handed out nicely made certificates for all those who could make it. We call each volunteer up one by one and explained for each person their contribution to the center. All of these actions, big and small, all add up to what makes us "ICC" and we were glad to share time with you and enjoy a great meal.

Secondly, we took a few of our most frequent participants out to play a few games of bowling at the Napa Bowling Center. everyone was able to play two whole games of Bowling and we were group together so in a sense it was a social gathering as well. We also provided individualized lunches for each person from the diner at the center, "El Titi Carnitas & BBQ". They were very accomodating for a group of our size and serving out the food went smoothly. And might we add that we had some real all-star bowlers! The field trip was all for fun but it was nice to see people who really enjoy bowling have a place to show off their skills.



## GROUPS/ACTIVITIES

The reception we received for both events was such an amazing response that we are all ecstatic and eager to do more events like these. We heard from a lot from volunteers, by simply acknowledging the ways they have helped the center and being cheered on by their fellow peers, it made their week to be appreciated at the event. Some even wanted their certificates laminated or expressed that they were going to frame theirs at home. Many people also really enjoyed the food we provided at the events. We had a self serve taco bar from Fridas Mexican Grill and the variety and quality From Titi's Carnitas and BBQ. That was our goal for these events; to get our folks out, to socialize and have fun!

We also have a revitalized group this May: "Gardening Gurus"! This will be a peer-led group that will have you exploring the garden at the center, the variety of plants we grow and what kind of ecosystem it brings to the backyard. There will also other broad topics and leans more towards storytelling. We hope you enjoy.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

What's coming up in May? On Monday the 27th, the center will be closed for Memorial Day, but we will reopen the following Tuesday, the 28th. Then on Friday the 31th, we are celebrating our 8th Birthday! And with the weather getting warmer, we hope to take the occasion outside into our backyard, eat some yummy cake and enjoy ourselves. We hope you all can be there as we celebrate 8 amazing years with the community.



# MENTAL HEALTH

May is Mental Health Awareness month!

Mental health is important all year round, but having an entire month dedicated to it helps raise awareness and end the stigma. In last month's newsletter we talked about the benefits gardening has on our mental health. How it can reduce mood disruptions, anxiety, depression, and even decrease risk of dementia. This month, it's all about self-care!

Gardening in itself can be a form of self-care, but first, what is self-care? Self-care is anything and everything that you do to better your physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health. Just like every plant is unique and has its own set of needs, that is also true when it comes to each one of us. What can work for someone else, might not work for you. Which is why it's important to take the time to look within and learn what you need to nurture your mind and soul. Even the very act of recognizing our feelings and emotions is a step in the right direction. It is vital in order for the garden to bloom.

A good first step is to take a few seconds out of your day to pause, breathe, disconnect and then reconnect. It might sound very simple, but can truly make a difference. Other examples of self-care include but are not limited to: staying hydrated, moving your body, watching your favorite show, spending time with yourself, meditating, taking a nap, the list goes on...

As you can see, it doesn't need to be anything fancy, as long as doing it makes you feel good, AND you do it with the intention of dedicating part of your day for yourself. It's important to treat our mind and body how we would treat our garden because after all, our mind is a garden!



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

This is a new section of our newsletter that will go over the volunteer spotlights that we have done on our social media pages. However, for this month we'll go over the 5 volunteers who have helped the community the most. While we are grateful for any and all help we get at the center, we want to give an extra big thanks to these individuals who have given it their all to help us at ICC.

We give thanks to James, who has been helping out in anyway he can, whether it be kitchen, cleaning, or with groups. We give thanks to Alberto, who has done so much work on our garden, planting and trimming, outdoor maintenance, as well as helping with interior maintenance also. We give thanks to Lupe, who volunteers her time teaching Beginners ESL on Mondays, and make a delicious lunch every day. We give thanks to Julie, who like Alberto, helps us with preparing the garden, maintaining all of our plants outside and keeping the center as beautiful as can be. And last but not least, Melody. She volunteers her time facilitating an art group that many love to attend, and recently she has been getting active with our Age & Wisdom group where she shines as a senior leader.

Any amount of help, big or small, makes ripples in the community and we feel them each and every day. Again, thank you all so much for your love and support of the center and its participants & staff.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Nearly halfway through the year but we ain't done yet. A lot of things that have been planned out for months are finally starting to come to fruition, and we still have a few more things coming ahead. Again, we are super thankful to all participants who came out to bowl and socialize and all our volunteers who make the center what it is: a community. We hope you have a great May, filled with lots of love for yourself, your family, and people around you!

## CO-LOCATED SERVICES

### Department of Rehabilitation

(707) 253-4924 | Bilingual Services

- Employment search
- Resume assistance
- Career growth

### Mentis: Healthy Minds Healthy Aging

(781) 932-6300 | Bilingual Services

- Prevention & Intervention Programs
- Health & Nutrition

### Napa County System Navigators

(707) 253-4963 | Bilingual Services

- Referrals made:
  - MediCal, Food stamps, housing
  - Physical/Mental Health Care

### Providence: Community Health Foundation

(707) 254-4157 | Bilingual Services

- Supportive Services & Programs for Adults with Dementia and Alzheimer

## SISTER PROGRAMS



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# INNOVATIONS COMMUNITY CENTER

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