

Optimum Health Institute Newsletter

Connecting the OHI Community | FALL 2023



Serving Others as a Path to Personal Growth

"A wonderful way to cultivate personal growth while serving others is by becoming an OHI Missionary."

— Bob Nees Jr., p2

Rhonada Marsland, OHI Guest |



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CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

BOB NEES, JR., SENIOR PASTOR

Greetings OHI community; here's wishing you optimum health and wellness as we enter the fall season. You may recall from our previous newsletter, I wrote about the difference between self-confidence and self-esteem, and why building self-esteem is important to optimum health and wellness as well as personal growth.

Serving Others as a Path to Optimum Wellness and Personal Growth

In this issue, I will continue the theme of personal growth by looking at how being of service to others promotes holistic wellness and holistic healing.

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."
3 John 1:2

What is Optimum Health and Wellness?

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

"Optimal health is a dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health."

Here at OHI we've helped hundreds of thousands of people achieve optimum health and wellness of the body, mind, and spirit for 47 years with our time-tested holistic healing program. At our healing missions in California and Texas, we can help you heal in body, mind, spirit and show you how to make changes to achieve optimum health. Maintaining optimum health through wellness techniques is a daily commitment, but that doesn't mean it has to be a chore. You start with small changes, establishing a daily routine and when done in a supportive community like OHI – it can be fun and fulfilling. When you help others with your time and talent new studies show that your health is improved.

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
Acts 20:35

How Helping Others Can Promote Optimum Health

Helping others reduces stress. According to the Mayo Clinic, service to others creates "a stress-reducing effect that decreases the risk of many physical and mental health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety and general illness."

Being of service feels good. It triggers the hypothalamus of your brain to release the neurohormone dopamine which

is known as the feel-good neurotransmitter. This chemical stimulates the reward center of your brain which creates feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. It is so effective at this that it actually motivates people to seek out and search for more such activities so that they can repeat the experience. Finding a worthwhile volunteer activity creates a symbiotic relationship where you help yourself at the same time you are helping others.

Helping others helps you live longer. Additional research has demonstrated that regular volunteer activity lowers blood pressure. Older individuals who donated 200 hours of their time per year reduced - by 40 percent - their risk of hypertension. In many ways volunteering is holistic healing that helps you live longer.

Assisting others connects body-mind-spirit and promotes personal growth. Personal growth is a serious endeavor; in fact, it is a personal responsibility because no one else can do it for you. And, very few will encourage you to do it. At OHI's holistic healing and wellness retreats, we show you how to develop personal growth through our classes and activities which encompass the body, mind, and spirit.

Supporting others helps regulate your emotions. Marianna Pogossyan, Ph.D. reports in Psychology Today that a recent study at Columbia University revealed that when you help others navigate their stressful situations; you enhance your own emotion-regulation skills, and subsequently enhance your own emotional coping skills. She adds, "The two most common ways to help others regulate their emotions are through acceptance (showing empathy by validating their feelings) and reappraisal (helping others think about their situation in a different way)." Pogossyan notes the study showed that helping others to regulate their emotions predicted better emotional and cognitive outcomes for those participants who were giving the help. Moreover, because heightened levels of self-focused attention are common in depression, the more people helped others, the more their helping behavior leads to a reduction in their own depression, thanks to the use of reappraisal in their own daily lives. At

OHI, fellowship occurs daily, and you may not realize it but your conversations are helping others and yourself.

Achieve Optimum Health, Wellness, and Personal Growth at OHI

A great way to help you achieve and maintain optimum health is by helping others. Service to others not only moves your own holistic healing to the next level, it provides you with opportunities for personal growth and gives you a sense of purpose.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38

A wonderful way to cultivate personal growth while serving others is by becoming an OHI Missionary. For those of you who have completed our three-week program, you have the opportunity to deepen your own personal OHI program experience. As a missionary, you will take your own holistic healing to the next level; you will form powerful bonds with your fellow missionaries and the OHI community; and you will find many opportunities for personal growth. It's a profound experience that will change your life positively in more ways than you can imagine. To learn more about the OHI Missionary Program, call (800) 993-4325.

