

Food for Thought

Newsletter of The Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center in Elmira, N.Y.

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Diva has message of love

Patricia Denise Tucker's nickname fits her perfectly.

The self-described "full-figured" Elmira-area resident, who energizes any room she enters, has been called "Diva" since she appeared in a local fashion show several years ago.

The nickname, fortunately, was given out of love because it reflects Patricia's pride and self-confidence.

Patricia, with the encouragement of friends, has transformed that energy into a workshop designed to help young girls learn how to accept themselves.

Patricia makes a difference beyond the workshops. She takes the girls being treated at Sol Stone Center on community activities, and runs a free support group for Nutrition Clinic outpatients at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays.

Regardless of who she's with, Patricia shares her positive outlook. But she admits it's not an easy concept to deliver to middle school girls at her workshops.

"My main point is to teach young women at a young age about positive body image," Patricia said. "I'm trying to show them that they have to love who they are and not think like they have to look like the women on the magazine covers and TV because a lot of that is not real."

Patricia has always strived to help others, but a 2006 bout with colon cancer – she says she was cured in 2007 – and her love of poetry helped inspire her to share her life lessons with girls and young women.

With urging from her friend and neighbor Carrie Hooey, Patricia came up with the Dishing With Diva workshops.

Her first workshop was in 2010 at Broadway Middle School in Southport, in Carrie's English classroom. Four other workshops have followed at Broadway.

"The girls love her," Carrie said of Patricia's workshops. "They are drawn to her personality, and they light up because she is so positive and makes each and every one of them feel special."

Patricia, an advertising sales representative with the Elmira Star-Gazette newspaper, also works every other Saturday as an activity therapist with "my girls" from the Sol Stone Center.

Patricia takes the girls being treated for eating disorders by Sol Stone staff out for fun activities like pedicures and manicures, thrift store shopping and making pottery.



"A lot of the girls don't want to be out but we do stuff that's fun and relaxing," Patricia said. "I constantly let them know how beautiful they are. And when they're having a hard time and struggling, I try to be right there for them."

Patricia credits "my girls," as well as Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center owner Carolyn Hodges Chaffee, and Carrie, with encouraging her to speak to others.

"Before my cancer diagnosis, I believed in helping others but I wasn't doing it," Patricia said. "They just made me realize that I had something to say and they were listening."

At the workshops, Patricia talks about her life, including her victory over cancer and her own battle for self-acceptance.

She brings journals and asks the girls in the workshops to write three to five things in their personal journals that they love about themselves.

"I believe when they're having a bad day, they can go back to the journal because it is positive," Patricia said. "There is no negative in the journal."

Then Patricia gives the girls a piece of paper. On one side, they write one thing they don't like about themselves. On the other, they write a few things that people have said about them.

Then she asks the girls to ball up the pieces of paper and throw them in a small casket she carries. Each girl has a funeral for her piece of paper, saying this chant: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, get all these negative thoughts out of us."

The results are always positive, Patricia said. "It kind of releases things," she said.

Patricia says she's touched by what the girls write about themselves. "A lot of girls write, 'I think I'm fat' or 'I don't like my ankles' or 'I don't like my nose.'"

"So I teach them a little task I do for myself. I told them to get up every morning and look in the mirror and always find one thing they like about themselves.

"I don't care if it's their earlobes," she said with a laugh. "Just find something and go with it for that day."

Patricia cautions there are no quick fixes, though. "It's going to take longer than 15 minutes to learn how to love yourself. It's going to take years. I'm just trying to put them on the right track."

Patricia tries to keep in touch with as many former Sol Stone patients as possible.

"I have more than 50 girls' names and numbers in my phone, and at Christmas time, I send messages to some of them and I am always amazed with how many get back to me and thank me," she said. "It makes me feel like I am doing something meaningful, and when I leave this world, I'll feel like I made a difference."

She's getting more inquiries about her workshops and talking with older girls and women now, too, including high school girls, Girl Scouts, women at the Elmira YWCA and students at Cornell University.

"She is one of the most powerful voices I have ever known to give a 'love your body' message," said Carolyn, who brought Patricia to speak at Cornell.

Carolyn also marvels at Patricia's work at the Sol Stone Center: "She models how to feel good about yourself and instills a positive presence for the girls."

