

Optimum Health Institute Newsletter

Connecting the OHI Community | SUMMER 2024



OHI: A Unifying Experience

“OHI’s safe and sacred culture and environment is designed to create a transformative and unifying experience that enables us to achieve optimum health.”

— Bob Nees, Jr., p1

Danielle Demko, OHI San Diego Staff Member |



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CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

BOB NEES, JR., SENIOR PASTOR

Greetings OHI community; here's wishing you long and lovely days as we enter the summer season. The extra hours of daylight beckons us outdoors where we can become one with nature to brighten our spirits and expand our consciousness.

OHI: A Unifying Experience

Unity is an excellent way to create community. When people come together in shared interests and intentions, the result can be powerful. In this issue I wish to continue our theme of unity by considering how we, the OHI community, are becoming one with each other in common purpose.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Psalm 133:1 NIV

You may recall from our spring newsletter that I wrote about how the past four years fomented an unprecedented division among people everywhere, and that it's now time for us to focus on finding harmony and community again. We looked at how community creates a blanket of security because the group is always willing to provide assistance, resources, and empathy to those who need it; and how we can unify because we have more in common than we realize. In this article, I will highlight the way unity is established through the OHI for Life Body-Mind-Spirit program, fostering strong connections among members of the OHI community

OHI's Unifying Culture

At OHI, we have developed a supportive culture that is woven through our OHI for Life Body-Mind-Spirit program. It's hard to explain until you've actually experienced it, but when our guests go through our many activities and classes they form a deep bond with one another. As they learn healthy eating and exercise for their bodies, camaraderie develops. They see each other's struggles and develop an empathy that feels new because they recognize they've found a fellow traveler - someone who is seeking more from life.

The program begins with learning how to eat wholesome, cleansing foods that help restore physical health. Dr. Psyche Williams-Forsen, professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland, observed, "It is often in and around food that we find camaraderie and unity. There are few events where food does not provide physical, spiritual or emotional comfort. Food can also reveal tensions and differences and be used as a tool for healing and wellness."

At OHI you'll join a cohort of like-minded people to learn when and how to fast; the value of raw foods; how to optimize digestion by combining certain foods and fermenting others; how wheatgrass juice will cleanse your cells and purify your blood. Plus you'll practice gentle exercise and walk every morning which stimulates the lymphatic system to eliminate

toxins, boost the immune system, and contribute to the healing process. And that's just the beginning.

Our classes and activities, such as journaling, self-reflection, positivity, mindfulness, and mental detoxification, are designed to help you uncover your purpose and enhance your life. By understanding how your beliefs, thoughts, and emotions can impact your health, you'll be able to improve your mental and emotional well-being. Our guests, missionaries, and staff all work together to support each other in reaching the level of change they are ready to achieve. The daily work seems challenging at first, but the unity and fellowship that develops helps them over the hurdles. This creates a powerful sense of belonging within the OHI community.

Our Alpha, Conscious Breathing, and Vocal Toning classes help establish a natural flow of energy through your body while creating harmony from inside out that improves your spiritual growth, health and wellness. We follow a way of spiritual development of becoming whole in theological discipline that enables a seeking of the Holy Spirit within. Our guests have roots in many different and varied faiths and religious experiences, from all histories and traditions, we learn from one another. We believe that each of the faithful seeks oneness with a Higher Power.

The experience of unity culminates with our You Validation class where guests get to experience the practice of giving and receiving gratitude. For many this is a deeply touching moment as they've never before felt what it's like to receive genuine admiration and acknowledgement of their efforts. It can be life changing.

OHI is not all seriousness and work; we also sow unity with fun activities like our Friday Night Live talent show. The cumulative effect is an amazing familial feeling that everyone walks away with.

Our unifying culture is more than just going through the OHI program; it's about joining with supportive people who work together in learning the tools and teachings we can integrate into our daily lives for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. As our guests attend our classes, the differences among them become less important. They realize that everyone has come with a need to heal on some level. As they progress through the classes and activities they make soulful connections and know they have each other's backs.

“OHI’s safe and sacred culture and environment is designed to create a transformative and unifying experience that enables us to achieve optimum health.”