What's New at OHI

We have developed a variety of special pricing programs for our returning community members – This is our way of thanking you for being a dedicated and loyal community member!

The Early Bird Special*

The Early Bird Special is ideal for guests who plan ahead. Receive \$100 off any single-occupancy private room for your 1st week when you book your reservation 3 weeks in advance.

Extended Stay Savings*

This special pricing is perfect for the guest who books a consecutive 2 or 3-week stay. Receive 15% off the entire 3-week program or 10% off a 2-week stay.

4th Week Bonus*

This bonus is for our "OHI frequent flyers". Stay 4 weeks in a 12-month period and during your 4th week stay – pay tuition (\$1750) plus \$75 for your room.

OHI's Commuter Program*

For those who live close to our Austin and San Diego campuses – Enjoy the benefits of the program while sleeping in your own bed each night. Pay Tuition Only (\$1750), which covers all classes, meals, and materials needed to complete the program.

OHI's Referral Program*

Receive a reward for referring your friends and family to OHI.

- Refer 1 person and get \$1000 off your first-week stay.
- Refer 2 people and get \$1000 off your first-

week stay and \$1500 off your second week.

- Refer 3 people and get \$1000 off your first-week stay, \$1500 off your second week, and your third week is Free in a Courtyard room at OHI San Diego or a King room at OHI Austin.

Bring a Friend and Save*

You and your friend receive a special rate when staying at OHI together!

Invitation to Try OHI Austin or OHI San Diego*

Are you an OHI San Diego returning guest hasn't yet stayed at OHI Austin? Or, an OHI Austin guest who is thinking of trying OHI San Diego? If you are, we have special pricing for you!

*Restrictions apply. Call (800) 993-4325 for complete terms.

Come to OHI for the Holidays!

Plan on celebrating the holidays at OHI this year. Enjoy this heartfelt time of year with like-minded people in our warm and welcoming community. We go all out with our decorations, lights, and music to make the season special. It's quite magical! Be sure to book early – **call us (800) 993-4325 to book your stay!**

Inside this edition: Read further about the connection between spiritual and physical health and tips on how to nurture yourself with nature. Get to know staff member, Alexis Enriquez; OHI Austin missionary, Tanya Trklja; OHI guest, Rhonada Marsland; and how an OHI Scholarship helped Darcia Smith find kindness and healing at OHI. We remain humbled and grateful to all those who contribute and help people like Darcia. Please also consider contributing to the OHI Scholarship Fund which helps OHI community members in need. And finally, be sure to turn to page 10 for details on OHI's Thanksgiving Savings.

Here's wishing you health and wellness in this fall season.

Yours in prayer,



Robert P. Nees, Jr.
Senior Pastor and Chairman
Optimum Health Institute of San Diego and Austin



Stay Connected With Your OHI Cohort

Join OHI Facebook pages for San Diego and Austin

- Start a Facebook group page for your cohort.
- Share food videos.
- Keep writing "Daily Gratitudes."
- Pledge to support your "Buddies."

As your transformation grows arrange to return to OHI with your friends from your cohort.

The Connection Between Spiritual Health and Physical Health



Holistic wellness is the integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

The Connection Between Spiritual Health and Physical Health

To achieve holistic health and overall wellness, you need to put effort into fueling your body, engaging your mind, and nurturing your spirit so that the balance shared between the three optimizes your health. But what is the connection between the various aspects of wellness? Is there a direct connection between spiritual health and physical health that science can explain? In this article, let's explore the connection between spiritual health and physical health, and then look at ways to enhance your spiritual health so that it improves your physical health.

What is Spirituality?

