

Optimum Health Institute Newsletter

Connecting the OHI Community | SPRING 2025



The Ritual of Cleansing

"The best thing about a cleanse is that it opens up space for growth, renewed intentions, developing positive habits, and new opportunities to learn more about what you are genuinely interested in."

— Bob Nees, Jr., p1

Reina Padilla, OHI San Diego Staff Member



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CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

BOB NEES, JR., SENIOR PASTOR

Greetings OHI community, and welcome to spring. There's just something about this season that is so invigorating. The air is warmer and the sun seems brighter. With new leaves emerging and flowers blossoming, vibrant color is returning to enliven a drab world as it awakens from its long winter nap. Spring symbolizes renewal, making it the perfect time for many to participate in Spring Cleaning. In this issue I'll explore a unique perspective on this tradition and discuss the significance of the ritual of cleansing.

The Ritual of Cleansing: Paving the Way for Healing

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

You may recall from our January newsletter, I wrote that all of us have something to heal. I noted that OHI looks at healing from a holistic approach which considers the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit. We then looked at how our bodies are designed to heal organically – if we remove obstructions such as unhealthy food, toxins, stress, and negativity. We reviewed that in order to heal holistically; we must address our mental and emotional needs with practices that consider the subconscious mind where most mental and emotional issues reside. We also considered the need to express our emotions in order to heal.

Many Situations Call for a Reset

Have you ever wished that you could just start over? From scratch? The burdens of life can lead to negative thoughts that can make you feel that way.

Are you feeling stuck? In unhealthy relationships where you are spending too much time with people who bring you down? In a dismal dead-end career that leaves your personal aspirations unfulfilled?

When your life is overloaded with too many responsibilities; and you struggle to keep it all together... When there are many things that need maintenance, cleaning, or some sort of care... When our lives get cluttered with too many details – many of them unnecessary... Feelings of overwhelm can make you wish you could throw it all away and start over. When you're feeling that kind of stress, it's time to unburden yourself with a ritual cleanse.

Create Your Own Ritual of Cleansing at OHI

Healing – including holistic healing – starts with cleansing. These days people talk about “going on a cleanse” as if it is a new thing. History, however, is full of cultures and religions that adhere to a custom of cleansing. Ritual cleansing, often called ritual purification, is practiced by all of the major religions including: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, as well as, many others. Most of these traditions involve cleaning the body with moving water.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. Ezekiel 36:25

I grew up as a Christian, and as such was baptized as a baby and again when I was old enough to understand its meaning. Baptism is a ritual cleanse that is a symbolic renewal of the spirit. In other words, it is a spiritual cleansing. There is so much more to spiritual cleansing which I will get into momentarily. First I want to discuss OHI's comprehensive holistic cleanse which tackles the whole self - body, mind, and spirit – and why you should develop a ritual cleanse.

Ritual is a Matter of Mindset

A ritual is more than just a habit; it is a way of thinking. A ritual is a sequence of activities that may be prescribed by tradition. Many rituals are symbolic, but establishing a ritual of holistic cleansing involves a great deal more. Like the dirt that is released from our skin and pores when we scrub our bodies while bathing, holistic cleansing is about releasing that which is hurting us: toxins, negative thoughts, limiting beliefs, bad habits, unhealthy relationships, and above all stress.

Our lives have many parts that can stand a clean-up. You may be carrying emotional baggage from past negative experiences such as an unhealthy relationship, a missed opportunity, or a career effort that failed. Perhaps you're feeling trapped in a lifeless routine that sucks the energy out of you. Anything that has the power to upset you or keep you awake at night is an area ripe for a cleanse. It's all about letting go - of all that no longer serves you - especially letting go of the past. At OHI you'll learn mindfulness techniques that will help you live in the present instead of the past or future.

Creating a ritual of holistic cleansing several times a year is a great way to routinely reset and renew your life. It gives you the opportunity to prepare for a fresh beginning. A cleansing ritual can bring clarity to your life and enable you to focus on your purpose or assist you in finding one. It empowers you to stay the course with your goals and dreams.

The best thing about a cleanse is that it opens up space for growth, renewed intentions, developing positive habits, and new opportunities to learn more about what you are genuinely interested in.

