



TIDE POOL TIMES

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association's Monthly Regional Newsletter

January Wellness



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Tide Pool Times Editor: Jenna Larson

Program Update Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Project

December found Amy and Jenna at the Mat-Su Valley Veteran's Resource Fair. Outreach for our Suicide Prevention Program is some of the most rewarding work, and our team loves connecting with Veterans in the Communities we serve. Connection is the most important part of our program, which is why we have multiple opportunities for our enrollees in the program to connect with us and each other.

Destiny has fully taken on the weekly listening circles at the Anchorage Vet Center, and Jenna's Wednesday afternoon yoga sessions resumed after she got back from visiting family. We are gearing up for the Chena Women's Wellness Gathering in April of 2025. This is the perfect healing space for women to experience nature and connection for overall wellbeing. Amy will be offering Healing Touch (energy therapy that helps balance the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being). Destiny will be there with Peer Support and Veteran resource assistance, and Jenna will be facilitating the daily activities as well as booking Rapid Transformational Therapy sessions for those who want to ameliorate their anxiety and depression.

All of us here at APIA and your SSG Fox Team want to wish you a peaceful New Year. If you know a Veteran in our service area or are one yourself, or if you are an active service member and you are interested in joining our program, please contact destinyk@apiai.org.



VA Suicide Prevention Grant Recipient

Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program Award Recipient



Photo Courtesy: David Fox



Photo Courtesy: Jeanette Dushkin

Mental Wellness Month

From Mental Health Center

Blue Monday is a day during Mental Wellness Month, usually the third Monday in January. The holidays are over, and many people start to realize the consequences of their actions when caught up in the spirit of the season. Credit card bills, weight gain, and seasonal depression are associated with Blue Monday. It is reportedly the saddest day of the year. But it doesn't have to be! This year, make Blue Monday and the rest of the month a celebration in honor of mental wellness.

One person can make a difference. Your words and actions are powerful, and if they reach even one person who struggles with mental illness, you've won. Below are some examples of how you can celebrate Mental Wellness Month even if no one else is celebrating.

1. Start a Conversation with someone about mental health to break the stigma of seeking treatment. Spread the truth about who and why people experience mental illness.
 2. Create a live video on social media sharing information about Mental Wellness Month. Try to make it go viral.
 3. Volunteer at your local mental health center. Other volunteering ideas include shelters, libraries, and food banks.
 4. Practice self-care. You can't truly promote mental wellness unless you prioritize your mental health. Get a massage, meet with a counselor, take naps, and find other ways to love yourself.
 5. Start a gratitude journal where you write at least five things you are thankful for daily.
 6. Learn a new hobby, one that distracts you from daily stressors and makes you happy.
 7. Join or start a mental health wristband challenge where you, and others you inspire, wear the bands all month long.
 8. Join or start a social media group for mental health awareness.
 9. Host a fundraiser to raise money and awareness for mental wellness.
 10. Read a book to an elementary classroom. There are wonderful books on mental health written for every age group, even picture books for early readers. Connect with a local elementary teacher and volunteer to read a children's book to the class. It is never too early to talk to children about emotions.
 11. Wear yellow (or green, pink, purples, etc.) on Blue Monday.
- For more tips on getting through January [visit this website](#).

REFRAMING WINTER

A few years back (2021) I was going through cancer treatment. I was intensely ill. It was winter in Alaska, and I couldn't keep up with all the normal things I was used to doing, not to mention the fact that we were all still reeling from Covid. I joined a support group on social media and found a beautiful poet going through what I was experiencing.

Andrea Gibson is a phenomenal writer and beautiful soul. Her encouragement never ceases to amaze me. Here is her latest share about the season and the depression we often feel. "Instead of depression, try calling it hibernation. Imagine the darkness is a cave in which you will be nurtured by doing absolutely nothing. Hibernating animals don't even dream. It's okay if you can't imagine Spring. Sleep through the alarm of the world. Name your hopelessness a quiet hollow, a place you go to heal, a den you dug, Sweetheart, instead of a grave."

