

ELDER CIRCLES May 2020

Aging in Place

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- ** Blog: "Aging in Place, A.k.a. Sheltering in Place" by Deb Knox
- ** Elder Circles temporarily cancelled
- ** "Pandemic Check-Up" by Kathleen Roberts
- ** Upcoming virtual events
- ** Video: Yoga Nidra
- ** Tucson Parks and Rec At-Home Bingo



Center for
Community Dialogue
& Training
A program of Our Family Services



93-year old Olive Veronesi of PA asking for libational support during the lockdown.

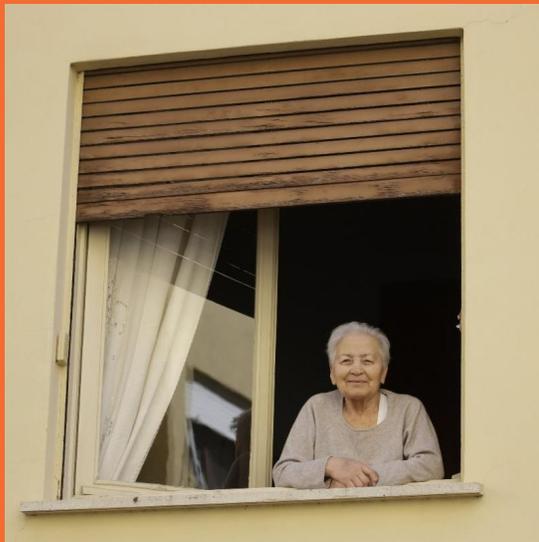
ALL ELDER CIRCLES TEMPORARILY ON HOLD

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Center has temporarily cancelled all Elder Circles in Tucson, Green Valley, Oro Valley and Oracle. Circles will be resumed as soon as possible, and we will keep you informed of all developments.

We hope that this step will aid public health efforts to slow the spread of infection and reduce the number of people who are severely affected.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Chris Medvescek at (520) 323-1708 x122, or email cmedvescek@ourfamilyservices.org.

Meanwhile, stay well in body and spirit!



AGING IN PLACE, A.K.A SHELTERING IN PLACE

Isolation and loneliness can have serious effects on elders in general, but with the arrival of Covid-19, and the required social isolation for our own health, we are all forced to address this in ways that match our personal situations and preferences.

When I was first attracted to the power of the words "aging in place" it was in relation to the act of "home sharing" or co-housing. This is an

alternative to moving into an assisted living facility dedicated to the purpose of aging safely and providing varying degrees of support *and* community. But suddenly it's taken on an entirely different meaning in my mind, as it truly feels as if I am aging in place and may continue in this position for quite some time. It's like the game we used to play as kids when the music stopped and someone shouted "freeze" and whatever position you were in, you must remain in until the next person takes their turn.



Having lived alone most of my life, for the first time, I find myself sheltering in place with another, and that has had quite an impact on me. I notice that without the contact of others, I am more dependent on the one I live with than usual and vice versa. This interdependency requires new skills, new awareness and is definitely a challenge at times. Having someone to share my thoughts and feelings with on a daily basis as the reality of the situation unfolds is a welcome benefit. **What new challenges or delights are you finding in your current situation?**

In my aging-in-place activities I have - not unlike others, I'm sure - attempted to build some structure into my days. That was after the first week of allowing myself to do absolutely nothing. Days consist of regular walking in the neighborhood for a mile or more because of the extra time available to us. My meditations, spiritual readings and quiet time are able to be longer and



UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS / ACTIVITIES

Here are a few ideas for things to do while you're continuing to stay at home:

May 5 | 2 pm:

Cinco de Mayo Festival

Eva Longoria will host Altísimo, a livestream Latin Music & Pop Culture Festival to celebrate Cinco de Mayo and raise money for the Farmworkers' Covid-19 Pandemic Relief Fund. Performers will include Gloria Estefan, Luis Fonsi, and many more stars. The performances will air through Facebook Live, YouTube and various media platforms. More info and links to watch can be found [here](#).