Getting Rid of That Which is No Longer Useful to You

A cleanse at OHI simultaneously addresses the body, mind, and spirit. The OHI cleansing diet helps eliminate toxins from your body through fasting and consuming fresh, raw, organic

foods. By participating in various classes and activities, such as our Release Ceremony and Mental Detoxification class, you will discover how to eliminate negative thoughts and limiting beliefs, effectively cleansing your mind.

"The cure of many diseases is unknown to physicians because they are ignorant of the whole; for the part can never be well unless the whole is well." Plato

The OHI for Life Body-Mind-Spirit Program will also teach you how to purify your spirit through practices like meditation, reflection, and prayer. It's important to find the time to be silent, quiet your mind, and pray. It is prayer, along with reflection and contemplation, that revitalizes the spirit most of all. Finding the silence and quieting the mind will guide you back to your higher power. That's why the best place to cleanse your spirit is in a peaceful retreat-like setting such as OHI where you are shielded from the erratic outside world in a safe and sacred space with a community of like-minded folks.

With your spiritual cleanse you will expand your consciousness. This means you will experience a wider and deeper awareness of your surroundings. It will enable you to live in harmony with others as you will feel more compassion and empathy for people everywhere. It will help strengthen your relationships with friends, family, community, and the world. You'll develop a better insight into the causes of obstacles you encounter, and the ability to recognize the lessons to be learned.

Additionally, your OHI cleanse will include learning how to master your emotions through our Alpha, Conscious Breathing and Self-Esteem classes. You must cleanse the stress from your life by learning how to healthily express your emotions. At OHI we will instruct you in how to cleanse your emotions which begins with acknowledging them. This validates that they are normal and okay to experience. Next identify the emotion you are feeling. By observing your emotion, you can focus your attention on what sensation it is causing in your body. Then ask yourself, "What is this emotion communicating to me?" and "What is it suggesting that I need?"

"Healing will likely require you to change something in your life. This is what cleansing is all about: taking the personal responsibility of making changes to your body, mind, and spirit."

All in all the ritual of cleansing is an act of self-care. It reminds us to slow down, focus inward, and check-in with how we're feeling. This intentional pause can help you realign with your goals, values, and higher self.

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

2 Corinthians 7:1

When we leave OHI and go back to our regular everyday life, it is easy to fall back into bad habits. Because of that, I

encourage everyone to make a ritual of cleansing at OHI one to four times a year.

Come to OHI this Spring

The sun is shining, and the flowers are blooming, this is a great time to reunite and strengthen your bonds with your OHI community. A spring cleanse will help you reset and revitalize your body after the long winter months. Be sure to book early – call us (800) 993-4325 to reserve your stay!

What's New for 2025

This spring, we are excited about the new updates coming to OHI. We have just introduced a new property management and reservation system aimed at improving our guests' experience by keeping track of your preferences. We're also improving our check-in process for quicker and more convenient arrivals. We're excited to have you at the center of this new system!

Additionally, we're initiating a fundraising campaign to increase scholarships for individuals on their healing journeys, set to launch in the coming months. In addition, we are planning to offer virtual classes, enabling you to participate in OHI sessions from the comfort of your home, so you can refresh and rejuvenate whenever you wish.

Inside this edition: Read further about OHI's cleansing diet and how to keep hope alive during difficult times. Get to know staff member, Reina Padilla; OHI missionary, Matt Krug; OHI San Diego guest, Maria Conchita Alonso; and how an OHI Scholarship helped Kimberly Searle hit the Reset button. We remain humbled and grateful to all those who contribute and help people like Kimberly. 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 your Memorial Day Savings.

Here's wishing you health and wellness this glorious spring.

Yours in prayer,



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



Stay Connected with OHI

Stay connected with the OHI Community on our social media platforms!

- Facebook: **OptimumHealthInstitute**
- Instagram: **@optimumhealthinstitute**
- YouTube: **@OptimumHealthInst**

The OHI Cleansing Diet & Why It Works



The OHI Cleansing Diet combines nutrition, detoxification, physical activity, with mental and spiritual practices to promote optimal well-being

The OHI cleansing diet takes a body-mind-spirit holistic approach to promoting optimal wellness, integrating nutrition, detoxification, physical movement, and mental and spiritual practices. This unique program is based on the science of detoxification and natural healing. Here's HOW it works and WHY...