Everyone has their own interpretation of what spirituality means. Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk, provided this explanation of spirituality in his book *The Music of Silence*: "Spirituality is a vital awareness that pervades all realms of our being. Someone will say, 'I come alive when I listen to music,' or 'I come to life when I garden,' or 'I come alive when I play golf.' Wherever we can come alive, that is the area in which we are spiritual. To be vital, awake, aware, in all areas of our lives, is the task that is never accomplished, but it remains the goal." Overall, spirituality is a sense of connection to something bigger than yourself, and often involves the search for meaning in life and to understand your purpose.

What is Spiritual Health?

Spiritual health is achieved when you feel at peace with life, and able to find hope and comfort in even the most difficult

times. If you are struggling to maintain your spiritual health, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What makes me feel most complete?
- When do I feel most connected to the rest of the world?
- Where do I find the most inner strength?
- What am I doing when I feel whole?

The answers to these questions provide a good starting point on your journey to improving your spiritual health.

The Connection Between Spiritual Health and Physical Health

By fostering a healthy spiritual life, can you better manage your physical health? Consider this hypothesis — A healthy spiritual life contributes to inner peace. Striving for inner peace means actively coping with stress and eliminating internal turmoil, and that allows your body the grace to rest and recover. That recovery fuels the strength needed for physical healing. Look at all the ways that a healthy spiritual life can contribute to a healthy body:

Lower blood pressure: High blood pressure damages your circulatory system and is a significant contributing factor to heart attack and stroke. By fostering a healthy spiritual life through positivity, you reduce stress which helps lower your blood pressure.

Lower risk of depression: Depression has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and high blood sugar levels. A healthy spiritual

life embraces positivity, self-acceptance, and an enthusiasm for learning and growth, and that engaged attitude lowers the risk of depression.

Stronger immune system: A healthy spiritual life is founded on optimism, and optimism lowers your fight-or-flight response and gives your body the green light to turn on the rest-and-repair response. That charges your immune system up and guards your body against illness.

Reduced stress: Chronic stress can cause lasting damage to both the mind and body, making you feel fatigued, distracted, or irritable. A healthy spiritual life steeped in positivity reduces stress, which improves your energy levels, your focus, and your mood.

Improved sleep quality: Insomnia is often caused by stress and anxiety. Fostering a healthy spiritual life reduces stress, which makes it easier to fall asleep as well as improves your sleep quality and duration. The more restful and restorative your sleep, the better your physical health will be.

Ways to Improve Spiritual Health

To improve your spiritual health, think about what brings you a sense of hope and positivity...

- 1. Religion:** If fostering a relationship with God brings optimism to your life, try seeking out the ritual and practice of religion. The sense of belonging that a church family offers could really buoy your spiritual health.
- 2. Nature:** If immersing yourself in nature brings all five senses alive for you, strive to spend time outdoors every day. Try gardening, hiking, or even apple picking. Sit under a tree and meditate or practice yoga. Lie in the grass and ground yourself, feeling the support of the earth down your spine and the warmth of the sun on your face. Those moments in nature will fuel stronger spiritual health.
- 3. Art:** If you find beauty and meaning in art, embrace that connection. Visiting an art museum is a wonderful choice, but why not try creating art yourself? Take a woodworking class, drop in to a paint-your-own-pottery studio, or take up a creative hobby like knitting or quilting. Whatever kind of art speaks to you can energize your spiritual health.
- 4. Music:** If music sparks joy, then embrace it! Make yourself a "spirit mix" of music that speaks to you. Or take your connection to music to the next level and learn to play an instrument or sing. You could support music in schools and foster a love of music in children. You could volunteer at a senior living community and create different music genre libraries so seniors can listen to the type of music that triggers long-term memory. Make music the centerpiece of your happiness and the happiness of others to deepen your spiritual health.