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:26 NIV

When a community has unity, everything runs better and more gets done. Unity fosters cooperation; people feel a sense of responsibility and commitment to one another that enables them to address and resolve common challenges and opportunities.

OHI is a place where we lift one another up and help each other. We celebrate with those who are celebrating, and we grieve with those who are grieving. At OHI no one has to face what they are going through all alone. OHI exists as a support system for everyone in our community. We encourage each other, and know that we can share what is going on in our lives without fear of judgment.

OHI is Built on Unity

Now we are creating more unity within OHI. Our two locations in Austin and San Diego share one program. The difference is that Austin is a smaller, more intimate, and quieter setting while San Diego is larger, has more people, and is more lively. Many of our guests have tried both locations and have their favorites. Starting in 2024, we will have facilitators from each of our locations to visit and teach in the other. This will help integrate both of our locations and keep them connected.

Also in 2024, we are focusing more on our social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) because it is important to connect both in-person and online. We are encouraging all guests, missionaries, and staff to unite in our online community by posting photos and comments to help us all stay connected with the full OHI community.

It is my sincere belief that OHI can spread our special unity to the world at large. Our community at OHI vibrates unity and leads by example when we show love and caring wherever we go. When we walk about in joy and confidence, we radiate a positive influence that people recognize and want to share in, and to be a part of. When that happens we have an opportunity to be a witness for the OHI program and its values and mission of unity. We in the OHI community are perfectly positioned to spread a powerful message of unity outward to the world.

What’s New at OHI

Over the past few months, we have been busy making enhancements to our program and facilities in both of our locations. We have introduced pricing programs for guests who stay three or more weeks or, as well as a rewards program for guests who refer their friends. We have trained more facilitators so that we are now able to reintroduce the variety of classes and hands-on experience in our food preparation classes that were available pre-pandemic.

In Austin, we have re-roofed the main building, replaced

windows, refinished bathtubs, and restored the hardwood floors in our guestrooms. We have more wonderful news: Our beloved facilitators, Sheryl Haupt and Danielle Demko will return periodically to teach classes.

In San Diego, we have refurbished the furniture, spa, and decks in the Courtyard, painted building exteriors, installed new planters and irrigations systems in our organic garden, and refurbished the Courtyard guestrooms. But that’s not all! Danielle Demko has returned to OHI San Diego on a permanent basis. And our beloved facilitators, Sheryl Haupt and Peg Harvey will return periodically to teach classes.

These are just a few of the exciting improvements we’ve made at OHI, and we can’t wait for you to come and experience them firsthand!

Come to OHI this Summer

Find your bliss and rejuvenate this summer in the peaceful relaxed atmosphere at one of our campuses. Our classes and activities are here to help you reset and revitalize your body, mind, and spirit. Schedule today, and experience for yourself the unifying culture at OHI. Be sure to **book early – call us (800) 993-4325 to book your stay!**

Inside this edition: Read further about the benefits of mindful eating and the positive impact of kindness. Get to know staff member, Danielle Demko; OHI Austin missionary, Rebecca Mann; OHI guest, Joy Quick; and how an OHI Scholarship helped Paul Steinberg find hope and a new beginning. We remain humbled and grateful to all those who contribute and help people like Paul. 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 Endless Summer Savings.

Here’s wishing you health and wellness in this summer season.

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 medial platforms!

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

Understanding the Connection Between Mindful Eating and Weight Loss



Learn the simple joy of being present with your food and your body and how to make a positive impact on your weight loss journey.

When it comes to weight loss, we live in a culture that heavily focuses on the number shown on a scale instead of working to cultivate a deeper connection with our bodies and the food we consume. It's time we forged a healthier relationship with food! Instead of trying to shed pounds and viewing food as an enemy to be conquered or a source of guilt, let's look at our connection with food as a powerful avenue for reclaiming our sense of agency and self-worth by practicing the transformative power of Mindful Eating!

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness, rooted in ancient Eastern philosophies, offers profound benefits for our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Mindfulness invites us to cultivate a deep awareness of the present moment, without judgment or attachment. The practice encourages us to observe our thoughts, emotions, and sensations with curiosity and kindness, fostering a sense of inner peace.