The Body: Nutrition, Detoxification, and Movement

From raw, organic plant-based foods to physical activity, every aspect of the OHI cleansing diet is designed to help the body detoxify, replenish, nourish, and heal.

Raw, Organic, Plant-Based Foods: The Foundation of Optimal Health

The foundation of the OHI diet lies in live, raw, organic plant-based foods. Raw fruits and vegetables are rich in enzymes, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytonutrients that support digestion and cellular repair. When food is cooked, the heat destroys many of its vital nutrients, especially enzymes that are essential for digestion. A raw diet helps the body retain these enzymes, promoting improved digestion and better nutrient absorption. Raw foods also have an alkalizing effect helping balance the body's pH and their high-water content helps keep the body hydrated.

Sprouted Foods: Unlocking the Full Potential of Seeds, Grains, and Legumes

Sprouted foods are a key component in the OHI cleansing

diet. Sprouting significantly increases the levels of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber in seeds, grains, and legumes, all of which contribute to improved digestion and nutrient absorption. Sprouts are a rich source of folate, Vitamins B, C & K, and minerals. They also contain natural enzymes that make nutrients and protein more bioavailable. Sprouting decreases phytic acid and lectins, which can interfere with nutrient absorption. Best of all, sprouts are easier to digest than unsprouted grains, nuts, and legumes.

Fermented Foods: Enhancing Digestive & Immune Health

Fermented foods are a powerful part of the OHI cleansing diet. Fermented foods like sauerkraut, seed cheese, and rejuvelac contain beneficial probiotics, enzymes, and bioavailable nutrients that support digestion and immunity. Fermentation produces beneficial bacteria (probiotics) that support a healthy gut microbiome, helping boost immunity and protect against inflammation, which is crucial for detoxification. Additionally, fermentation helps break down food, making vitamins

and minerals more bioavailable. The natural enzymes in fermented foods help break down proteins, carbs, and fats, reducing bloating. Fermentation helps neutralize phytic acid and lectins, making nutrients easier for the body to absorb.

Dehydrated Foods: Concentrated Nutrition

Dehydrated foods are an interesting addition to the OHI cleansing diet, adding texture, variety, and concentrated nutrition. Dehydration at low temperatures (below 105°F) keeps food in its raw state, maintaining vitamins, minerals, and natural enzymes. Dehydration can also make fibrous foods like fruits and vegetables easier to digest while retaining beneficial fiber.

Wheatgrass: Detoxification and Cellular Repair

Wheatgrass, another staple of the OHI cleansing diet, is particularly revered for its detoxifying properties. Wheatgrass contains a high concentration of Vitamins A, C, E, and K, which are essential for immune function and cellular repair. The nutrients in wheatgrass help support liver health, further boosting the detoxification processes.

Juice Fasting: A Scientific Approach to Detoxification

Juice fasting is another powerful component of the OHI cleansing diet. Juice fasting allows the digestive system to rest while still providing the body with vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables. Juice fasting activates the body's natural detoxification processes by promoting the release of stored toxins from fat cells. Juices are rich in



phytonutrients, antioxidants, and vitamins that help to repair oxidative damage, fight inflammation, and support cellular regeneration.

Elimination of Toxins: Relieve Stress on the Body

The OHI cleansing diet does NOT include processed foods, animal products, caffeine, sugar, or alcohol. Eliminating these foods reduces the intake of toxins and stress on the body.

Intermittent Fasting & Food Combining: What to Eat and When to Eat It

The OHI cleansing diet also incorporates intermittent fasting and food combining to boost the effectiveness of the program. Intermittent fasting helps regulate metabolism and improve cellular repair by restricting eating windows, giving the body time to detoxify and regenerate. Food combining enhances digestion and nutrient absorption by pairing foods that complement each other, reducing digestive strain.