Carrie says her students who have attended Patricia's workshops talk about her for days afterward because she has a simple and powerful mantra: "Love yourself no matter what by focusing on the positive and the things you can change," Carrie said.

Patricia is passionate about the new direction in her life, and is eager to share her positive thoughts with as many people as possible.

"Embrace who you are," she said. "Don't feel like you need to be like everyone else. You just need to be like yourself."

Dishing With Diva

To learn more about Patricia's workshops, call or e-mail The Nutrition Clinic or Sol Stone Center:

Call: (607) 732-5646 or (877) 765-7866.

Email: enc1003@aol.com.

TABLE FOR ONE

Bruce J. Brennan, M.S., R.D.

Registered dietitian and chef Bruce J. Brennan offers meal suggestions:

Stuffed Loaded Baked Sweet Potato

For a quick and easy meal for one – try a stuffed loaded baked sweet potato – rich in complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, beta carotene (Vitamin A), along with a hit of iron and calcium. This recipe gives the bonus of being a good source of protein all at the same time as being both quick and easy. Combine with a green salad garnished with nuts or avocado and some fresh fruit – and you have a complete meal that is sure to please!

- 1 each Microwave Wrapped Sweet Potato
- 1/2 cup Black Beans, drained and rinsed (1/4 of 15 oz. can)
- 1/4 cup Fresh Chopped Tomato (1/4 fresh tomato)
- 1/2 stalk Fresh Chopped Celery
- 1/2 stalk Fresh Minced Cilantro*
- 1/4 tsp. Ground Cumin
- 1/4 tsp. Ground Coriander
- Pinch Kosher Salt
- Pinch Fresh Ground Pepper
- 1/6 oz. Plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 each Mozzarella Cheese Stick

* **Cilantro is optional.**

Take one Microwave Wrapped Sweet Potato and cook in the microwave as per package directions. When cooked, remove from wrapper and split open to accommodate the stuffing. While the sweet potato is cooking – prepare the rest of the ingredients. Take about one-half cup of drained and rinsed black beans and toss with fresh chopped tomato, chopped celery, minced cilantro, cumin, coriander, salt and fresh ground pepper – toss the same with about two tablespoons of a plain Greek yogurt. Drain any excess liquid and “stuff” the mixture into the baked sweet potato. Top the stuffed potato with one grated mozzarella cheese stick and broil in the oven until the cheese is melted and the stuffed sweet potato and stuffing mixture is heated through. Enjoy sizzling hot from the oven topped with the remaining Greek yogurt.

It is an easy and delicious meal ready in less than 10 minutes.

A safe place to go

An Elmira home has been transformed into transitional housing for people recovering from eating disorders, and treatment professionals say the residence is one of the few of its kind in the nation.

Bruce J. Brennan, a registered dietitian and the nutrition director for Sol Stone Center, opened Gehret House in 2008 to help some patients make the move from a treatment facility to more independent living. Bruce, who owns the home, said he noticed that some patients needed a supportive place to live temporarily after they left their treatment facility.

“I started it because there were patients who would do very well at Sol Stone but home wasn’t necessarily the healthiest place to return,” he said. “So they would struggle and end up having repeat admissions due to not having a supportive home environment.”

Carolyn Hodges Chaffee, the owner of The Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center, said Gehret House has filled a critical missing piece in treatment.

“We have lagged way behind the drug and alcohol field because they have halfway houses and transitional programs, and eating disorder programs have never provided that as an option,” she said. “The majority of patients’ recovery happens in the outpatient setting, so that supportive environment is critical to ongoing care.”

Carolyn said Gehret House is the only transitional housing of its kind in the area, and there are just a handful of others across the country.

“Eating disorder patients have never had this as a treatment option,” she said. “Having the housing locally has made the transition much easier for our clients. They already have a relationship with our staff and are able to trust the process.”

Bruce said he looks for a “level of motivation” in a patient before agreeing to accept them at Gehret House.

Some Sol Stone patients staying at the supervised Hoffman House have made the shift. “They move to Gehret House to practice living more independently so when they go home, they are used to being able to live without supervision and support around the clock,” he said.

Gehret House can accept up to eight people in furnished upstairs and downstairs apartments, Bruce said. Each floor has its own kitchen, full bathroom and television. The home also has Internet

access and laundry facilities.

