

The JOYFUL INDEPENDENT

SEPTEMBER 2024

September is a favorite month

...for those of us who are tired of a long, hot Arizona summer. We notice the first signs of fall as the temperatures drop ever so slightly and the days become a bit shorter. In Arizona, the emotion feels a bit like Spring Fever does to folks who live in other parts of the country. We are anxious to feel cool morning air again and feel the revival of spirit and energy that seems to come along with it. Our Activities Calendar for September provides more than ample opportunities to use this renewed energy so get out and enjoy some fun with your neighbors! Check out our new Activities Calendar inside!

THE GOOD NEWS • Chaplain Kurt Stromberg

Fall and Disobedience

The Fall: Beautiful Colorful Trees and Disobedience. It sounds like a broken record when I say that time is literally flying by, as we find ourselves in transition, from the scorching Arizona summer to the fall season; this Chaplain's favorite time of year. Being from the Midwest may have something to do with the appeal of the fall season as there are not many things that are as spectacular as the vibrant colors on the leaves of the trees.

Solomon in his great wisdom reminds us of this when he states, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

This includes the leaves changing colors as the trees prepare for the winter season.

"The Fall" also represents mankind falling out of alignment with the Creator because of our rebellious spirit which causes us to be disobedient. Yahweh at the time of creation gave Adam and Eve free reign over the entire garden with ONE exception, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, God did say, "you must not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." (Genesis 3:3) And just like when a child is told "NO" rebellion is often the response, just like Adam and Eve.

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What causes you and I to be disobedient just like Adam and Eve? What causes us to fall and or sin? From the beginning the Creator's instructions for us have included being obedient to His commands and covenants.

This thought is shared with us in Deuteronomy 28 where we are instructed about the "Blessings for Obedience". "If you will fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth."
(Deuteronomy 28:1)

When our Creator says "NO", He means no. And that meant for Adam and Eve to stay away from the tree at the center of the garden, Christ reiterates these same thoughts as He declares, "If you love me, keep my commands." (John 14:15)

The world sure could use some more love and Jesus felt the same way when He taught this, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest command. The second is like it, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:36) Our Creator is seeking a personal relationship with each one of us. He loves us so much.

His commands are included in the fruit of the Spirit where we are to treat each other with love, joy, gentleness, kindness, as well as self-control. How you treat others reflects where you are in your personal relationship with your Creator.

Just as children are called to be obedient to the instruction of their parents, we are to be obedient to the Lord's instructions, commands and covenants for our life. In doing so life becomes more about us, instead of just focusing on me.

People can tell where we are in our personal relationship with our Creator by the fruit that we produce. Are you producing sour or bitter fruit or sweet and succulent fruit? Obedience to the Creator's instructions helps us be the kind of people that others want to be around. Remember the example, "He came to serve and not be served." (Matthew 20:28).



Our Mission:

Through Christian love and excellence, we are dedicated to providing a fulfilling lifestyle and promoting independence to those we serve.

Honoring the American Worker

Labor Day in America conjures up images of three-day weekends, American flags proudly waving in the breeze and poolside gatherings featuring BBQ burgers and hot dogs. While many citizens have the opportunity to celebrate Labor Day with a day off, this Federal holiday has a long history of supporting American workers.

Labor Day is a national holiday that is observed on the first Monday in September. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, “Labor Day is an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers.”

The concept of Labor Day began in the late nineteenth century. Labor activists began to lobby for a federal holiday recognizing the “many contributions workers have made to America’s strength, prosperity and well-being.”

Municipal ordinances passed in 1885 and 1886 gave way to a movement to secure state legislation. While New York was the first state to introduce a bill, Oregon was the first to pass the law recognizing Labor Day on February 21, 1887.

That same year, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York also passed laws to enact a Labor Day holiday. Over the next several years, many more states had adopted Labor Day holidays. On June 28, 1894, Congress passed an act, and President Grover Cleveland signed a law that proclaimed the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday.

Labor Day was celebrated throughout history much as it is today, with parades and parties honoring the American worker. The first proposal for Labor Day “suggested that the day should be observed with – a street parade to exhibit ‘the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations’ of the community, followed by a festival for the recreation and amusement of the workers and their families.”



Our Values:

*Guided by Christ’s love, we believe in the immeasurable value of every person.
We are committed to joyfully serve with humility, integrity and respect.*

Many citizens are proud to fly their flags and show their pride in America on Labor Day, and every day. According to the American Legion, it is considered general flag etiquette to display the flag “on all days, especially on all Federal holidays; and on State holidays.”

Senior citizens can show their support and thanks to the American working class by displaying their American flags on Labor Day weekend. Use the three-day weekend as an opportunity to travel, visit family, or host a gathering in honor of Labor Day. This late-summer holiday celebration doesn't have to be elaborate. Many Labor Day celebrations happen poolside with a cooler of cold drinks along with a simple BBQ of hamburgers and hot dogs — a classic American meal.

Though there are likely many more triple-digit days in the future, Labor Day also tends to mark the unofficial end of summer. With school back in session and most people back from their summer vacations, Labor Day signals a transition into fall.