Colon Cleansing: Releasing Built-Up Toxins

Colon cleansing is another essential practice in the OHI cleansing diet. The colon plays a critical role in eliminating waste and toxins from the body. When the colon becomes backed up with waste, the body's ability to eliminate toxins efficiently is compromised. Colon cleansing techniques, such as colonics and enemas, help to flush out built-up waste, hydrate the intestinal walls, and stimulate healthy bowel function.

Hydration: Flush Out Toxins

The OHI cleansing diet makes hydration a priority. It is essential for supporting kidney and liver function, both of which play crucial roles in detoxification. Water also helps support healthy digestion.

Physical Activity and Movement: Lymphatic Exercise and Stretching

The OHI program combines a cleansing diet with physical activity to maximize results. The lymphatic system is responsible for transporting and eliminating toxins, waste products, and excess fluids from the body. The lymphatic system relies on gentle lymphatic exercises and stretching to stimulate the flow of lymph fluid to eliminate toxins more efficiently. Regular movement also supports detoxification by improving circulation, reducing inflammation, and enhancing organ function. Exercise has been shown to increase the rate

at which the body excretes waste products, such as carbon dioxide, urea, and toxins, further aiding the detoxification process.

The Mind: Meditation, Mindful Eating, and Education

The mind is another essential component to the success of the OHI cleansing diet. The cleanse incorporates practices like meditation and mindful eating to reduce stress and promote detoxification.

Meditation & Prayer: Reducing Stress and Enhancing Healing

Meditation and prayer have been proven to reduce stress and lower cortisol levels, which directly supports detoxification. Chronic stress can hinder detoxification by overwhelming the body's systems, so reducing stress through meditation enhances the body's ability to cleanse and heal.

Mindful Eating: Cultivating a Healthy Relationship with Food

Mindful eating encourages you to slow down, tune in to hunger cues, and savor your meal, which improves digestion and allows the body to better absorb nutrients. Mindful eating also helps to regulate appetite, reduce emotional eating, and avoid overeating.

Education & Workshops: Knowledge is Power

OHI classes and workshops teach you the principles of natural detoxification, nutrition, and holistic health. This knowledge helps empower you to maintain your wellness progress after you leave OHI and return home.

The Spirit: Community Support and Encouragement

The supportive, nurturing environment at OHI plays a key role in the OHI cleansing diet. Being part of the OHI community provides you with emotional support and accountability during the cleanse. Staff and fellow participants encourage each other in a nonjudgmental and nurturing environment.

Why It Works: The Synergistic Power of Holistic Healing

The reason the OHI cleansing diet works is that it takes a holistic body-mind-spirit approach to detoxification and wellness, creating an interconnected healing experience. The proven detoxification practices are rooted in natural and holistic health principles. The community support gives you the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals in a warm, supportive environment. The tranquil settings of the OHI campuses in Austin and San Diego provide a serene location for self-reflection and healing. And the practical tools and strategies taught in all the classes and workshops help you continue your wellness journey after you return home. The OHI cleansing diet empowers you to take control of your health and achieve lasting transformation.

A wellness retreat at OHI gives you the time and education you need to implement meaningful change in your life. The gift of a healing retreat at OHI promises to be life changing. **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**

How to Keep Hope Alive During Difficult Times: 11 Strategies for Nurturing Resilience and Purpose

Life is full of challenges, and maintaining hope during difficult times is critical. The good news is that hope can be cultivated. Use these strategies to help you stay hopeful when life feels heavy:

- 1. Focus on What You Can Control.** When facing adversity, focus on what is within your control to maintain hope. Direct your energy toward small actions. For example, if you're overwhelmed by work, focus on organizing your tasks for the day. If you're dealing with a health issue, prioritize maintaining a healthy diet.
- 2. Find Meaning in the Struggle.** Finding purpose in adversity reignites hope. Consider how your current struggles may teach you resilience, compassion, or patience. Reflecting on the bigger picture can transform your perception of challenges, turning them into opportunities for personal growth.
- 3. Build Strong Social Connections.** Social connection is a powerful tool in maintaining hope. Reach out to friends, family, or community groups. Social support provides emotional validation, practical help, and often, new perspectives, all of which contribute to a greater sense of hope.
- 4. Practice Gratitude to Boost Mental Health.** People who practice gratitude experience increased positive emotions, better sleep, and lower levels of stress and depression. A simple way to practice gratitude is by keeping a daily journal. Writing down three things you're grateful for each day can increase your sense of hope.
- 5. Visualize a Positive Future.** The brain cannot differentiate between vividly imagining an event and experiencing it in real life. By visualizing yourself overcoming current struggles and achieving your desired outcome, you foster hope by reinforcing the belief that positive change is possible.
- 6. Engage in Regular Self-Care.** Taking care of your body can improve your emotional state. Prioritize exercise, adequate sleep, and good nutrition, and manage stress through relaxation techniques to improve your mental health. Prioritizing self-care helps build a stronger foundation for resilience and hope.
- 7. Seek Inspiration from Others.** Learning more about people who have triumphed over adversity can provide both comfort and motivation through the psychological phenomenon known as vicarious resilience, where witnessing someone else's strength enhances your own.
- 8. Break the Problem into Smaller, Manageable Steps.** Breaking down large problems into smaller, manageable

tasks helps you feel more in control. Take small steps toward solving your problem and celebrate each victory along the way. This incremental approach allows you to experience progress, which fuels hope.

- 9. Accept That it's OK to Struggle.** Instead of fighting or avoiding your feelings, give yourself permission to feel pain, frustration, or sadness. It's not a sign of weakness but a key part of processing difficult emotions. This acceptance makes it easier to move forward and opens the door to healing, which nurtures hope.
- 10. Lean on Faith or Spirituality.** Spiritual practices are linked to improved mental health, greater life satisfaction, lower levels of depression and anxiety, and better emotional resilience. Practices such as prayer or meditation can provide a sense of connection to something larger than yourself and offer hope for the future.
- 11. Remember That Tough Times Don't Last.** Individuals who experience hardship often emerge from it stronger, with a new sense of purpose and appreciation for life. This suggests that while pain is inevitable, hold on to hope because tough times don't last forever and often lead to growth. When you encounter tough times, remind yourself that "this too shall pass."

OHI Classes Help Build Your Resilience and HOPE

Maintaining hope during tough times isn't about ignoring the challenges you face but about applying strategies that can help you stay resilient and move forward. By focusing on what you can control, finding meaning, nurturing social connections, and engaging in self-care, you can foster a mindset of hope that will carry you through even the most difficult moments. At OHI, there are many classes that inspire hope. The Emotional & Mental Detoxification and Self-Esteem classes supports your emotional self-care. The Alpha I & II and Conscious Breathing I & II classes help you quiet your mind and manage stress. And the Focus I & II classes help you define goals that support your values to achieve what matters most to you. In good times and bad, hold on to hope and come to OHI for a complete reset of your body, mind, and spirit!

OHI wellness retreats give you the time and education you need to implement meaningful change in your life. The gift of a healing retreat at OHI promises to be life changing. **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**



Meet Maria Conchita Alonso, a devoted guest at OHI San Diego!



Maria Conchita

When you live in Los Angeles and work in the entertainment industry, you live a very intense lifestyle — lots of industry events with tasty unhealthy food and alcohol, and lots of stress and pressure to maintain a youthful appearance. Actress, singer, and philanthropist Maria Conchita Alonso understands the downside of living and working in Los Angeles all too well and wanted to find a hideaway where she could decompress and give her body an overall tune-up. “I heard about OHI from a friend more than a decade ago,” said Maria Conchita. “I was looking for a place where I could disappear from the world for just a bit and regain my peace of mind. I went to OHI for two weeks, and it was exactly what I was looking for. I feel so much happier and more relaxed when I go there. I disconnect from my phone and social media, I focus on my health, and I meet the most interesting people there that I never would have met otherwise. It’s the most energizing experience. I try to go twice a year for a complete reset of body, mind, and spirit.”