Sometimes we just need a reminder to allow our feelings, and a slower pace. Rest is acceptable. There is healing there for us. Acknowledging these normal human emotions isn't the same as staying stuck in them. It's just for a season. Hibernate. -Jenna



Photo Courtesy: Jeanette Dushkin

Monthly Spotlight

Climbing trees, jumping on mountain bikes, and getting lost in the woods shaped me from an early age. Nature began as a refuge from a chaotic upbringing. As I grew older, it became a place where I found a sense of belonging and deepened my connection to myself. It ultimately led me to become a Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist—the first person to be certified in the United States!

As a teen, I discovered I had a strong sense of justice and often found myself standing up for those who were being harmed. I consistently challenged systems and authority, regardless of the consequences that nearly always followed. My soulmate, Caitlin, and my partner, James, would tell you I came out of the womb this way. Integrity and wholeheartedness are my two guiding values, which naturally make me attuned to patterns, able to call out inequities, ask the hard questions, and act when others stay silent. It's not always an easy path, but I know it is the one I'm meant to walk.

Being part of the Queer community, I understand how sacred community, belonging, authenticity, and safety are for human development. I believe that everyone deserves to love and be loved, to have safe and stable housing, and to be embraced for their truest selves. These values guide my work as a clinician, as a mother of two, and as a person in long-term recovery. (But that recovery story? That's for another day.)

Oh, and by the way, my name is Becks Jacobs. I'm a Behavioral Health Clinician and Wellness Project Coordinator on the Breaking Waves team. I get to combine my passion for helping others and advocating for community with my reverence for the outdoors. I'm surrounded by a team that wears their hearts on their sleeves and steps into the ring to fight for others. I'm deeply grateful that APIA has been part of my journey.

To those reading this, I hope you are surrounded by people who cherish you. I hope you laughed so hard this week that your belly ached. I hope you feel seen and heard. And I hope you never forget the infinite power of your voice. If you're missing any of those things in your life, come seek me out at APIA—I've got you.



TIP OF THE MONTH



During my undergrad I had a professor that started off the new semester in January by having us all write what our New Years Resolution was. Being that it was the middle of January, there were many who freely admitted that they had already lost motivation for what they had just written down.

Studies show that only 19% of people who resolve to make a change in the New Year actually stick to it. This was the whole point of the exercise; professor was proving a point. There are more effective things we can do to effectuate positive change in our lives, and they are a whole lot more fun, in my opinion.

Make a list of what you are looking forward to this year. Think about how you can make them happen and then plan it. If it's a trip for instance, set a date in your calendar with an alert for when you'll book the ticket. Do the same for the hotel, and any activities. You get the picture.

Create monthly themes. Instead of 365 days of one goal, give yourself a month of whatever you want the theme to be for those 30 days (give or take). This type of planning creates a sense of accomplishment and fun. Have more fun this year!

In Good Health ~ Jenna



Photo Courtesy: Aleutian Images

Coffee, Kindness, & Connections

Ahhhh, the first week of January. The gyms are full, the “health food” is out in all the stores, and there are yoga pants on sale everywhere you go. The resolutions are prominent in social media, and health product peddlers are amped to their height on the sale of a dream-version of their consumers. Hopes are high. “New Year, New You!”, we think to ourselves. It’s a grand version of what we inherently know is the truth of our daily lives; today is a new beginning, a fresh start, full of promise. That’s why I love coffee. What it symbolizes. Mmmm, coffee. A brand-new day. The promise of a day yet to be discovered. More on that later.

This past year has been one of reevaluation. What are we willing to tolerate, or recreate? I became painfully aware of my propensity to give too much thought and energy to the things that have little return on investment. What is it for you? What thing have you perpetually put effort into in the past that was a waste of energy? What are some healthy resolutions and healthy boundaries you can create for yourself this year? What are your goals, and what are your plans to achieve them?