5. Helping Others: If you find fulfillment in helping others, that service can take on many forms, whether it be doing volunteer work, being kind to a stranger, or offering help to a friend or family member in need. Lean into that source of gratification and find a way to be of service every day, and you'll jumpstart your spiritual health.

6. Gratitude: If focusing on all the things in your life you are grateful for brings you peace, there are many gratitude practices you can tap into — journaling, prayer, mindfulness, meditation. Start or end each day listing 5 things you are grateful for. Reach out to people to express your gratitude for all the joy they bring to your life. Fostering an attitude of gratitude is a great way to fortify your spiritual health.

Improve Your Wellbeing at OHI

Spirituality is a sense of connection to something bigger than yourself, and includes a search for meaning in life and to understand your purpose. By fostering a healthy spiritual life, you can better manage your physical health through reduced stress, improved sleep quality, a stronger immune system, lower blood pressure, and lower risk of depression. To improve your spiritual health, embrace what brings you a sense of hope and positivity — fostering a relationship with God, spending time in nature, enjoying art and music, helping others, or expressing gratitude. The effort you put into supporting your spiritual health today will pay itself back to you with improved physical health tomorrow. Healthy Spirit = Healthy Body

One of the best ways to improve your spiritual health is with a wellness retreat at OHI. Our holistic healing retreats give you the time and education you need to implement meaningful change in your spiritual life. The gift of a healing retreat at OHI promises to be life changing.

Strengthen the connection between your spiritual health and your physical health. Book your next visit to OHI today. Call OHI today (800) 993-4325.

Let Nature Nurture Your Health

There are so many wonderful self-care tips that will help you on your journey to optimal health and well-being. One of the simplest pieces of self-care advice is also one of the most effective — spend time in nature. From gardening in your yard to hiking the Appalachian Trail to camping in a national park, nature is endlessly fascinating and the benefits to your health are just as numerous. Let's take a quick peek at just how spending time in nature could jumpstart your wellness journey...

How Does Nature Nurture You?

Nature provides opportunities for recreation and leisure, spiritual fulfillment, personal development, social relations, and aesthetic experiences. In short, nature is one of the best holistic health supplements around! The health benefits of spending time in nature have been supported by scientific research time and again:

- Lowered blood pressure, decreased heart rate, and reduced cortisol (stress hormone)
- Improved immune system function
- Increased endorphin levels and dopamine production (promotes happiness)
- Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Boosts creativity and ability to problem solve
- Restored capacity for concentration and working memory
- Reduced irritability and feelings of isolation
- Increased feelings of calmness
- Helps you live more in the present moment (disconnecting from technology and stress triggers)

Here's how to get the most out of your time in nature:

- Allocate a minimum of 2 hours per week spent outdoors to see health benefits
- Move your workout outdoors — those who exercise outdoors regularly can reduce the risk of mental health problems by up to 50%
- Spend time outdoors before you start a creative project. Researchers think the variety of interesting, but non-distracting stimuli you experience in nature primes your brain for "directed attention."

5 Ways to Enjoy Nature that Jumpstart Your Wellness

Practice mindfulness by reveling in nature's natural wonder and beauty. Here are 5 ways to embrace the joy of nature:

Exercise in nature: Swim, bike, hike, climb, jog, golf, or surf your way to better physical health in the great outdoors, and your body will thank you. The cardiovascular or strength training activity will help your body sweat out toxins, build muscle, strengthen bone, and improve flexibility and balance.



Elevate your mood in nature: With the sun shining on your face, you can't help but feel the weight of the world lifted from your shoulders. Exposure to sunlight assists in setting circadian rhythm, which aids in boosting mood while you're awake as well as helps you go to sleep at night for better sleep. A solid circadian rhythm also combats anxiety and depression.

Connect with God in nature: The great outdoors is really one big church sanctuary, so go outside and appreciate all that God has wrought. As you pray or meditate, make the effort to incorporate breathing exercises. Connecting your breath to the moment can enhance your appreciation of the outdoor space and your connection to God.