People staying in Gehret House are required to bring their own clothing and toiletries, and pay for their own food, Bruce said. They are also required to fix their own meals and help clean up the house because there is no staff.

Bruce checks in daily at the house and is on-site there four or five days a week. He also brings the residents together for a weekly meal and weekend outing.

Bruce tries to provide residents with job leads and coaching for interviews while monitoring their ongoing treatment.

“I work with them to try and find some type of employment or some sort of positive volunteer experience for them so that they are used to being healthy while trying to hold a job or do some other type of work,” Bruce said.

However, Bruce said residents are responsible for their own days.

“Learning how to be more independent and deal with being responsible for making and keeping appointments is part of the process of getting back to a full and independent life.”

Bruce said most of the former Gehret House residents have been able to move on to better lives.

“If it wasn’t a healthy living environment that they came from, then they needed to be healthier to be able to make the right choices in that environment if they went back there,” he said. “Gehret House is sort of like a stepping stone to get them back there or to a healthier place so they can go out and live on their own.”

Other facts about the house:

- People staying in the house must be in treatment, and 18 or older.

- Insurance does not reimburse patients for stays at Gehret House, but Carolyn called the weekly charge “very affordable.”

- Many of the Gehret House residents have been from Sol Stone, but Bruce also accepts people from other facilities.

- People stay in the house from a few weeks to more than a year in one case.

- About 90 percent of the people that have stayed in the house were women.

For Gehret House inquiries

Call (607) 368-0541 or send email to welcome@gehrethouse.com.

Aid for treatment

A Rochester, N.Y., foundation is providing financial assistance to people who need help paying for eating disorder treatment.

The foundation, called Moonshadow's Spirit (The Jennifer Mathiason Memorial Foundation), has approved scholarships for five people since it began accepting applications in March 2010. The foundation, started in 2009, awards scholarships on a quarterly basis.

The next application deadline is May 31.

▪ **What it does:** The foundation helps pay for insurance co-payments, housing for families and, in some limited cases, travel expenses. The foundation usually sends the scholarship money directly to the treatment facilities.

▪ **Scholarship amounts:** Applicants can request any amount needed. The foundation has awarded more than \$10,000 to applicants, with scholarships ranging from about \$1,200 to about \$2,900.

▪ **Who it helps:** The foundation's applications committee awards scholarships to people seeking assistance at U.S. and Canadian facilities.

▪ **Key requirement:** Applicants must be accepted into an inpatient, residential or partial hospitalization treatment program. The foundation, however, does not help pay for outpatient treatment.

▪ **Who applies:** The foundation prefers that the patient complete the application, but family members and providers may assist. There is no age requirement for applicants.

▪ **To apply for aid and learn more:** Go to www.moonshadowspirit.org and click on "Application Process" on the right side of the home page. The 13-page application packet, a Word document, includes scholarship criteria, instructions, an explanation of the application process and an application.

The foundation received a national boost on Dec. 3, 2010, when it was mentioned in a New York Times article as one of the few foundations offering assistance to families of eating disorder patients.

On that same day, Sharon Mathiason, Jennifer Mathiason's mother and the board chair of the foundation, spoke at the 11th Annual Leah Robarge Memorial Seminar in Corning. Her appearance at the annual seminar of The Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center helped introduce the foundation and its mission to eating disorder treatment professionals and patients. Since that day, the foundation has seen an increase in the number of applicants seeking aid, Sharon said.

The foundation was started by Jennifer's parents, Sharon and David Mathiason of Webster,

and her friends. Jennifer died in 2009 at age 26.

Jennifer battled an eating disorder for 10 years and recovered in 2005, Sharon said.

Sharon and Erika Fillmore, a close friend of Jennifer's who is on the foundation board with the Mathiasons, remember Jennifer as a generous and kind person who always thought of others.

Erika, who also recovered from an eating disorder, said Jennifer worried about people with eating disorders who could not afford treatment. Erika said she and Jennifer noticed hundreds of people in an online eating disorder community who said they were unable to afford treatment, which can cost \$1,000 a day or more. "That was such a common thread, people who wanted to recover, wanted treatment but couldn't afford it," she said.

Sharon said her daughter was a talented writer and painter who also sang and performed on stage. In fact, prints of some of Jennifer's paintings, including "Moonshadow Fairy," are sold to raise money for the foundation on its website. Sharon also recalled Jennifer's compassion, saying she went out of her way to help people living on the streets in Rochester and New York City.