So before the season comes to an end, take some time to recognize Labor Day and say farewell to summer with a celebration honoring American workers.

Pain Management Tips in Honor of Pain Awareness Month



Chronic pain is one of the most common ailments in America. According to a May 2024 article on chronic pain on the National Library of Medicine website, “Chronic pain affects over one-quarter of the United States population and is a prevalent complaint seen in outpatient medical clinics.”

According to the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), September is Pain Awareness Month. During this time, IASP and other organizations “raise public awareness around pain, pain management, and the great work pain professionals do during September...and beyond.”



What is Chronic Pain?

According to the Mental Health America website, at “some time in our lives we will all experience pain—physical and/or emotional discomfort caused by illness, injury, or an upsetting event.” Though pain can serve a protective purpose so “your brain signals you to stop doing whatever is causing the pain, preventing further harm to your body,” it is not meant to last a long time. Acute pain typically lasts three to six months.

On the other hand, chronic pain is ongoing beyond that timeframe or goes away and then returns. It can begin to negatively affect your well-being. According to Mental Health America, “Chronic pain is often associated with other health conditions such as anxiety and depression, resulting in a low health-related quality of life.

How does chronic pain affect mental health?

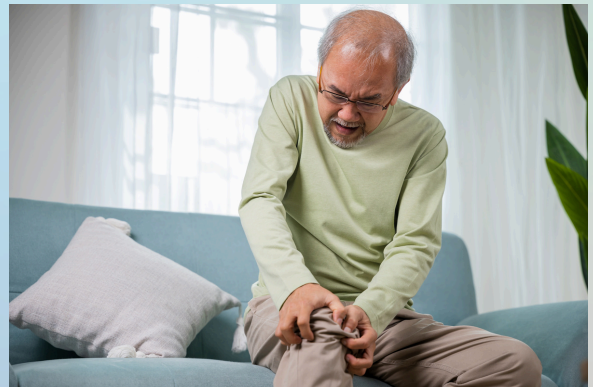
Living with ongoing pain can be physically and emotionally stressful, and chronic stress can change the levels of stress hormones and neurochemicals found within the brain and nervous system. This can ultimately affect mood, thinking and behavior.

Mental Health America states: “Disrupting your body’s balance of these chemicals can bring on depression in some people.”

Furthermore, an article on the topic featured on the Mayo Clinic Health System website states that certain factors can magnify the experience of pain, such as “stressful life experiences, mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and social isolation, decreased ability to do the things you enjoy doing and overexertion or under exertion.”

Tips for managing chronic pain

While the article states that there is no single cure for chronic pain, medical management, movement therapy and coping strategies can help. In order to maintain your physical and mental health, tools to help you manage your chronic pain are essential. Some of these tools include are listed on the next page.



Practice breathing exercises, such as inhaling slowly through the nose and allowing the lungs and belly to expand before exhaling slowly through the nose and mouth.

Physical activity, such as a gentle stretching program, yoga or tai chi can help. Those with chronic pain need to work with a physical or occupational therapist to determine appropriate exercises, as all bodies and all pain are different.

Enjoy meaningful activities that help boost the body's endorphins, which act as the body's feel-good chemicals. Exercise, relaxation techniques and enjoyable experiences activate endorphins. Seek a little joy and calm each day.

Other essential coping strategies can include:

- Meditation
- Practicing good sleep habits
- Eliminating unhelpful substances such as cigarettes or alcohol
- Eating a healthful diet

When developing a routine to manage chronic pain, slowly begin to incorporate these or other methods one at a time. Caregivers who support someone with chronic pain can help by educating themselves about pain management methods that they can suggest or help implement for their loved one. Those with chronic pain should also stay in touch with their caregivers for help and support as well as for the benefit of connection.



Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month is annually recognized in America from September 15 through October 15. The history, culture, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South Americas are celebrated and honored, according to the National Hispanic Heritage Month website.

Hispanic Heritage Month began Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 under President Lyndon Johnson. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded the observation to span a 30-day period from September 15 through October 15. On August 17, 1988, it was enacted into law on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

According to an article on the website, September 15 is a significant date because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Furthermore: "Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Also, Columbus Day or Dia de la Raza, which is October 12, falls within this 30-day period."

Why is Hispanic Heritage Month significant in Arizona?

It's essential to recognize the history and culture of the Hispanic community in Arizona because it is at the core of the state's demographic. According to an article on ABC15.com: "The most recent American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates the state's Hispanic population at 2.3 million, making up just under a third of the state's total population of over 7 million."

The article goes on to state that in the last decade alone, approximately 394,000 Hispanics were born in or have made their home in Arizona. The state now has the fourth-largest Hispanic population in the country.

The importance of recognizing Hispanic's role in history spans beyond Arizona. According to the National Museum of the American Latino website: "Latinas and Latinos have always held significant roles throughout our country's history, dating all the way back to the American Revolution. Hispanic Heritage Month is important because it provides an opportunity to celebrate the integral part the Hispanic/Latino community has had in growing and strengthening our democracy."



How is Hispanic Heritage Month celebrated?

