

MEDITATION CORNER

Together is a road traveled by the brave.

- George Betts

Moving through life fully in concert with others requires commitment and much energy. It demands self-love, unconditional acceptance of others, patience, the ability to be vulnerable and to take risks, and the decision to stay put even when the desire to run is great. And this assortment of characteristics is only the beginning. More is required of us, much more, if we want real experience of belonging to those around us. But even more than that is guaranteed for us if we are willing to *be present always*.

If we've chosen to go it alone in the past, we can quickly recall the frequent uncertainty, the defensiveness when questioned by others, the absence of emotional support when the going was rough. But then, we may have believed we were free—other's didn't have to be counted on. However, real freedom to be who we are can only be found among a circle of friends who have committed themselves to us, just as we have committed ourselves likewise.

Together we'll grow, find happiness, and gain strength.

I will lock arms today and move forward in the company of those who need me. I need them also.

The above meditation is taken from: *The Promise of a New Day*, November 4, Karen Casey & Martha Vanceburg, 1991, Hazelden Foundation. Reprinted with permission.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A CHESTNUT VOLUNTEER?

Chestnut has many volunteer opportunities available. Service work is an important part of recovery and what better way to give back than by volunteering for Chestnut? We have opportunities available in the following areas:

- Adolescent Chemical Dependency Treatment Program
- Adult Chemical Dependency Treatment Program
- Management Information Services Department
- Marketing & Communications Department
- Special Events
- Health & Community Fairs
- Facilities & Maintenance Department
- Clerical & Support Services

More information, including a volunteer application can be found on our website at www.chestnut.org/volunteers. You can also contact Diana Myers at (309) 827-6026.

Ask the Expert—Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Each issue of The Beacon will feature an interview with one of Chestnut's clinicians. This issue's interview is with Kerri Marsh, MS, LCPC who is Associate Director of Adult Outpatient Services



What is SAD?

Simplified, SAD is the winter blues. Many people feel depressed, caused by a decrease in sunlight as the days get shorter.

How do I know I have SAD?

SAD looks a lot like depression. It differs in that those who suffer often display the following symptoms: lethargy, increased appetite, increased cravings for sweets and carbohydrates, weight gain and irritability.

How does light therapy treat SAD?

Light therapy tries to approximate the exposure one would get from sunlight. Light therapy involves a person sitting in front of what's called a light box for anywhere from 15-20 minutes a day, up to an hour.

How can diet & exercise affect SAD?

Eating a sensible diet, along with limiting sweets is often helpful. Exercise acts as a mood enhancer. Exercising outdoors in daylight is also helpful.

What else can I do to help myself if I have SAD?

- Try to spend at least 15-20 minutes a day in outdoor sunlight
- Try to follow a daily schedule or routine
- Contact a doctor or other healthcare professional if you're not feeling the benefits of light therapy or if you do feel depressed. Prescribing an anti-depressant can help severe symptoms.

Beating those holiday blues

The holidays can be a period of emotional highs and lows. Sometimes holiday blues can trigger relapse for those recovering from alcoholism and addiction. The following tips are suggestions on how to achieve a happy, sober holiday season:

- **Good self-care is vital.** Remember to slow down. Take some quiet time each day and work on an attitude of gratitude. Plan relaxation and meditation into your day, even for a few minutes, no matter how busy you are.
- **Don't overindulge.** Go easy on the holiday sweets and follow a balanced diet. Monitor your intake of caffeine, nicotine and sugar. Exercise regularly to help maintain your energy level amid a busier schedule. Don't try to do too much. Get plenty of sleep. Fatigue is a stressor. Maintain some kind of schedule and plan ahead; don't wait until the last minute to purchase gifts or prepare to entertain.
- **Enhance your support system.** Holidays are a good time to reach out more frequently to your therapist, sponsor, spiritual advisor or support group. If you're in recovery, spend time with fellow recovering people. Let others help you realize your personal limits. Learn to say "no" in a way that is comfortable to you.
- **Find new ways to celebrate.** Create some new holiday symbols that will help you redefine a joyful holiday season. You might host a holiday gathering for special recovering friends and/or attend celebrations of your Twelve Step group. Don't expose yourself to unnecessary temptations, such as gatherings where alcohol is the center of entertainment.

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White Christmas Hot Chocolate

One way to celebrate the holidays is by enjoying a non-alcoholic festive beverage. The recipe below is sure to bring a feeling of warm holiday cheer.

- 12 ounces of milk
- 1 1/4 ounces of white chocolate chips
- 1 ounce of crushed peppermint candy canes
- whipped cream

Pour the milk into a saucepan and bring it to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add the chocolate and half of the crushed candy canes. Whisk until smooth and creamy, then pour into a coffee mug. Top with whipped cream and remaining crushed candy canes. Makes one single serving.

RECAP OF ALUMNI EVENTS

Recovery Dance

Chestnut's Alumni Services official kickoff took place at the Recovery Dance held on Saturday, September 8 held at Miller Park Pavilion. Approximately 100 people attended the dance which was held in honor of September being National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month. The dance featured a live DJ. Thanks to the following sponsors of the dance: Music Traxx, Oak State Products, Wal-mart and Waugh Foods

Pizza & Movie Night

On Friday, October 5, more than a dozen individuals who were either alumni or in residential treatment enjoyed pizza at Monical's and then went to see a movie at University Cinemas. Watch for more "Dinner & Movie" nights coming up in January and March.

Make a Difference Day

On Saturday, October 27, twenty-one volunteers assembled and painted fourteen adirondack chairs which will be placed outside the men's and women's residential units for clients to sit on. After all their hard work, the volunteers enjoyed a cookout lunch.



A fun time was had by all who attended the dance.



Volunteers worked diligently during Make a Difference Day.