I take my writing cues from my clients and life events with a common theme. If there are three or more souls just in my circle dealing with an issue, chances are, more of us are dealing with similar headaches. Our outward lives are often an indication of what is happening within us, so with this in mind, I fashion my goals and plans for this revolution around the sun. This year, I choose to release self-judgment. I choose to have a deeper connection with those I love and with those who edify, encourage and uplift me. As I have always made a conscious effort to focus on the beauty and greatness of those in my inner circle, I aim to allow them to do the same for me. The learning of self-worth and connectedness is something I choose to allow this year. Maybe I’m not the only one.

Perhaps the world is coming to the conclusion that connection is a direct byproduct of our releasing self-judgment. I’ve noticed that the more I learn to totally and unconditionally love and accept myself, the more I am able to have compassion for others. We’ve talked previously about shame and how it damages our capacity to evolve. Connection does the opposite. It creates a network of strength where we are able to find commonalities with those around us and our environment and admire the strength and tenacity of others as well as see their humanness.

WHY PRACTICE MINDFULNESS?

Some time ago, a psychology student overheard another student, Jacob, telling his friends about his current worries. So, she approached them and gave them an unforgettable lesson.

As she walked towards them, she held on to a glass of water and asked them: “How much does this water weigh?” “I don’t know,” Jacob said with a shrug.

“Eight ounces!”

“Wrong,” the student said.

“A pound?”

“Wrong again.”

“What is the answer?” Jacob asked.

“The way I see it, the actual weight — the weight in numbers — is irrelevant. What’s relevant is how much time a person spends holding it.”

“What do you mean?” asked Jacob.

“If you spend less than a minute holding the glass of water, you’ll observe that it’s fairly light. But, if you spend hours with it in your hands, your arm might ache. And if you spend almost a day holding it, your arm is likely to cramp and feel numb,” she explained.

“That makes sense.”

“It’s just like your worries. The longer you worry, the heavier your heart will feel.”

(Adapted from Inspirational Life)



Photo Courtesy: Jeanette Dushkin

Connections (Cont.) From the Editor

The great sages have long told humanity that our acceptance of ourselves helps us accept others with compassion. The converse is also true. When we are hard on ourselves, we transfer that to our judgment of others. A favorite quote I saw last week was by Taylor Steele, “Every time I judge someone else; I reveal an unhealed part of myself”. Let me share this fun little tidbit. While watching a wholesome family show with my son a while back I learned from one of the characters that the word “psyche” is derived from the Greek, which means both “butterfly”, and “soul”. Another character in the series took this to mean that the soul is that part of us that has the power to transform like a caterpillar turns into the butterfly. Okay, so now that I’ve sufficiently shared a fun tangent with you, here’s what I found...

I find myself reminding... well, myself, as well as my kids and clients that we each have control of three things, everything else is up to somebody else. “You are in charge of YOUR thoughts, YOUR feelings, and YOUR actions.” Attempting to control another is an act of futility that can only, by nature create resentment and resistance to what you really want. The cool thing about this power of choice is we can choose whom we surround ourselves with. What a difference this makes! B.F. Skinner has taught us much in the realm of human behavior. The premise goes something like this...Encourage (respond to) what you want to see more of and ignore (put on extinction) the behavior that you’d rather not deal with.

Alright, back to my thoughts on coffee. In Italian, the word espresso means “when something is forced out”. I know it’s literally referring to the near-boiling water that is pushed through the ground coffee beans, but my capacity for connection insists there are more analogies to be made than just the glorious beginning of the day. That coffee has no say in whether the water is forced through it, but the effect it has on the water that pushes through is profound. By the end of this day, you will have been propelled through time. What you chose to do with that time will be completely up to you. By the end of this trip around the sun, you get to effectuate change. Since you have control over only three things in your life (those thoughts, feelings, and actions we were talking about), my hope for you is that you create a masterpiece of yourself, healthy boundaries, and an environment of kindness for those around you. Happy New Year!

NEW YEARS MOOSE STEW



This is a delicious and nutritious meal for anytime you need something hearty, healthy, and warm. (Adapted from Maggie Joos recipe for Beef Stew.)