The benefits of mindfulness are many. By training your mind to be present, you unlock the power to respond to challenges with clarity and composure, rather than reacting impulsively. This heightened awareness not only reduces stress and anxiety but also enhances our capacity for resilience and compassion. Research suggests that a regular mindfulness practice can improve focus, memory, and emotional regulation. Whether you practice mindfulness through formal Alpha/meditation practices, engage in mindful movement like stretch/yoga, or become mindful through simple everyday activities like walking in nature, incorporating mindfulness into your life can enrich your everyday experiences and build a deeper connection

between yourself and the world around you.

What is Mindful Eating?

Mindful Eating is a practice that encourages a deep connection with the food you consume, embracing the sensory experience of eating while being fully present in the moment. It's not just about what you eat, but also focusing on how you eat it:

- Eating slowly and without distraction
- Engaging your senses by noticing colors, smells, sounds, textures, and flavors
- Appreciating your food, the journey it took to get to you, and the effort it took to prepare
- Responding to physical hunger cues and eating only until you're full
- Distinguishing between true hunger vs emotional craving triggers
- Eating to maintain overall health and well-being, not eating to satisfy a craving
- Noticing the effects food has on your feelings and body
- Practicing forgiveness when coping with guilt and anxiety about food

Mindful Eating allows you to replace automatic thoughts and reactions to food with more conscious, health-promoting responses and a profound appreciation for the food that is nourishing your body. The practice of Mindful Eating is non-judgmental, inviting you to cultivate kindness toward yourself and your body, honoring your body's innate

wisdom, and trusting yourself to make choices that truly nourish you, body and soul.

An Evidenced-Based Approach to Weight Loss

In a world where fad diets and quick fixes dominate the weight loss conversation, Mindful Eating looks at food from a perspective grounded in self-awareness and compassion. Through Mindful Eating, we learn to let go of restrictive dieting mentalities and embrace a more balanced approach to nourishment, and now there is scientific evidence that supports the benefits of Mindful Eating and its contribution to weight loss. By slowing down and making eating an intentional act instead of an automatic one, you give your brain the chance to register satisfaction, which can prevent mindless snacking or binge eating later on. When you eat too fast, the fullness signal may not arrive in your brain until you have already eaten too much. This is very common in binge eating disorder (BED). Studies suggest that practicing Mindful Eating can improve digestion and nutrient absorption, all of which supports weight loss.

Mindful Eating also makes you aware of the emotional triggers that make you want to eat, even though you're not necessarily hungry. Knowing your triggers allows you to create a space between them and your response, giving you the time and freedom to choose best how to react. By acknowledging emotional eating triggers, you are less likely to act on them, which also contributes to weight loss. Most studies agree that Mindful Eating helps you lose weight by changing your eating behaviors and reducing stress. In fact, one review of 10 different studies found that Mindful Eating was as effective for weight loss as conventional diet programs. Overall, findings support that by changing the way you think about food through Mindful Eating, the negative feelings that may be associated with eating are replaced with awareness, improved self-control, reduced stress, and positive emotions. When unwanted eating behaviors are addressed, your chances of long-term weight loss success increase.

Getting Started with Mindful Eating

Mindful Eating begins with simple awareness. Start by taking a few deep breaths before you begin your meal, tuning into the sensations within your body and acknowledging any feelings or emotions present. This moment of pause sets the stage for a more intentional and nourishing eating experience.

- Set a timer for 20 minutes, and take the full time to eat a normal-sized meal
- Eat slowly and chew thoroughly, using all five senses to experience the food
- To help yourself slow down, try eating with your non-dominant hand or use chopsticks if you don't normally use them
- Eliminate distractions (turn off the TV and put down your phone)



- Eat in silence, and take the time to contemplate the source of your food, appreciating the effort and resources that went into its creation, honoring the interconnectedness of all beings and the Earth
- Focus on how the food makes you feel, experiencing satisfaction as the nourishment sustains your body
- Stop eating when you're full
- Before reaching for more food, do something else if you are not truly hungry (read, go for a walk, etc.)