Hispanic Heritage Month is honored in various ways around the country. Many museums and cultural institutions present special exhibitions and programs. Some cities may host festivals, parades, events and other experiences that engage and educate attendees about the history, culture and achievements of the Hispanic/Latino community.

Learning more about Hispanic culture need not be reserved for just one month out of the year. There is a wealth of knowledge online, within libraries, and through museums and experiences that showcase the history of the Hispanic culture and its significance in America.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, consider attending a parade or event, committing to learning something new about the culture, or engaging in a cultural tradition. For example, seniors who like to cook may try a traditional Hispanic recipe in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, while those who enjoy art may wish to attend a museum with a Hispanic Heritage Month exhibition.



Volunteer Spotlight

Have you noticed a lot of activity in our libraries recently? We have a new team of Resident Volunteers, 'The Librarians,' who are taking the books off the shelves, removing old, unwanted labels, repairing dust covers, cleaning books and shelves.



The books are being alphabetized, by author, before they are returned to the shelves. The Librarians will make every effort to comply with protocols for libraries:

- No books will be kept on top or bottom shelves where they cannot be reached;
- Large print books will be kept in their own separate section;
- Returning books should be placed on the designated return table. The Librarians will refile them.

Lynne LeRoux, Volunteer Council Leader, counts herself fortunate to have travelled at home and abroad. She enjoys working with diverse groups; wants to make the books available in an organized manner. She notes there is a great selection of books, and that we have happy librarians!

Bonnie Spicer is the Team Leader of The Librarians. She likes to travel, loves to read, has worked in libraries in the past, and wants to organize the Center and Grand libraries.

She wants you to know that the libraries have a wide selection of books for our residents to enjoy.

Pam Obermeyer is a former family therapist and a published author of a non-fiction book titled, Let's Communicate With Love.

Bert Obermeyer likes to care for others, likes to help his wife who is a librarian. He notes we have a LOT of books!

Charles Sevarese, when he was still a new resident, began to quietly clean and straighten the library shelves and books. He began the process of creating a 'large print' section, and of removing books from the bottom and top shelves.

Our gratitude goes out to these dedicated resident volunteers! See photo on page 9.



Did You Know?

September is Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mental illnesses, for the most part, are thought to be caused by a variety of genetic and environmental factors:

- Inherited traits: Mental illness is more common among those with affected blood relatives.
- Environmental exposures before birth: Stressors, inflammation, toxins, alcohol, or drugs during pregnancy may link to mental illness.
- Brain chemistry: Neurotransmitters, brain chemicals, carry signals throughout the brain and body.

The following factors can increase the risk of developing a mental illness:

- A history of mental illness in a blood relative
- Stressful life situations
- An ongoing (chronic) medical condition
- Brain damage as a result of a serious injury
- Traumatic experiences, such as military combat or assault
- Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
- A childhood history of abuse or neglect
- Few friends or few healthy relationships
- A previous mental illness

Tips for preventing or managing mental illness:

- Monitor warning signs: Identify triggers with your PCP or therapist.
- Routine checkups: Don't skip medical visits, especially if unwell.
- Seek help early: Don't wait for symptoms to worsen.
- Self-care: Prioritize sleep, nutrition, and exercise.



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nutritional nuggets

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Three Simple Ways to Prevent Inflammaging

Have you ever rolled out of bed one morning wondering where that new ache or pain came from? It might be due to inflammaging, a type of low-grade inflammation that increases with age. Age-related inflammation is highly correlated with serious illnesses like heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, and poor brain health. In this month's edition of Nutritional Nuggets, we'll look at 3 ways to lower your inflammation naturally.



EAT MORE ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Eating a diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods is like giving your body a daily dose of love and nourishment. Fatty fish, leafy greens, berries, nuts, olive oil, turmeric, ginger, and green tea are not just delicious, but they are also packed with powerful antioxidants and nutrients that can help reduce inflammation in your body. Find creative ways to incorporate them into your diet by drinking a soothing cup of organic turmeric and ginger tea, drizzling olive oil over your veggies, or adding berries and greens to a smoothie.



EAT LESS PRO-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Take control of your health by avoiding foods that trigger inflammation in your body. Lowering your intake of omega-6 fats like corn, soybean, sunflower, and safflower oils reduces your risk of chronic diseases. Opt for healthier alternatives like olive oil, avocado oil, or coconut oil to nourish your body without causing inflammation. Heat damages olive oil, so don't use it for baking or frying. By making small changes to your diet, you can experience increased energy, improved mood, and overall better health.



EAT FOR YOUR PERSONAL BIOCHEMISTRY

There are several other things that can trigger inflammation that we don't consider.

- Food Sensitivities
- Nightshades
- Diets high in sugar, processed or refined foods

K came into my office struggling with bursitis. When we removed her food allergens, the pain was gone in one week. J's pain was increased by chili powder, a member of the nightshade family. All of my clients reduced their inflammation when they removed junk food and ate more whole foods!



Resident Volunteer Librarians



Resident Peggy Stimson shows off her craft from Camp Fellowship.

Members of the Mesa Rotary Club sponsored a Paint & Sip event for our resident art class and joined in to socialize.

Fun was had by all!

