September is National Recovery Month. The next 30 days hope to highlight people’s achievements as they move forward in the path of treating and healing from mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

It has been 29 years since the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) began to celebrate Recovery Month, hoping to establish a culture of awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders, as well as a supportive environment for the millions of people in the process of recovery.

This year’s theme is *Invest in Health, Home, Purpose and Community*, which explores “how integrated care, a strong community, a sense of purpose, and leadership contribute to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance use disorders.”

At CODAC, we know that with support and treatment, recovery is possible! Inside this issue, you’ll find Mark E.’s story. Mark’s life experiences and where he is now are great representations of what a supportive and stable environment, in collaboration with treatment, can accomplish. Mark became a CODAC member in 2014 and has been in recovery for serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders since. Today, Mark celebrates nearly three years without drinking alcohol or using drugs.

This month, and always, we celebrate people like Mark. We celebrate how far you’ve come!

For more information about National Recovery Month, including events, visit RecoveryMonth.gov.
Success Story
An interview with Mark E., CODAC Member

By: Sami S.

Mark E.’s journey has been a difficult one. But he has worked hard at his recovery. His journey and success story only get better.

During the interview, Mark shares with me that he has been diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, depression and alcoholism. For years, Mark says he had no idea he had mental illnesses. The way Mark dealt with everything was to self-medicate by drinking. When Mark drank, he says he would end up using drugs, too. While Mark shares these memories, he shakes his head and says, “I used just about everything under the sun and moon.”

Mark says he struggled with alcoholism the most. He didn’t do drugs, unless he drank and was around other people who used drugs. Mark says he would feel depressed and paranoid, so he would go to the store and get a 12-pack of beer and just drank and smoked.

I asked Mark why he decided to stop using alcohol and drugs. He says the depression was just getting worse and worse. Mark couldn’t keep a job. Then, Mark got two DUIs. The fines took most of his money. Mark ended up homeless, but he kept drinking.

It was time to do something.

Mark joined CODAC in 2014. CODAC’s behavioral health team did a psychological evaluation and determined he has serious mental illnesses. Mark says he also went to La Frontera, where they helped Mark apply for all of the benefits he could qualify for. Mark received food stamps, housing and disability benefits.

Mark hasn’t drank or used drugs in nearly three years! Motivation has really helped him. Mark says he’s attended recovery groups since 2015. Mark also takes medication on a regular basis.

I asked Mark if he still struggles with some of these issues and, if he does, how he deals with them. Mark says sometimes he has the temptation to drink, but he goes on walks instead. He also visits the library or rides his bike. Mark has changed the friends he hangs out with, as well. He now surrounds himself with people whom he can talk to if he has a bad day.

Why is Mark a Success Story?

“I think staying sober and being able to accomplish things, being motivated is what makes me a Success Story,” he says. “Get help. Life is too short. Things get better day-by-day.”

This reminds me of what I always say about a Success Story:

Success is a journey, not the end of the story.
Tucson’s Pride in the Desert

This year’s annual Pride Parade and Festival in Tucson is all about new beginnings. The theme and the symbol of a butterfly, “truly embodies the fresh new direction of our organization, our community, and the power of unity in fueling positive change,” says Tucson Pride, the parade’s organizer. Pride is usually celebrated in the month of June. But the three-digit desert temperatures of summer inspired LGBTQIA people in Tucson to move the celebration a few months later, when it’s a bit cooler.

LGBTQIA pride is not only a celebration of sexual and gender identity diversity, but also a social and political mobilization against discrimination and violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and all other gender non-conforming and non-heterosexual people.

Pride’s origins date back to June 1969, after the historic Stonewall Riots in New York City, primarily led by transgender people of color.

As it’s been the tradition for the past few years, members and staff of Living Out Loud, CODAC’s LGBTQIA health and wellness program, will participate in Pride and are working on designing a float.

If you would like to participate, visit CODAC at Country Club every Tuesday for the Pride Parade Preparation group.

Tucson Pride Parade is on Saturday, Sept. 29, starting at 11 a.m. at Reid Park. For more information, visit: https://www.tucsonpride.org/festival.

Summer Memories at the Mill Pond

By: Rebecca J.

Mill Pond provided a way to appreciate nature during my summer in Newington, Connecticut.

With the wind to our backs and wings on our heels, Nancy and I rode our bikes to the Mill Pond. Complete with sack lunches, fishing rods and bread for bait. It was a beautiful summer day. However, there was more to Mill Pond than just fishing. On the west side of the pond, there was a natural waterfall with a footbridge.

Looking back, Nancy and I performed a daring stunt. We would walk barefoot under the footbridge on the waterfall’s rocky surface. There was even a time when a police patrol car stopped and the officer warned us to be careful!

One of my favorite activities at Mill Pond was to scale down to the foot of the waterfall and pick up any trash that may be polluting its base. I consider Mill Pond to be a magical place. Stocked with gold fish and loaded with toads. Fishing was always successful. Although, we would put the fish back in the water.
Recipe: Turkey Meatloaf

By: Risa R.

Ingredients:
- 2 pounds of ground turkey
- 1 large onion
- 2 green bell peppers
- 1 jar of marinara sauce
- 1 cup of bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste

Follow these steps:
- Chop onion and two green bell peppers.
- Add salt and pepper to ground turkey.
- Add onion, green bell peppers and bread crumbs to the turkey.
- Mold turkey into loaf pan.
- Cover loaf with aluminum foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- Pour jar of marinara sauce on turkey loaf. Cover again with aluminum foil. Bake for another 15 minutes. Yummy!

Happy Labor Day!

By: Bill J.

Labor Day...the official end of summer, right? Well, maybe not here in Tucson. Have you ever wondered about the origin of this holiday?

Labor Day was created by the United States labor movement, with the idea of honoring the economic and social achievements of workers in the U.S. Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894 and it is observed the first Monday of every September.

This year, as we celebrate with family or friends, let's also be mindful of the great work of our predecessors, and let's honor the present generation of workers and what they represent to this country's advancements.

*Astrology is the study of the movements and relative positions of celestial objects as a means for divining information about human affairs and terrestrial events. It dates back to the 2nd millennium BCE.