

FALL 2022

# RENEWING HOPE

ANCHORPOINT COUNSELING MINISTRY'S NEWSLETTER



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**Miranda Wild**  
OFFICE MANAGER

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am deeply passionate about Anchorpoint's mission and ministry! As a person of faith, I am inspired to foster spiritual connections and support people in need through unconditional service. As a husband and father, I cherish opportunities to help other families along their life and relationship journeys. As a local community member, it means a lot to me to be able to serve my neighbors.

I have been part of the Anchorpoint family since 2017. During this time, I have witnessed how the immense skills and dedication of a caring team of professionals can change lives for the better. You make this work possible!

I am stepping into this new role with great appreciation for the many extraordinary legacies of care and support that have helped to shape and define this ministry over the past 56 years. It is truly because of YOU that Anchorpoint can bring hope, healing, and learning to so many youth, adults, couples, and families who are battling very difficult circumstances in their lives. It is an immense honor and privilege to lead Anchorpoint's vital mission forward with your support!

Many thanks for all you do,

**Mark Heinbockel, MSW**  
Executive Director

## BE AN "ANCHOR OF HOPE" FOR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

EARN A \$500 MATCHING  
GIFT BY SIGNING UP FOR  
AN AFFORDABLE MONTHLY  
GIVING PROGRAM

A wonderful anonymous donor generously pledged a **\$500 donation for each of the next 30 new Anchors of Hope members.** Please consider joining today to take advantage of this limited-time opportunity.

You can make a big difference and continue all year long by joining our monthly giving program! The Anchors of Hope are donors like you who want to make a bigger impact. This program started in 2021 to provide ongoing care and support to neighbors who need mental health and educational services.

Monthly giving is an easy and affordable way to help, but your impact is HUGE! You can pledge any amount to be drawn automatically from your credit card or bank account each month (e.g. \$10, \$20, \$50, etc.). You pick the start date, and you'll always be in control and free to change your monthly giving at any time.

30 caring supporters like you are already Anchors of Hope... will you join them?

### HOW TO SIGN UP:

- Visit [www.anchorpoint.org/monthly-giving-registration](http://www.anchorpoint.org/monthly-giving-registration)
- Return the enclosed monthly giving registration form
- Call us at 412-366-1300

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## YOUR GIVING... YOUR IMPACTS!

"I think Anchorpoint was the best thing for my kids. It made me feel better that there was somebody else there."



Rachel saw her children were struggling, so she asked for help.

As a mother of six, she's deeply devoted to her children. "I've raised all the kids pretty much all on my own through the years," she explains.

Rachel admits there have been challenges; father figures have come and gone from her kids' lives, and she's been forced to work evenings to provide for her family.

"It makes you feel like a terrible parent," she says, "because you're not *there*."

But Rachel will do anything for her kids, and she knows when they need help. Her daughter Lucy has trouble reading, and it's taken a toll on her confidence. Her son Braydon struggled in school and made poor relationship choices that put him on a bad path.

How does a single mom of six find special services to help her kids? "You can't say no," Rachel explains, "but you can't always afford it either."

And then she found Anchorpoint. Her kids were able to get the support they vitally needed because of generous giving from donors like you!

Lucy's reading troubles began in Kindergarten. She watched her twin sister excel while she fell further behind. She desperately wanted to do better, but she wasn't given the chance.

She says, "All my classmates were always like, 'Lucy! The word is this!' But in tutoring, they give me a couple minutes to think and try to do it myself."

Braydon struggled with school and relationships, too, and counseling helped lead him down a better road.

"Everybody in our family could see what was happening," Rachel said, referring to her son. "We tried to talk to him, but we were too close to it."

Sometimes, what can help us most when we're struggling is an outside perspective. Rachel explained, "When people you love are telling you things, you don't really take them in. But somebody from the outside starts asking questions, and then you can pull yourself out and think about it. I think Braydon learned a lot of that here, which was nice."

These are all services Rachel couldn't have afforded to give her kids elsewhere - but you made them possible!

"I think [Anchorpoint] was the best thing for my kids," Rachel says. "It made me feel better that they had somebody... that there was somebody else there kind of taking that burden a little bit off of me."