Maria Conchita Alonso was born in Cuba, and her family moved to Venezuela when she was five years old after the Cuban Revolution. Her career started in beauty pageants when she won Miss Teenager of the World and years later placed in the top seven of the Miss World Pageant. As a singer, she has received several gold and platinum records and has been nominated for three Grammy Awards. As an actress, she made her Hollywood film debut in *Moscow on the Hudson* with Robin Williams, and is best known to international audiences for the action thriller *The Running Man*. She became the first Latin-born actress to star on Broadway, debuting in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. She is known to television audiences for her role on *Desperate Housewives*. “I moved to LA 42 years ago,” said Maria Conchita.

“Working in the entertainment industry, waiting to know what the next creative project is, can bring anxiety. OHI teaches you to love yourself in every stage of your life while adding more life to your years. It’s a powerful place of healing. Every time I go, I leave feeling energized about the future. It is so inspiring to feel truly healthy. I glow. There’s nothing like it!”

Maria Conchita’s parents opened a spa in Venezuela when she was a teen, and that greatly impacted her relationship with food. “My parents were very loving and supportive,” said Maria Conchita. “As a teen, they were complimentary of my toned body and would tell me that I needed to stay that way to set the example for the spa clients. It never occurred to any of us that focusing on physical appearance could impact your mental health in the long term. I knew I needed to look a certain way to succeed in beauty pageants, so I could leverage that success into a career in modeling, singing, and acting.

Years later, I developed an eating disorder that I still struggle with to this day. OHI’s mental health classes have really helped me get a handle on that. The Mental Detox class has taught me how to cancel, reframe, and replace negative thoughts to facilitate the healing process. The Alpha I & II and Conscious Breathing I & II classes help with my meditation practice, and the vocal toning class is great. It all helps to clear my mind and get ready to face the world again.”

Maria Conchita’s most recent visit to OHI was over the holidays. “I have a very difficult relationship with food,” said Maria Conchita. “The holiday season is filled with parties and industry screenings that can trigger my bulimia. This year, I chose to work on my relationship with food, go to OHI, and skip some of those events. It was difficult being away from my dog, cat, and friends for the holidays, but investing in healing myself now leads to a happier, healthier life for years to come.”

A wonderful bonus of attending OHI is that it’s where Maria Conchita formed lasting friendships with a few guests who have become some of her dearest friends. “They mean so much to me, and I never would have met them if it wasn’t for OHI,” said Maria Conchita. “I love the energy of most guests. We support each other by creating a nurturing environment. When you love others, it makes it easier to love yourself. I recommend OHI to everyone I know; the time spent here is truly a gift.”

Get to Know OHI Missionary, Matt Krug

When Matt Krug looked back on his life, he realized he was living in a way that didn't serve his well-being. "Fast food was my diet of choice, and exercise was rarely on my schedule," said Matt. "I neglected my emotional health, ran from my fears, and was plagued with anxiety. I lacked self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and a connection to something greater than myself. Over time, this lifestyle took its toll, leading to obesity, high blood pressure, and prediabetes."

In early 2022, Matt's life took an unexpected turn. "I was diagnosed with colon cancer," said Matt. "I had the right side of my colon removed. It was a wake-up call. Determined to make lasting changes, I transitioned to a whole-food, plant-based diet. My body responded well to the shift, and I began to feel better physically. However, exactly one year after my surgery, the cancer returned. This time, it spread throughout my body, and my prognosis was poor. My oncologist informed me that chemotherapy was an option but clarified that it was purely palliative. If I wanted a chance at healing, I had to become my own advocate. I began researching holistic healing approaches, and that's when I came across the story of Peg Harvey, a woman diagnosed

with terminal ovarian cancer that had spread to her lungs. She attended a three-week program at OHI and saw vast improvements in her health. She continued her healing journey as a missionary with OHI, and in just 19 weeks Peg showed no signs of cancer. She later went on to become a Program Director and Facilitator at OHI San Diego. Her story resonated deeply with me, and I knew I had to experience OHI for myself."

Matt arrived at OHI in January 2024 under their scholarship program. "The scholarship was a gift I will always be grateful for," said Matt. "Without that support, I wouldn't have been able to afford the three-week stay, which, in many ways, may have saved my life. As I immersed myself in the OHI program, I noticed a shift almost immediately. The overwhelming fatigue that had consumed me began to lift. I felt a renewed sense of vitality, confirming that I was on the right path. But as my final week approached, anxiety crept in. What would happen when I left this safe, healing environment? Would I be able to sustain my progress on my own? I inquired about the Missionary Program, filled out an application, and by the time I returned home, I had received a phone call confirming my acceptance."

and in December 2024 I arrived at the Austin campus. OHI has become my second home, and I plan to stay involved for years to come."