Carolyn Hodges Chaffee, the owner of The Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center, remembers Jennifer the same way. She treated Jennifer when she was a student at Cornell University.

"Jennifer touched many lives," Carolyn said. "She was always someone who found the positive in any situation and was thought of as someone you could always count on."

Erika said she expects the foundation will continue to grow. But for now, they do what they can to help. "We cannot pay for 100 percent of treatment, but we certainly have the ability to supplement or fill in the gaps. We want to give people every opportunity to be successful."

• **How to help the foundation:** To donate or buy merchandise, including prints and notecards, go to the website. The foundation has two major fundraisers each year, a June garage sale and a September dinner and silent auction, both in the Rochester area.

Other resources for aid

• Two other foundations offer grants to eating disorder patients in financial need:

The Kirsten Haglund Foundation:

www.kirstenhaglund.org.

The Manna Scholarship Fund:

www.mannafund.org.

• **Mercy Ministries of America** offers free, biblically based treatment:

<http://www.mercyministries.org>.

Nutrition Clinic begins program in new Vestal office

The Nutrition Clinic opened an outpatient eating disorder program on April 14 in Vestal.

The office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays in the Center for Holistic Services at 4513 Old Vestal Road.

Carolyn Hodges Chaffee, M.S., R.D., owner of The Nutrition Clinic, said the office offers outpatient nutrition and medical services, but will expand in the future to offer an intensive outpatient program.

"We've opened an office in the Broome County region because of the increasing number of patients we are seeing from that area," Chaffee said.

Dr. Marc Immerman, medical director of The Nutrition Clinic, provides medical services at the Vestal office. Amy Enright, R.D., provides nutrition counseling. Patients will be referred to local therapists for individual psychotherapy.

Patients seeking an appointment in the Vestal office should call The Nutrition Clinic in Elmira. They may be referred by a doctor, therapist or family member.

In addition to its main office in Elmira, the clinic offers outpatient eating disorder services in Ithaca and Syracuse.

The Sol Stone Center, located at the Elmira office, is a partial hospitalization program for patients unresponsive to outpatient care or people discharged from inpatient or residential facilities.

The Nutrition Clinic, which serves more than 26 counties, is recognized both regionally and nationally in the treatment of eating disorders.

The clinic has been treating and advocating for people struggling with eating disorders for more than 20 years.

• **To reach The Nutrition Clinic,** call (607) 732-5646 or (877) 765-7866.

Here's how we can help

The Nutrition Clinic in Elmira, Ithaca, Vestal and Syracuse, and the Sol Stone Center in Elmira offer hope to people with eating disorders. We tailor our treatment programs for each person.

The Nutrition Clinic

Our nationally recognized outpatient clinic is committed to helping people make permanent, healthy lifestyle changes.

We provide a treatment approach to help patients discover and use their values, talents and emotions to build the self-esteem to deal with life's challenges. We provide traditional and intensive outpatient services.

Our medically based program is available for people with anorexia nervosa, bulimia, compulsive overeating, binge eating disorder and eating disorder not otherwise specified.

Sol Stone Center

This partial hospitalization program specializes in treating people that have been unresponsive to outpatient care and/or people discharged from an inpatient or residential settings.

Our services are geared toward meeting the medical, nutritional and psychological needs of patients.

Our skilled staff guides patients as they interact with each other through programming and the recovery process.



The Nutrition Clinic and Sol Stone Center in Elmira

Hoffman House

The house, located near the clinic, provides housing for women enrolled in the Sol Stone Center.

It is a safe, supportive and supervised residence for those being treated from outside the area. Male housing can be arranged as well.

Support groups for patients

- **Elmira:** 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays, The Nutrition Clinic, 1003 Walnut St.
- **Syracuse:** 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Ophelia's Place, 407 Tulip St., Liverpool.

Support groups for loved ones

- **Ithaca:** 6 to 9 p.m. May 16, June 20, July 19, Aug. 15 and Sept. 19 at Cornell Cooperative Extension, 16 Willow Ave.
- **Syracuse:** 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, Ophelia's Place, 407 Tulip St., Liverpool.

How to contact us

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Welcome to our third newsletter

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