Socialize in nature: Outdoor activities are a great way to socialize. Whether you take a yoga class outdoors, join a group bike ride, or picnic with friends, enjoying nature is the driving force that brings a group together. Socialization is critically important to your mental health, and nature provides so many fun activities you can pursue with friends and family.

Solitude in nature: Outdoor activities are also a great way to enjoy solitude and find peace in a chaotic world. When you spend time in nature by yourself, you give yourself permission to be in the present moment and experience it with all five senses. To stand outside in the rain, feeling the cool water on your skin, smelling the wet earth, tasting the clean raindrops on your lips, hearing the distant thunder, and seeing flashes of lightning, it gives you a perspective on your place in the universe and how magnificent and complex and awe-inspiring the natural world is.

Spending Time in Nature is Essential to Your Well-being

A stay at OHI is a wonderful way to immerse yourself in nature and reap the healing benefits. With OHI Austin's winding walking trails and OHI San Diego's beautifully landscaped gardens — both campuses provide the perfect safe and sacred outdoor space for healing. So come to OHI and spend time in nature to nurture your well-being!

Allow nature to nurture your body, mind, and spirit. Book your next visit to OHI today. Call OHI today (800) 993-4325.



GUEST SPOTLIGHT

Meet three-time OHI Guest, Rhonada Marsland

Rhonada Marsland was born and raised in California. She has been an interior designer for 20 years, and currently resides in Florida. Seven years ago, she started experiencing health issues, so she invested the time and energy to track down the source. To her dismay, she found she was allergic to an avalanche of foods — shrimp, coffee, chocolate, almonds, eggs, etc. “I needed a reboot,” said Rhonada. “My inflammation was out of control. I met a great group of women, and one recommended I try a wellness retreat at OHI. She had stayed at OHI several times, and said it was life changing. I needed that.”

Rhonada Marsland

Rhonada’s first visit to OHI San Diego was five years ago. “I was so nervous,” said Rhonada. “The first week was brutal. I was pretty sick during the detox and had a migraine for five days. But something good happened by Friday of that first week. I suddenly felt like a new person. I realized I didn’t just want to stay for another week; I NEEDED to stay.”

So, what brings Rhonada back to OHI time and again? “I think what keeps me coming back is how good it feels to do a complete body and mind reset,” said Rhonada. “I pay attention to my body now and eat so much healthier. And mentally I am now my own friend. I go a little easier on myself. I am lighter in every sense of the word after a week at OHI.”

Rhonada goes to as many classes as she can when she stays at OHI, but she does have a few favorites. “I absolutely LOVE the vocal toning class where you clear your energy centers,” said Rhonada. “That is magical. You can feel everyone’s electricity. It is very powerful. But I think the classes that are the most impactful for me are the mental detox classes and the self-esteem classes. I learned at OHI that we have 70,000 thoughts each day, and many are negative. I knew I needed to change my thinking and focus on the good. For me, accepting past mistakes and losses and moving on has helped me lead a more fulfilling life. You can’t grow as a person or move forward if you’re always looking back. Listening to others also helps me to stop and be present. You can’t be present if you’re always talking. Everyone has a story. You just have to be willing to stop talking and just listen. I believe everyone who goes to OHI wants to improve their lives. It is very intentional. Working on yourself can be challenging. It takes a village, and the more help I can get the better. Sharing my feelings and getting someone else’s point of view helps me gain perspective.”

Rhonada doesn’t continue the raw diet at home, but just does her best to incorporate what she can. “I swear by the daily juicing,” said Rhonada. “I have done it for five years now, and the days that I skip my morning glass of celery juice I can definitely feel the difference. I limit eating meat to only once or twice a week. I also sprout now, and it is so easy!”

Rhonada’s most recent OHI stay was particularly impactful for her. “I always meet wonderful people at OHI,” said Rhonada, “but the women I met during my last stay were such a gift. We clicked. We became sisters, and I know these are friendships I will have for the rest of my life. I am certain God had planned it that way.”