Upon reflection, Matt has learned so much as a missionary working in service to others. "OHI's program supported my physical healing, but I believe that my most significant transformation has come from the emotional and spiritual work I've done here. OHI's classes in Alpha Meditation, Conscious Breathing, and Emotional Detox have provided a foundation for healing that I carry with me every day. Meditation and breathwork have helped me regulate stress, shift out of a fight-or-flight state, and cultivate a healing mindset. I visualize myself as vibrant and full of life. Each meditation strengthens my belief in my body's ability to heal. Looking ahead, I'm no longer consumed by how quickly I can rid my body of cancer. Instead, I focus on how I can live my best life — filled with joy, love, and purpose. I'm currently training for a marathon this summer and finishing my doctorate in education. I choose to embrace life rather than fear death."

Matt Krug



In early March 2024, I arrived in San Diego as an OHI missionary, stepping into the next phase of my healing journey." Matt found serving as a missionary to be a life-changing experience. "Over the next six months, I witnessed even greater improvements in my health — both physically and emotionally," said Matt.

"The opportunity to practice what I had learned, support others on their healing journeys, and immerse myself in OHI's mind-body-spirit philosophy gave me a profound sense of purpose. When my missionary term ended, I returned home, but something felt incomplete. Graciously, OHI offered me another opportunity to serve as a missionary,

For anyone considering OHI, my advice is simple: Trust the process. Open yourself up to healing on all levels. Healing isn't just about what you eat — it's also about addressing emotional wounds, shifting your mindset, and connecting with something greater than yourself. OHI has given me the tools, the community, and the faith to move forward on my journey, and for that, I will always be grateful. I highly recommend the Missionary Program. Give yourself the gift of time at OHI, and you will transform yourself — body, mind, and spirit."

Thinking about applying for OHI's Missionary Program? **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**

Scholarship Recipient Kimberly Searle Hits the RESET Button

Kimberly Searle was diagnosed with an auto immune disease in her teens. While her initial symptoms were less severe, complications progressed over the years. "10 years ago, I began having severe bouts of IBS, extreme fatigue, and chronic



Kimberly Searle

inflammation in my joints that made it difficult to walk," said Kimberly. "I have constant pain, vertigo that lasts for weeks, and complications with my heart. I realized Western medicine was not helping me. I scoured the Internet and came across OHI. I completed the scholarship application, detailed my 50+ years of health struggles, and was thrilled to be offered a scholarship."

The raw plant-based diet sounded daunting to Kimberly, but she knew she needed a unique approach to combat her chronic health problems. "I always knew how important clean eating was to allow my body a chance to heal, but I didn't know how to properly go about it," said Kimberly. "I attended all the classes on nutrition, digestion, proper food combinations, meal planning, and hydration. The education was transformational! Within the first week, my joint pain from inflammation was gone. I no longer needed to take ANY pain medication, and I could stand up straight again when I walked. It's a miracle that food could heal what years of Western medicine couldn't. After three weeks of clean eating and less stress, I came home and had my blood work redone. My cholesterol, AC1, triglycerides, etc., were all in the NORMAL range. What a breakthrough!"

OHI also helped Kimberly deepen her faith. "I've always had faith in God, but at OHI I learned to lean into that," said Kimberly. "I also learned the importance of slowing down my thoughts through meditation. One of my favorite classes taught me how to visualize myself as the healthy happy person I was meant to be. It was life changing!"

Kimberly is truly grateful to OHI for the scholarship she received. "Thank you to everyone who supports OHI," said Kimberly. "The scholarship changed my life. People need to understand what this program can do. I recommend OHI to everyone. It's the reset button we ALL need."