Ingredients

2 tablespoons Grapeseed Oil (or olive)
1 ¼ pounds Moose Stew Meat
1 diced Onion
3 minced Garlic Cloves
4 ounces diced Green Chiles
2 tablespoons Tomato Paste
2 cups Chicken Broth
2 diced Carrots
3 diced stalks Celery
1 cup Peas
Salt and Pepper to taste

Instructions

Salt and pepper meat. Heat oil in heavy pot over medium-high heat. Brown the meat, about two minutes on each side. Remove from heat Add onion, garlic and chilies to pot; stir to pick up browned bits. Cook for two minutes, then add ketchup (or tomato paste). Stir and cook for two more minutes. Pour in stock and add beef back to the pan. Cover pot and reduce heat to low. Simmer, covered, for one hour. After an hour, taste and add additional seasonings as needed. Add carrots, celery and peas. Stir, cover and let sit for 30 more minutes. Enjoy!



Photo Courtesy: Ali Marvin

Community Board



Want more
from your
relationship?



Learn new ways to understand & enjoy each other more.

Alaska VA is offering a one-day workshop for Veterans & their partners.

For more information contact the
Relationship Health & Safety Program:
(907) 257-4827

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Rural Health



Building Relationships with
Vitality and Engagement



★ Veterans Food Assistance Program ★

What?

Starting October 1st DVNF will be offering a one-time grant per veteran household to support their nutritional needs.

How to Apply

We have an online application that will need to be completed by the Veteran. The application can be found at <https://www.grantinterface.com/sl/dl4NjA>. The link will be open starting October 1st, 2024.

Veteran Qualifications

- Must have a DD214 or Veteran ID
- Was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
- A letter of reference from a case worker or advocate may make the application more favorable.

Other Details

- This is not a monthly grant.
- The groceries will be delivered directly to the Veteran using Walmart or grocery store delivery service.
- Veterans can receive up to \$450 worth of groceries

For more information, please contact us: (202) 737-0522 - info@dvnf.org
www.dvnf.org



WWW.APIA.ORG



ALERTON PIERCE OF ISLAND ASSOCIATION

Community Board (cont.)



Photo Courtesy: Destiny Key

**In January We Celebrate
Orthodox Christmas, &
Mental Wellness**

UPCOMING EVENTS

January is the month of...

New Years
Orthodox Christmas
Mental Wellness
Civil Rights

January 7th

Orthodox Christmas

January 14th

Orthodox New Year

January 20th

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February is the month of...

Valentine's Day

Presidents Day

March is the month of...

Daylight Savings

St. Patrick's Day

Sewards Day

Vietnam Veterans Day

Employee Appreciation

Lead by Example

**Prioritize Your
Mental Health**



NATIONAL COUNCIL
for Mental Wellbeing



Contact 1-800-844-375-2742 or

907-222-9764 to discuss a behavioral health referral

SMOKER'S LUNG VS HEALTHY LUNG

SMOKING CAN IMPACT YOUR LUNGS IN SO MANY WAYS. SEE THE DIFFERENCE BELOW:

- GRAY OR BLACK IN COLOR
- INFLATED LUNGS
- IRRITATED & INFLAMED BRONCHIAL TUBES CAUSING RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS
- DAMAGE OF THE AIRSACKS
- INCREASED THICKENED MUCUS CAUSING BUILD UP IN LUNGS & AIRWAYS, MAKING IT HARD TO BREATHE
- COUGHING UP PHLEGM
- SMOKERS COUGH
- OCCASIONAL WHEEZING & MORE



- PINK IN COLOR
- NORMAL SIZE LUNGS
- NO INFLAMMATION OF THE AIRWAYS
- BREATHE EASIER
- HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM
- MORE OXYGEN LEVEL
- MORE ENERGY
- LIVE LONGER



We are here to help. We have resources & the help you need to support you along your quit journey.
Call your local clinic or the Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Today!

- APIA Local Health Clinic: (907) 276-2700
- Behavioral Health Clinic: (907) 222-9764
- Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

For more information, contact Caroline Nevak at
(907) 222-4237 or email: carolinen@api.ai.org