Rhonada’s faith has only deepened since she started visiting OHI. “Spirit never really leaves you. You leave it,” said Rhonada. “So, I work hard on keeping it strong. Giving thanks every day for my blessings. Prayer every day before I sleep, and meditation or yoga before sleep keeps me grounded. Bible study with all my girlfriends on a weekly basis via Zoom keeps my spirit, spiritualism, and my faith strong.”

Rhonada wraps up the conversation with this heartfelt advice. “You are what you speak, so be a good communicator,” Rhonada said. “You can have all the love in the world for an individual but if you aren’t communicating clearly that relationship will be difficult or even fail. Communication is key to a successful friendship, parent/child relationship, and with your significant other. I also think you should try to express one random act of kindness per day to a stranger. People are always happy to hear a compliment, and I am most happy giving them. It feels great to be someone else’s cheerleader. And my last piece of advice is don’t be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. I turned 55 recently and booked a trip to India. I traveled by myself for part of it. I probably wouldn’t have done that 10 years ago.”

Get to Know OHI Missionary, Tanya Trklja

Tanya Trklja describes herself as someone suspended forever in that “in between” place. “I grew up in Serbia and left my family to come to Canada,” said Tanya. “I have always felt stretched between the two countries. I think every immigrant can identify with that feeling. With that mindset, I had high expectations and felt I had to prove myself. I worked hard for decades in a very stressful corporate project management and operations role, where I was a high achiever. I also spent a great deal of time juggling my family, kids, social life, professional development, and expectations from my family back in Europe. About seven years ago, my body gave in to all the pressure, and I experienced a total body, mind, and spirit breakdown.”

Tanya turned to OHI for help. “The program helped me immensely,” said Tanya. “The wheatgrass detox cleanse was exactly what my body needed to reset. The organic raw vegan foods were as delicious as they were healing. The body, mind, and spirit classes helped me process my breakdown so I could start building myself back up again. But what I appreciated the most was the sense of fellowship and community at OHI. I needed that to

uplift my spirit and reinvent myself. Listening to other people’s stories really inspired me.

“After experiencing the program as a guest, I knew I would one day come back as a missionary. That ‘one day’ manifested itself the very next year. Since then, I keep coming back annually to both OHI San Diego and OHI Austin for a tune up and inspiration.”

Tanya felt “cared for” when she was an OHI guest, but she felt truly “connected” when she served as an OHI missionary. “OHI is my home away from home, and the staff and fellow missionaries are my adopted family,” said Tanya. “I feel fully supported surrounded by like-minded people. As missionaries, we’re all helping each other while living the program and supporting other guests on their life journeys. As a missionary, I know I am living my life’s purpose, connecting and helping others. It helped me develop a greater self-awareness, deepened my reliance on God, and allowed me to trust the Spirit to guide me through life’s challenging situations. The daily prayers and Bible reading deepened my faith and values. I feel confident I now have the most up-to-date healing modalities for body, mind and spirit in my toolbox to continue living the OHI program outside of OHI. And I owe it all to the OHI Missionary program.”

Tanya opened up and was totally vulnerable while working as a missionary, and she received so much in return. “We all know how great it feels to give without expectation, and that is exactly how I approached being a missionary,” said Tanya. “I have been so blessed in return. It is an honor to be a listening ear as guests share their feelings. To offer encouragement and hope to someone who is

temporarily going through a dark phase in their life, and holding a space for their healing, is a responsibility I took seriously. I am so grateful that OHI taught me how to offer support to those around me, show love instead of fear and understanding instead of judgment. I now shine my true authentic light and am present for others.”

On a practical note, Tanya sees many benefits to serving as a missionary. “When you’re a missionary, you deepen your skill sets in areas of guest services experience, relationship management, food service, and facilitation skills. You enhance time management and communication skills in the areas of team building and community development. These personal development skills can enhance anyone’s life, academic and professional experiences.”