AT OUR ANNUAL SUMMER GALA AND GOLF CLASSIC, WE RAISED A TOTAL OF  
**\$107,000**

THE GENEROSITY YOU SHOWED AT THESE EVENTS WILL

**FULLY SERVE 214  
CLIENTS/FAMILIES**

WHO OTHERWISE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD  
COUNSELING/TUTORING SERVICES. **THANK YOU!**



ANCHORPOINT.ORG



## A HEALTHY DOSE OF VITAMIN N

### Connect With Nature And Improve Your Mental Health

By Lauren Burke, LCSW

Every day, society gets busier and busier. People end up juggling multiple responsibilities. They constantly feel like they're never enough, dropping the ball, or just completely defeated and burnt out. In fact, 76 percent of U.S. adults admit to currently experiencing burnout, which is up 9 percent from pre-Covid surveys. In our go-go-go culture, it's hard to slow down. We pride ourselves on being busy while also being severely over-stimulated, and our mental health is paying the price. In the present circumstances, mental illness affects 1 in 5 Americans in any given year. A connection with nature, however, can offer some reprieve. People have long recommended "fresh air" as a way to feel better, both physically and mentally. Let's specifically talk about what some Vitamin N (nature) can do for your mental health.

Spending time outside (specifically in green spaces like gardens, parks or forests) can have many benefits on our overall wellbeing. While it's not fully understood, there is an intuitive link between nature and wellness. The results of multiple research studies show measurable short and long term benefits of being in nature.

#### Some of these benefits include:

- **Stress Reduction:** Studies have shown as little as 10 minutes in green spaces significantly reduces cortisol levels (which is the primary stress hormone within the body). It also relieves muscle tension, lowers heart rate, reduces blood pressure, and balances brain activity. Exposure to green space appears to increase parasympathetic nervous activity, which is the system

that relaxes or "undoes" the effects from stress caused by the sympathetic nervous system, resulting in a biological and felt sense of calmness.

- **Improved Mindfulness:** Green spaces also appear to slow rumination, the process where individuals may replay negative instances or worrisome thoughts repeatedly. One way nature quiets the mind is by heightening awareness of your senses.
- **Improved Mood:** An ever-growing body of research supports the notion that spending time in nature boosts mood. In one study (Bratman, 2015), participants who took walks in natural settings reported heightened moods when compared to their counterparts who walked indoors. These same participants were studied by advanced imaging techniques after their nature walks and proved to have less brain activity in the prefrontal cortex. This is the brain region involved in depression, behavioral withdrawal, and negative self-reflective processes. Nature also boosts endorphin levels and dopamine production, which promotes an increased sense of happiness within the brain.
- **Enhanced Memory and Attention Span:** A 2008 study by Marc Berman shows that memory and attention span improved by 20% after one hour spent interacting with nature. The study also found students who took nature breaks had improved accuracy in memory and fewer errors in completing tasks.
- **Improved Productivity with Work and School Performance:** Typical indoor work and school environments negatively affect the brain's ability to

filter important stimuli from less-important ones. With vast sources of technology, many scientists believe our brains were not made for this kind of information bombardment. It can easily lead to mental fatigue. Nature restores depleted attention circuits as well as improves working memory and our ability to concentrate. Because of this, many individuals find themselves being more open to productivity, creativity, and problem solving after spending time outdoors.

- **Boosted Immune Function:** The coronavirus pandemic brought awareness to the importance of maintaining a healthy immune system to fight infection. Whether it is from inhaling the immune-boosting phytoncides in the essential oils of trees or ingesting microparticles of healthy bacteria from soil, numerous studies support an improved immune boost as the basis for the many health benefits of times spent in nature.
- **Regulate and Improve Sleep:** Lack of natural light triggers melatonin production, which is why you may get drowsy after spending the day inside. Going out in the daylight, even if it's overcast, suppresses melatonin

production. The result could help keep you alert during the day, making it easier to get a good night's rest later.

- **Social Connection:** Nature can also help connect you with other people in your community, which could help reduce feelings of loneliness. Exposure to nature can promote social interactions, leading people to value community and develop closer relationships.