Mindful Eating at OHI

OHI has always embraced Mindful Eating, encouraging each guest to reconnect with their body and nurturing a healthier relationship with food. Mindful Eating encourages you to slow down and savor each bite, embracing the pleasure and satisfaction that comes from honoring your body's needs. When you approach your meals with mindfulness, your body is better equipped to break down and assimilate the nutrients it needs to thrive, promoting overall health and vitality. When you eat slowly and without distractions, you can take the time to appreciate the effort and resources that went into the food's creation. Scientifically speaking, this approach taps into the intricate relationship between our minds and our digestive systems. Slowing your meals down allows your brain time to register that you are full, so you are less likely to overeat which helps with weight loss. Mindful Eating also helps address unwanted eating behaviors like binge eating, emotional eating, or distracted eating, which can also be instrumental in supporting weight loss. Overall, Mindful Eating is not about strict rules or deprivation, but rather about cultivating a compassionate and understanding relationship with yourself, your body, and the food you eat. By approaching food with curiosity and kindness, you can find balance and peace in your relationship with nourishment, cultivating a healthier, happier life one mindful bite at a time!

One of the best ways to foster mindful eating is with a wellness retreat at OHI. Our 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.**

How an Act of Kindness Can Make a Difference

In a world often marked by chaos and uncertainty, acts of kindness stand as beacons of hope for a brighter tomorrow. Small gestures, infused with genuine empathy and compassion, possess the remarkable power to uplift spirits, mend broken hearts, and forge bonds of solidarity. So, let's take a closer look at the power of kindness, and how you can start your own ripple of kindness...

What Do We Mean By An "Act of Kindness"?

An act of kindness is any action that benefits others without expecting anything in return. It extends compassion, empathy, and generosity to someone in need. Acts of kindness can range from small gestures like holding the door open for someone, to more significant deeds such as donating resources to help those in need. The essence is a desire to make a positive impact on another person's life, whether it's to brighten their day, alleviate their suffering, or simply show them that they are valued and cared for.

How Small Acts of Kindness Can Make a Difference

Acts of kindness reminds us of our shared humanity and the goodness that resides within each of us. When you extend a helping hand or offer words of encouragement, you create a chain reaction of positivity. The person on the receiving end feels valued and supported, and they are more likely to pay it forward, spreading kindness to others they encounter. It's a beautiful cycle that has the potential to touch countless lives and foster a sense of community and compassion in our world.

As a side benefit, engaging in acts of kindness has been scientifically proven to elevate mood, reduce stress, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose for both the giver and receiver. WOW!

Simple Acts of Kindness

A small act of kindness has the power to change a person's perspective. Consider the simplicity of a smile offered to a stranger, a gesture that transcends language barriers and speaks volumes of understanding and goodwill. Think about how lending a listening ear to someone in distress can provide them with solace, validating their feelings. The modest act of holding the door open for someone laden with bags can make a huge difference, showing them that they are not alone in their struggles. The humble gesture of reaching out to a friend with a note of encouragement can brighten dark moments and deepen a friendship.

But are "acts of kindness" always small? Not at all – let's



think bigger! Volunteering time at a local shelter, feeding the hungry, or participating in a community clean-up exemplifies the spirit of altruism, fostering a sense of belonging and interconnectedness within society as a whole. Acts of kindness can extend to the world around us in countless ways. Planting trees, rescuing an animal, or picking up litter all contribute to creating a more compassionate and harmonious world. Furthermore, advocating for social justice causes, standing up against discrimination, and amplifying the voices of the marginalized are acts of kindness that resonate deeply with the collective human experience, promoting equity and inclusivity for all.

You Can Make a Difference

Acts of kindness, both big and small, express compassion, empathy, and generosity. They transcend boundaries of race, religion, and culture, embodying the universal language of understanding. Engaging in acts of kindness has been scientifically proven to elevate mood, reduce stress, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose. Moreover, performing acts of kindness creates a positive feedback loop, inspiring others to pay the kindness forward and perpetuate a cycle of goodwill. Simple acts such as complimenting a coworker or surprising a neighbor with a homemade treat can have profound effects on both individuals and the community at large. So, let's start a ripple effect, and embrace the power to make a difference, one small act of kindness at a time.