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 48 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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(800) 993-4325

Meet OHI San Diego Staff Member, Reina Padilla

Reina Padilla has had a long career in food preparation. “I raised my son in Visalia, California, for ten years,” said Reina. “I had my own Mexican restaurant there for six years, and it was very successful. When COVID hit, restaurants all over the world suffered, and mine was no different. I was a single mother, and I had to make tough choices to keep my family afloat. Closing the restaurant felt like such a loss. Fortunately, an opportunity to sell the restaurant came my way, and I was able close that chapter of my life in a way that felt satisfying. After moving on from my restaurant, I worked in school transportation for a year while my son finished high school. When he was accepted at San Diego State University, we decided to move to San Diego. Once there, I took work in cleaning, but that was very hard on me physically. I have suffered from chronic back pain for many years. I wanted to get back into food preparation, so when I saw the role of Kitchen Assistant at OHI was available, I jumped at the chance to apply.”

Reina joined the staff at OHI San Diego four months ago. “While I have many years of experience in food preparation, I think my real passion has always been interacting with people,” said Reina. “Working at OHI gives me the opportunity to work with food as well as support guests. The guests that come to OHI are so interesting, and I have learned so much from talking with them. Every day I come to work with the goal of providing each of them with the best wellness experience possible. I help guests with anything they need and answer all their questions about food preparation and juicing. In my experience, food is what brings people together. And here, people come together to create a new relationship with food. They learn to use food as medicine to heal and nourish their bodies. For guests with a health opportunity, I have seen how this food has changed them for the better. Inflammation and pain leave the body, and they heal themselves through food. It’s astounding.”

Reina quickly learned how to prepare the recipes that are part of the OHI diet, and she’s fascinated with all that OHI has taught her about nutrition. “OHI has had a huge impact on diet and on my personal health,” said Reina. “I eat much healthier now, and I’ve stopped consuming sugar entirely, which I’m very proud of. I didn’t realize how addicted to sugar I was, but now that I’ve eliminated it from my diet entirely, I feel physically stronger and mentally clearer. My back pain has greatly subsided. I never expected this benefit, but it is a blessing.”

This is the first time Reina has worked in a wellness retreat during her career. “I am fascinated by OHI,” said Reina. “It has been a wonderful experience in every sense of the word. The energy here is so relaxing and peaceful. I put in 100% effort at OHI I feel like I am immediately rewarded with this sense of peace. It’s really beautiful.”

OHI’s spiritual education has impacted Reina as well. “After working at OHI for four months, I feel like I’ve gotten clarity on my true values,” said Reina. “My priority has always been the well-being of my son, but now I see how necessary it is to prioritize my personal health and wellness as well. OHI has also inspired me to lean into my own spirituality. I have started to meditate and journal to organize my thoughts. I never expected to see my spirituality blossom because of my job, but guests



Reina Padilla

talk about their beliefs openly here, and it makes me want to examine my own beliefs. It’s very rewarding.”

While Reina considers herself a newcomer to OHI, she can see how the classes make a big impact on the experience the guests have. “If I had one piece of advice to share, I would recommend you make the most of your stay at OHI,” said Reina. “Don’t miss any of the classes or activities offered. They matter. The food combining classes, the dehydration, sprouting, and fermented foods classes, and the menu planning classes all help you make the most of the diet once you get home. The meditation classes, the mental detoxification classes, and the self-esteem classes all help give you mental clarity.”

“If you’ve never experienced a wellness retreat at OHI, I hope you give it a try. You won’t regret it. I have seen so many guests leave lighter, happier, and healthier after a three-week stay. It is life changing for everyone who comes here. And it’s life changing for me to witness their health journeys. I am inspired!”

Are you looking for a career where you can make a difference by helping and serving others? **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**



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The Free Sacred Trinity Church and its subordinate religious missions, OHI San Diego and OHI Austin, are not-for-profit organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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We are a non-profit religious organization and your donation is tax deductible. On behalf of all those who benefit from the OHI Scholarship Fund, we offer our gratitude!

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Spring 2025



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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See Page 10 for details or call (800) 993-4325

Our Mission

We serve as a change agent for holistic healing by creating a safe and sacred space.

Core Values

Holism, Generosity, Relationship, Life-Long Learning, Stewardship, and Service.

Guiding Principles

Trustworthiness, Respect, Empowerment, and Alignment.