Tanya enthusiastically shares stories of her missionary experience with others. “Whether helping guests with the detox cleanse, conducting exercise classes, or hosting a weekly variety show, the role was fun, creative and very gratifying,” said Tanya. “I loved seeing guests transformed with renewed energy and motivation to live their optimum life. I wholeheartedly recommend OHI’s Missionary program to anyone who feels the call to return and serve. We are all ambassadors of this program, and we have a unique opportunity to share our knowledge and experience with anyone interested in making a positive life change. I am passionate about sharing my experiences and promoting the OHI program around the world with the hope that everyone learns that transformational healing can be accessible to all.”

Tanya’s parting words show you her true heart. “The OHI program allowed me to be more open, to be vulnerable and able to share and receive. I now focus on what I can control and let go of what I can’t. I’m living my very best life with intention, one day at a time. Come to OHI, and you can, too.”

Tanya Trklja



Scholarship Recipient Darcia Smith Finds Kindness at OHI

Darcia Smith knew something was wrong. "I had hearing loss in my right ear, headache pain so severe that it made me nauseous, and my face was too tender to even touch," said Darcia. "Doctors kept telling me it was just a sinus infection. When the right side of my face, mouth, and tongue went numb, the diagnosis came back Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma, which is an inoperable cancerous tumor in my nasal passage. They recommended chemo and radiation. I prayed on it, and instead started a vegan regiment. That choice led me to meet Karyn Calabrese, the owner of Karyn's Plant-Based Kitchen. I shared my diagnosis with her, and she told me about OHI. OHI blessed me with a scholarship. To God be the Glory!"



While traveling to OHI, Darcia got sick and had to isolate in her room for a week. Even though she was alone, she never felt lonely because her connection with the staff and guests was profound. "I couldn't have imagined how kind everyone would be to a stranger," said Darcia. "I felt so loved and cared for. The kitchen staff would leave heartfelt notes on my food tray. The facilitators knew I liked jigsaw puzzles, so they dropped off puzzles at my room. I could feel everyone praying for me."

After spending four weeks at OHI, Darcia's health improved drastically. "I no longer take pain meds twice a day for headaches, the feeling is completely restored to the right side of my face, mouth, and tongue, my nasal passages are open and clear (I can blow my nose!), my blood pressure is 118/64 with no meds, and the sciatic nerve pain that I've had for three years is gone. God did His thang!"

Darcia has nothing but praise for OHI. "The OHI scholarship was instrumental in saving my life. THANK YOU! I hope everyone who reads this article will give OHI a try."

"Your life is a gift, and they can help you make the most of it. There is love, joy, and peace at OHI, and I plan to be a missionary there one day."

Share the Love, Share the Feeling, Share the Gift of Healing

Please consider contributing to the OHI Scholarship Fund to help those in need experience the benefits of the OHI for Life program. Over the course of our 47 years, OHI has provided scholarships to individuals who could not afford to otherwise attend. In most years, we have been able to fulfill all requests for assistance through the generosity of our community. OHI invites you to join with us in celebrating our healing mission with a tax-deductible gift. Your contribution will help to make our community stronger, healthier, and more vibrant. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Provide the Gift of Healing today by supporting the OHI Scholarship Fund with a **tax-deductible one-time donation, or sustainable monthly contribution.**

Optimum Health Institute is a non-profit, religious organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

Share the Gift
of Healing



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- 3 PHONE**
(800) 993-4325

Meet OHI San Diego Staff Member, Alexis Enriquez

Let's get to know Alexis Enriquez. As the Kitchen Manager at our San Diego campus, Alexis is the magician who brings the healthy raw plant-based diet to life for our guests.

OHI: Tell us a little about yourself outside of OHI.