Nurture your body, mind, and spirit with kindness with a wellness retreat at OHI San Diego or OHI Austin – **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**

Joy Quick's Inspiring OHI Guest Journey!



Joy Quick

breakfast through Thursday lunch, with solid raw food on Thursday night through the following Monday. I chose the juice option made with all green veggies, and easily drank two glasses at each meal. I also learned about the healing properties of wheatgrass juice in the food classes. In an effort to heal myself with natural methods, I had already been following a plant-based diet for over a year with no sugar, no dairy, no wheat, and no yeast, so the diet at OHI was nothing radical for me. I found the food to be delicious.”

Joy knew what to expect from OHI's cleansing diet, but she was surprised by the insights the classes offered. The classes, staff, and guests were the lifeline she was hoping for. “How amazing to find a place of healing where everyone shared my beliefs and values about healing and wellness,” said Joy. “I had great conversations with staff members and other guests. We were candid and vulnerable with each other, and I immediately felt a bond. You could feel the love and support offered by everyone.

In the Mental Detox class, the teacher used the phrase, ‘We are the guardians for ourselves.’ Wow! I suddenly realized that I have not been a very good guardian. As a Marriage & Family Therapist, I have looked outside of myself to nurture and help others, but my personal boundaries were poor. I thought I had broken my habit of co-dependency, but since retiring and not working with clients, I discovered I haven't always done what I wanted or needed in the name of compromise. What an eye-opener! I began to think that maybe the swelling in my belly was where I had stuffed old toxic emotions — anger, sadness, grief, and fear. I turned my attention inside and went into light meditation. I slowly recognized the origin of my fear in this lifetime was my early childhood. I remembered my mom had told me that I was almost 1-year-old when they ‘broke my spirit.’ It dawned on me that I have carried intergenerational family dysfunctional patterns and trauma for most of my life. I did not feel safe during my childhood to express these emotions and avoided any acknowledgement for years. Somewhere along the way in my life I had stopped crying, but suddenly tears started falling. I have done so much work on myself to be a better person, forgive my parents, and live a happier life. I thought my childhood wound was ‘I'm not good enough.’ Instead, this self-reflection showed me that the true root of my childhood trauma was ‘I don't matter.’ More tears fell and I sobbed. I finally let go.”

“OHI helped me feel safe, supported, and encouraged. A simple act of kindness from another guest opened the door to my transformation. I realize that I am the guardian of my sacred self, and I now love myself more than ever. Breaking old patterns has become part of my process.”

“Now everything looks like a blessing!” said Joy. “It feels like the universe has opened up to support me. I have let go of so much, and my resolve to trust myself is stronger than ever. Through my time at OHI, I have learned to stay completely in the present, and I trust I will be shown the way forward, one step at a time. This is the miracle I had hoped for. My body says this phase of my health opportunity is now complete. I matter! I am content and blessed, nurtured and fulfilled, safe and at peace. I am on my way to be fully healed, energized, and ready for the next step in life. Thank you, OHI!”

Get to Know OHI Missionary, Rebecca Mann

Rebecca Mann reached a breaking point in her health opportunity and asked God for guidance. “I had broken my C7 vertebrae at age 18, and after that accident I suffered from spinal stenosis and degenerative disk disease with bulging disks. I was on three different pain meds and had trigger point injections for pain every two weeks. I had three knee transplants and was on steroids for inflammation. I also had Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, autoimmune disorder, and am on thyroid medication for that. I was in constant pain and had absolutely no quality of life. One night the pain was so intense that I fell to my knees and cried out for help. I heard a voice in my heart that told me to do the OHI missionary program, and that was it. I went to work the next day and told them I needed to take a 1-year leave of absence to solve my health issues. I applied to be an OHI missionary immediately. The pieces of the puzzle all fell into place, and 2024 is the year to turn my health around for good. I started in January as a missionary.”

