



NEVER ALONE OVER THE HOLIDAYS

by Dylan Buck

I love the fact that the Academy's schedule includes being open for celebration on holidays. This is important for me because I am a full-time student at Manatee Technical College, studying AutoCAD. For those members who have a full-time schedule, either by going to college or back to work, it allows us to stay connected with the Academy community. For those with more free time, the Academy is consistently open on weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm to provide a diverse range of volunteer opportunities. I appreciate that the Academy takes into consideration members' schedules, allowing us total flexibility in when we attend.

I tend to come every day during my semester breaks, and recently, on Indigenous Peoples Day, I had a day off from school and I was able to spend the day working within our community here at the Academy.

As we approach the holiday season, the Academy is particularly attentive to the challenges of loneliness and isolation during traditional festive celebrations. We open our doors every major holiday, on the actual days they are celebrated, providing members, staff, families and friends the opportunity to gather, socialize and enjoy each other's company.



The Academy is open on Thanksgiving Day to members and staff, as well as other major holidays

WARM WELCOME TO GRANT GOODIN

by Grant Goodin

I was only just diagnosed with a mental health diagnosis this year, after a Baker Act which was a very traumatic experience that has stayed with me. After that experience, I connected with a therapist at Centerstone who recommended the Academy. For a while I've been unable to keep a productive routine in my home life. When I toured the Academy, I felt positive that I had found a place that could help me find purpose.

The Academy provides well-needed structure, and I find that I'm far more motivated here than I am at home. The Academy gets me out of my house and out of my head, and it helps me feel connected to others in a meaningful way.

Usually when I'm here I do prep work in the kitchen. Mincing, blending, cooking—I find it to be a surprisingly relaxing experience. Everyone is so positive here and I really feel like I'm building new skills. Culinary has inspired me to do more cooking and home and to widen my diet.

When I'm at home my life is pretty bland and dull, spending my time daydreaming away and never really getting stuff done. Coming here has given me a sense of place and has inspired me to do more in my day-to-day existence.



(L to R) Alin Romonita of Sarasota Memorial Hospital (SMH), Preston Zorn and AJ Ramirez



NAMI Walk participants gathered together for photos



(L to R) Erica Siegel and Patty Haltinner



Members and staff at the NAMI Walk

EARLY BIRD GETS THE WALK

by Erica Siegel

Saturday, October 4 was a beautiful morning (6 a.m.!) for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk. When my dad and I arrived, Patty Haltinner, the Academy at Glengary's Enrollment Coordinator, was already there. We set up the Academy tent and table with our flyers and newsletters.

My dad is 80 years old, and he did the walk. He was so happy. He's "Mr. Exercise," as I like to call him. He plays golf, pickleball—you name it. It was very special and meant a lot to me that my dad was there. Several of his friends walked with us as well, in honor of their friend's daughter who lost her life to suicide years ago.

There were at least 20 tables hosted by other helpful organizations. We went around and spoke to many of them. For example, we learned about a new inpatient psychiatric facility opening in North Port, FL, which was interesting to learn. It was wonderful to see so many communities come together for such an important cause.

DRAWING COURAGE

by Omar Tlemsani



Omar Tlemsani (L) teaching his perspective drawing workshop to Nursing Students from Gannon University

I was thinking that the day would be a normal day. Then, in the middle of organizing for the wellness workshop I facilitate on perspective drawing, I was told that instead of the handful of friendly faces I am used to seeing at the workshop, there would be guests. Next thing I know, twelve unfamiliar women were seated among our Academy members, smiling up at me and ready for me to begin. We were hosting Gannon University students for a Lunch & Learn, and our guests wanted to sit in on the workshop!

I kept calm during the class and taught them how to draw a bookshelf in perspective. At the beginning, I was taking them line by line, step by step, in drawing the first three shelves and the general hollow area of the bookshelf. Then, I asked them to try to complete it themselves. Throughout the class everyone was doing an excellent job. Some were naturals and completed the bookshelf in the short time. I love to compliment everyone on their work and see people take interest and even enjoy art in perspective and proportions. This boosted my confidence, and now I feel capable as a teacher. This aligns with my goals to teach more in the future!

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