AE: I was born in Mexico. I came to the United States when I was 12 years old. I didn't speak English, but I immediately started middle school and quickly learned. After middle school, I went to the Health Science High School in San Diego. Sharp Memorial Hospital was nearby and had a relationship with the school. Students could shadow hospital employees in different departments, and then apply for a job at the hospital. I worked in food services at Sharp Memorial for two years and learned a lot. When I attended college, I continued to work in the restaurant industry to help pay for tuition. My major is biochemistry. Cooking is all about experimentation and chemical reactions, so cooking and biochemistry are distantly related if you think about it. Anyway, I met my wife, Diana, nine years ago when we were both in high school. She's a nurse now. We've been married for two years. I don't have a lot of spare time, but I do try to go to the gym and workout regularly. I also like to get outdoors and hike. The weather is always beautiful in San Diego, so when I'm not in the kitchen I like to get outside and enjoy the sunshine.

OHI: What made you decide to apply to OHI?

AE: To be honest, working in the restaurant industry is very intense. The hours are brutal, and the stress is very high. I had been working in that environment for eight years. I had to put my college classes on hold because biochemistry is just as high stress and intense as working in a restaurant. I wanted a new job that utilized my restaurant management experience, but that was less of a pressure cooker. I was looking for an environment where I would be valued for the contribution I was making. I saw an OHI hiring post looking for an Assistant Kitchen Manager, and I checked into the organization. It was completely different from the restaurant environments I was used to working in, but at the same time it utilized all of my skill sets. I was hired in December 2022 as Assistant Kitchen Manager, and I was recently promoted to Kitchen Manager. I love it here! The atmosphere is so calm and peaceful. The staff members from every department are so kind and supportive of each other. And the guests are really interesting and pleasant to serve. I work six days a week, but the time I spend here is very pleasant. All the staff members work extremely hard to make sure the guest experience is as welcoming and accommodating as possible. It's very fast paced, and we are busy from the minute we arrive to the minute we leave. The time goes by in a blink, and at the end of the day we have served amazingly healthy, delicious food to people who want to fuel their body with only a clean, organic, raw diet.

OHI: What are your responsibilities as Kitchen Manager?

AE: I manage the kitchen staff, and we prepare all the food for the guests. There's a bit of a learning curve to it, getting up to speed on the OHI program of food combining, living food recipes, nutritional



Alexis Enriquez

information, and program standards. I had a bit of prior experience in dehydration, juicing, fermenting, and sprouting, but working in the OHI kitchen has made me a master at all of it. We make the Rejuvelac and do all the wheatgrass juicing. I also help out in the greenhouse a bit.

OHI: What's your favorite part about working at OHI?

AE: I love the opportunity to meet different people each week. I join the guests at circle before every meal. I answer any questions they may have about the food, the program, the Rejuvelac, and how to sprout and ferment. They ask really great questions because they are so motivated to continue the program for themselves when they go home, and I'm happy to give them the confidence they need to keep going.

Every day at OHI is different, so I'm always learning. I also really appreciate how the staff members all look out for each other. It's such a supportive place.

OHI: Do you have any advice for those who have never visited OHI before?

AE: Come with an open mind and an open heart. Be willing to experience change. Around the fourth day, you will see how amazing this detox diet is for your body. It will benefit your health in ways you can't even imagine.

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Fall2023



Visit Us: Sunday Open House

Visit our weekly Open House every Sunday starting at 4:00 p.m. in San Diego and Austin. The OHI Program offers visitors, guests and adherents a personal tour of the facility, lecture, prayer circle and an all-raw plant-based meal. A \$5 donation at OHI San Diego and \$7 donation at OHI Austin is appreciated, but not required.

Contact Us: (800) 993-4325

We'd love to hear from you. To receive special offers and updates, email us at newsletter@optimumhealth.org or call us at (800) 993-4325. For more information about the OHI for Life Body-Mind-Spirit Program, please visit our website at www.optimumhealth.org

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