Rebecca learned about OHI fifteen years ago from a friend. “I wanted to take a break from the world,” said

Rebecca Mann



Rebecca. “I went to OHI, and it was positively transformative. I have been back at least five times over the years but had never considered the missionary program before. Six years ago, my health really took a nosedive. In addition to the above-mentioned issues, doctors found a cyst on my brain and my thyroid. I had terrible headaches, and the meds prescribed made me feel worse. I walked into OHI on January 6 feeling completely broken but determined to change that. I strictly adhered to the diet and went to the lymphatic stretch classes every day. I turned my focus on others and worked in service to their transformations. To see guests walk in who were truly suffering and in pain, and to see everything change as they apply themselves to the program and walk out the door three weeks later completely healed and happy, that was inspiring. But it’s not magic. Transformations are not miraculous. Anyone can get the miracle of healing if they show up and put in the hard work. At OHI, the diet is cleansing, the classes are inspirational, and the guests and staff are supportive. You have all the tools you need to succeed here. Our habits keep us sick, and you need to let go to let the healing happen. If you put in the hard work to break old habits, change your thinking, and embrace a raw vegan diet, the healing will come to you.”

Rebecca committed herself to the program and to serving others, and here is what she found. “By Week 4, I was off all my pain meds and steroids. I didn’t even take a Tylenol,” said Rebecca. “The only medication I was still on was my thyroid medication, and that was cut in half. The raw vegan diet eliminated my inflammation and cleared my clogged liver. It purified my body, mind, and spirit. The quiet of OHI strengthened my resolve and my character. I lost 30lbs of fat and gained 10lbs of muscle. I felt so good that I was inspired to become

a yoga teacher, knowing it would increase my overall healing capacity. A friend of mine living in Indonesia had invited me to come visit after my three months in the OHI missionary program were finished. I did some research and applied to a 200-hour yoga teacher training program at an Ashram in Bali. It was incredible!

Rebecca has some advice for anyone considering the OHI missionary program. “Honor the commitment,” said Rebecca. “When you put your heart and soul into the missionary program, beautiful changes await both you and the guests. You’ll be inspired as you help guests on their healing journey, and that inspiration will carry you through on your own journey. You’ll come out a better person for it. I’m hoping to do another 3-month stint as a missionary again later this year. I envision for myself complete cellular reconstruction, and I believe I can achieve that with the help of OHI. If I can heal my thyroid entirely and get my Hashimoto’s in check, I can get off all medication. That is my goal, and at OHI I believe all things are possible.”

“I want to thank everyone at OHI for all the enriching food, love, friendship and support. I have addressed trauma from my childhood, processed the grief of losing loved ones, overcome a broken heart, and come out the other side a whole person. The three months serving as a missionary helped me regain my mobility and build my strength to successfully complete the yoga teacher training program in Bali. Thank you OHI!”

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

Scholarship Recipient Paul Steinberg Thanks OHI for Meaningful Stay

Paul Steinberg understands irony. “For over 20 years I had worked in pharmaceutical business development getting drugs into clinical trials,” said Paul. “I was diagnosed with kidney cancer in December 2022. It then became obvious to me that pharmaceuticals were less about curing patients than acquiring customers. I made the decision that I didn’t want to rely on biotech to turn my cancer around. Hippocrates said ‘food is your medicine,’ so I radically changed my diet as a first step. I was already largely



vegetarian but saw the value in a raw plant-based diet. Even with my diet improvement, I knew I still needed a radical change in my life to better fight the cancer. A friend told me about OHI, and I immediately applied for a scholarship.

I arrived at the San Diego campus

December 2023. The instant sense of wellbeing that I felt was incredible. The staff and guests were all so kind and approachable. I met so many like-minded people who have become part of my support community.”

Paul’s time at OHI was all memorable, but the most meaningful moment came at the end of his stay. “On my final day, Kathy Hertz, a missionary, invited me to celebrate my progress in the garden,” said Paul. “When we arrived, there were 12 people waiting and they held a support ceremony just for me. Everyone sat in a circle, and each spoke about me. I thought to myself ‘Why am I deserving of all this attention?’ They told me they came together because I needed to understand how many people truly supported me on my healing journey. It was honestly one of the most moving moments of my life. I recorded it on my phone, and I am so grateful to be able to listen to all the beautiful words whenever I am feeling particularly vulnerable.”