So, you've learned to connect with nature for your mental health, and know the benefits, but you might be wondering: What does "connection with nature" actually look like, and is it really as simple as stepping outside and going for a walk? Well, yes and no. Evidence shows the quality of our relationship with nature, known as connectedness, is part of the reason for positive impacts. Connectedness refers to the way we relate to and experience nature. To enhance nature's benefits substantially, you need to truly engage with your surroundings once you step out the door. A strong connection with nature means feeling a close relationship or emotional attachment to our natural surroundings.

## THERAPIST'S CORNER: TIPS ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CONNECTION WITH NATURE

1. **Use all of your senses to notice details:** Actively involving your senses can help develop a deeper connection with the natural world. It should generate a multitude of positive emotions such as compassion, calmness, joy, curiosity, and gratitude. It's surprising how much you miss when you aren't actively paying attention to your five senses. We might notice the beauty of nature by listening intently to birdsong or touching the bark of trees. We could take time to smell flowers or look at the vibrant colors. One thing that may help you pay more attention to noticing details is pretending you have a camera. If you're scanning your surroundings with photography in mind, you are more likely to notice things that interest you. You will naturally focus on things that are beautiful, meaningful, or intriguing – all things that you want to capture and remember. By taking the time to notice the smaller details, you can get out of your own head and clear your mind from the day's troubles.
2. **Visualize being one with nature:** Take a moment to see our interconnected relationship to a much larger ecosystem. For example, try mindfulness breathing or breathing with nature for a few minutes. This allows you to reflect on how trees and plants are all breathing together with you. As you exhale CO<sub>2</sub>, they are cleansing and transforming your breath back into oxygen to fuel your body. Being a part of this simple yet complex system

reminds us that everything offers value and belongs. Ultimately, nature has its own means of balance. At the basis, the five elements that make up nature oppose each other, yet nature balances them out. Perhaps nature can teach us to have better balance and live harmoniously both within ourselves and the world around us.

3. **Be curious; let your mind wonder and reflect:** Put your detective hat on and be curious about nature. What kind of bird is that? I wonder how it ended up here? Reflecting on the natural world allows us to find universal truths and wisdom that may help us navigate our lives. There's a reason so many authors of great poems and novels use nature as the looking glass into the human condition. Our natural environment is full of life lessons and can perhaps help us make better sense of the world.
4. **Perceive beauty or find spiritual meaning:** Nature offers a chance to increase our spiritual connection. When in nature, we recognize we are part of a world much larger than ourselves. Take time to observe nature's great forests, lakes, mountains, oceans, etc. This often invokes a feeling of the divine and a deep gratitude or inspires a great sense of awe. Historically, these resources have always been honored in ancient cultures, connect people to the sacred, and generate spiritual feelings.

# MEET OUR NEW ADDITIONS TO THE ANCHORPOINT TEAM!

**JENNIFER ARANDA, MA**  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

After working for various nonprofits in development roles, Jennifer is eager to use her skills to help plan events, grow outreach, and raise funds for the mental health and education services provided at Anchorpoint.



**REBECCA FREYVOGEL, MEd**  
TUTORING PROGRAM MANAGER

Rebecca is thrilled to begin her first school year as the Tutoring Program Manager. She's worked for over 15 years as an educator in various roles including classroom and ESL teacher, Reading Specialist, coach, and tutor.



**JENNIFER GALVEZ, LCSW**  
LICENSED COUNSELOR

Jennifer has been in social work for 29 years and takes a strengths-based, holistic approach and seeks to foster a sense of emotional safety for her clients. She views the therapeutic relationship as a partnership, built on trust and mutuality.



**KRISTEN OLSON-GAIA, LSW, JD**  
LICENSED COUNSELOR

After two years of internship at Anchorpoint, Kristen is excited to join our team full-time as a licensed social worker. She finds her purpose in helping clients deal with grief in its many forms and enjoys facilitating our spousal loss support group.



**CATHY MANN**  
ADMIN SUPPORT ASSOCIATE

After spending years working for the West View Borough, Cathy joined us as a vital support for our admin staff especially as our intake specialist. When she's not answering the phone at Anchorpoint, she enjoys reading and spending time with her grandkids.



**AMBER WALCZYK, MEd, LPC**  
LICENSED COUNSELOR

Amber has a special interest in the pediatric population with issues surrounding adjustment, anxiety, inattention, trauma, anger, and more. She strives to provide a safe space where clients feel empowered while working toward therapeutic goals.



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