

MAY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Cottonwood Alumni Program



Geo Hoshaw, Alumni Coordinator, Cottonwood Alumnus

As an alumnus of Cottonwood myself, I look forward to supporting each and every one of you guys on your journey. Although your time at Cottonwood may have ended, your place in the Cottonwood Family has just begun. What you all do after you leave residential is an instant opportunity to put the skills and knowledge from here to use. We have so many engagement opportunities to stay connected as an alumni community through our alumni aftercare meetings, fun monthly events, our alumni social media app, and a direct line to myself for anything you need.

Please reach out anytime! I'd love to connect with you, hear how you are doing, and support you in any way!

Phone number: 520-697-2827
Email: AlumniCW@cottonwoodtucson.com

Weekly Alumni Meeting

We welcome you to join us at any of our Weekly alumni meetings, either in-person or on zoom, if you haven't already. The collective group has great camaraderie and wisdom which is a great tool in one's recovery. Through community and connection, we grow stronger individually.



May Staff Spotlight: Melissa Hetzel, Chief Operations Officer, LCSW



Where were you born and where have you lived?
I was born in Toledo, Ohio. Over the years, I've lived in Michigan, Ohio, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Washington.

What inspired you to work in this field?
I've always been drawn to helping people who struggle with mental health and substance use challenges. As my career progressed, I developed a strong interest in building skills around trauma work.

What motivates you personally?
I'm driven by the goal of becoming a better version of myself each day—always growing and improving from who I was yesterday.

What hobbies bring you joy?
I enjoy hiking, cycling, and paddleboarding—anything that gets me out into nature.

What hobbies would you love to try?
Pickleball is on my list!

What's your favorite thing about working at Cottonwood?
I love being surrounded by nature—birds, cacti, sunrises and sunsets, javelina, and coyotes. It's an incredibly grounding environment.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?
"If you're not sure what to do, just do the next right thing."

What's your dream vacation and why?
I'd love to spend an extended period of time along the coast of British Columbia. The water, the food, the culture, the terrain, and the people—it all speaks to me.



May Alumni Spotlight

Liz Farrell, Fall 2021



When were you at Cottonwood? I was in Cottonwood for 30 days in August 2021. Against all the advice, I went home, quickly relapsed, and returned five days later to a world of acceptance! The next 6 weeks set me on a life-changing path!

Where are you from, and where have you lived? I am from Chicago and still live in the house I grew up in. I graduated from the University of Arizona, where I learned to appreciate the beauty of the desert! My daughters thought that Cottonwood's location would help their lifelong cause, and thankfully, it did!

What is your biggest self-realization along your recovery journey? I came to Cottonwood to stop drinking and left with so many other things to work on! Acceptance and my renewed spirituality allowed me to finally experience hope and see my ability to change. Thanks to the people I met along the way, I started to believe that I have value and can be of service to others.

What's your favorite memory from Cottonwood? I loved my Art Therapy classes with Lucia. I learned to embrace imperfection and to not be afraid of having color in my world. The atmosphere of acceptance and creativity was really special, and I still carry it with me!

What's a part of you that you really like about yourself now? I trust myself to show up in a way I never could before. I am much more present and have a newfound understanding of how precious life is and how much there is to be grateful for.

What motivates you on a daily basis? I want to be here to watch my daughters and my loved ones thrive in their lives. I hope to continue to use my rocky path to help others find a smoother one.

Favorite piece of wisdom that you use often? That we can only change ourselves!

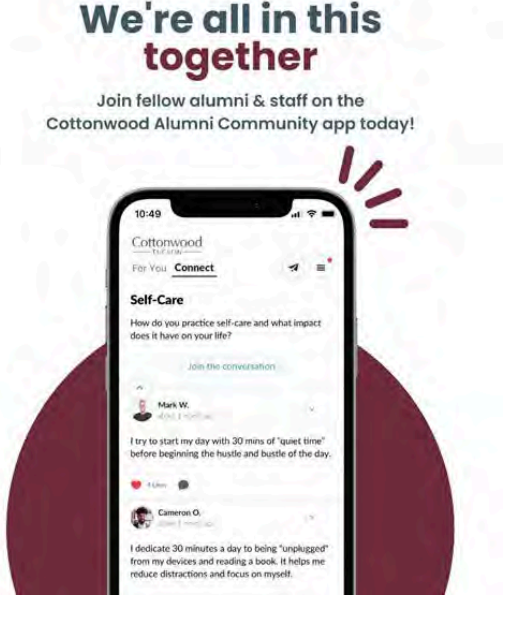
Dream vacation and why? The feeling of love, acceptance, and spirituality I found during the Cottonwood Reunion in Tucson was a dream vacation to me!

April Alumni Event Recap...Sanctuary Cove



Really fun group at our April Alumni Event! Great to have John John back, Clayton deciding we didn't climb high enough, seeing Luis in person in a long time, and Lauren & Cactus (Kevin) channeling their Sonoran Spirits. Great weather, great company, and fun in recovery!

May Alumni Event Zipline!!!
Saturday, May 31, 2025
12:30-5:00 PM
Arizona Zipline Adventures



Are you on our Cottonwood Social Media App, yet?

If not, you should be! Join today to stay connected to upcoming events, your fellow alumni and to share your journey with us!! Don't miss out!

Do you know someone who could benefit from a stay at Cottonwood?

If so, please have them reach out to me directly. I'd love to discuss how I can help.

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