What are Paul’s words of advice for anyone facing a health challenge? “OHI’s full 3-week program will change the way you eat, but it’s the people who will forever change your life for the better. Thank you for the scholarship, OHI. I am truly grateful.”

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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(800) 993-4325

Long-Time Staff Member Danielle Demko is on the move – transitioning from OHI Austin to OHI San Diego!

Danielle Demko has always had a heart for service. And fortunately, OHI has been at the center of her heart for over five years. “I joined OHI San Diego in January 2019,” said Danielle. “I loved everything about my experience at the San Diego campus, so when the opportunity came up to take the position of Executive Director of the Austin campus in March 2022, I was happy to make the move. Since it was a 2-3 year commitment, I wanted to glean everything I could out of the experience. I’ve grown so much and will always be forever grateful to the staff and guests at OHI Austin!”

Danielle’s 2.5 years in Austin have been truly meaningful, with time spent bonding with the OHI Austin team and guests, building relationships with the local Austin vendors, and getting to know the culture of the city of Austin. “What a great experience it’s been!” said Danielle. “The staff and guests at OHI Austin really embraced me. I fell in love with the beautiful OHI campus nestled in the country just east of Austin. The property feels like an oasis, the best kept secret. Just coming onto the property allows the guests (and staff) to take a deep breath. So many refer to it as ‘home.’ The setting has a lot to do with that. The guest size lends to the intimacy as the capacity is a bit smaller than OHI San Diego, allowing guests to build lifelong friendships while also leaving time for solitude.

Now that Danielle’s tenure as OHI Austin’s Executive Director is coming to an end, what will her next adventure be? “I became a grandma last summer to Dawson, my first grandchild,” said Danielle. “My son, Thatcher, works in Vancouver seasonally for about nine months out of the year. In the off season, he and his family split their time between San Diego and Michigan where each of them respectively were raised. The end of my tenure has come at a perfect time! I need to get back to San Diego so I can enjoy my new grandson. I don’t want to miss these special first years. It has been my honor to serve the guests at our Austin campus, and there will always be a special place in my heart for each and every one of them. I’ll be back in Austin to teach from time to time to ensure a smooth transition. But for now, San Diego is calling.”

Guests can look forward to seeing Danielle in her teaching element when she returns to OHI San Diego. As OHI San Diego’s Program Director, she’ll be teaching classes as well as contributing to curriculum updates and perhaps gradually expanding the course roster. “I’m particularly passionate about teaching and the classes that encompass the mental, emotional and spiritual component: Emotional & Mental Detox, Alpha I & II, Conscious Breathing I & II, Focus I & II, Vocal Toning and more,” said Danielle. “I’ll also be available to support guests through one-on-one counseling. Every guest that walks through our doors comes in with something at play, something that prompted them to allocate time and money for their stay. I want to give them the space and/or support they need. I’ll also be heading up the Missionary Program, which I love. This is healing on another level. Giving each



Danielle Demko

missionary the support they need while they bridge any gaps between staff and guests feels like a balanced reciprocity. They are our campus angels! It’s miraculous to see each missionary change and grow on their own healing journey as they work in service to others. And lastly, I’ll be part of the leadership team at OHI San Diego. I look forward to supporting our leadership initiatives.”

Danielle’s closing words are truly heartfelt. “I feel like I’ve been called to help others through OHI, and it has been my honor to contribute to both campuses and to be utilized wherever the organization needs me,” said Danielle. “Starting at OHI San Diego in 2019, being able to stay open through Covid, saying yes to OHI Austin at the end of 2021, and now heading back to San Diego...it’s all been such an honor. It’s also been transformative, both professionally and personally. I genuinely love both properties and the staff and guests respectively! They are equally near and dear to my heart, and now I can easily bridge the two locations.

I have so much love for OHI, and I am excited to see what the future brings. Thank you for everything, OHI Austin. I have been proud to call you home! And now it’s time to get back to my roots and my family in San Diego, bringing all the growth I’ve had in Austin with me. California, here I come!”

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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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Summer 2024

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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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.