May 6 & every Wed | 3 pm:

Yoga Nidra Meditations

Join Tucson-based The Gathering Point Community Acupuncture for their **free** 40-minute Yoga Nidra sessions held via Zoom. Yoga Nidra is "yogic sleep" - a meditation, not a physical practice. You will lay on your floor, yoga mat, blanket, couch, bed comfortably. Not sure what to expect? Check out the Yoga Nidra video link below to get an idea of this wonderful relaxation technique. Find out more [here](#).

May 7 & every Thur | 8:30 am:

Livestream Qigong classes

Join Tucson native Mimi Kuo-Deemer, a Qigong and yoga instructor who now lives and teaches in the UK, for her

deeper and I am grateful for that, too. I also started blogging/journaling on a somewhat regular basis, if not daily every other day, just to keep track of my inner life, some of the outside information relative to the progression of the disease, and my changing relations with others. **Were you able to create a schedule or a to-do list and has that been helpful?**



The experience of others who recently moved into assisted living facilities is different. One woman I know spoke of bringing her bowl to what used to be the dining room and standing in line waiting to receive her portion. (Not exactly a dignified means of having dinner served!) Meanwhile, another friend bragged about the activities they still had that provided a semblance of normalcy and social interaction, but within a short period of time those, too, were cancelled. And at another place, people gather outside on their balconies and back patios at 5 pm for a virtual happy hour, not unlike what's happening on balconies around the world. So far, none of those places have any cases let alone fatalities.

Oh yes, since this is about aging in place, the concern of the virus is especially strong for we are the most vulnerable - to the disease and to the social isolation. Are we the canaries in the coal mine? It has taken me a while to wrap my head around that reality as well. **Are loneliness and isolation affecting you more, and what ways have you found to cope?**

livestream classes on Zoom. Mimi offers a wonderful combination of Qigong movements and inspiring spiritual teachings based on the Tao Te Ching. Zoom classes are **by donation**; registration is required. [Click here](#) to learn more and sign up.

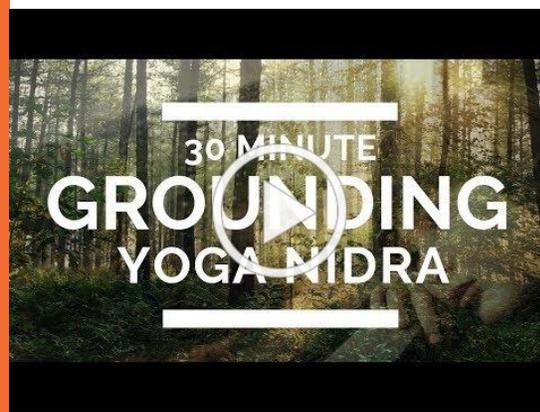
May 22 | 5 pm:

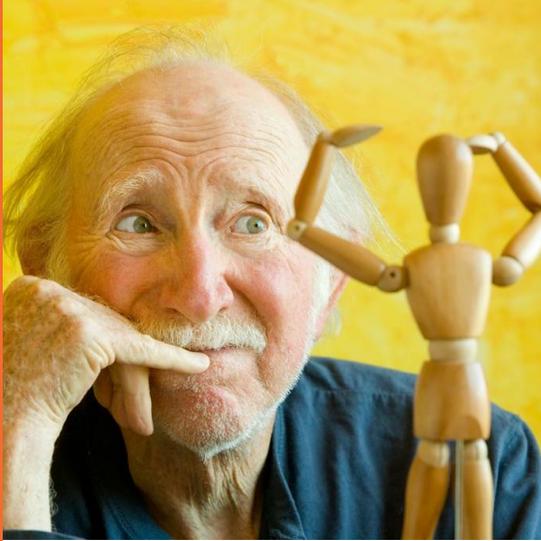
New Moon Writing Circle

Join Lisa O'Neill of Tucson-based The Ninth House for a Zoom-based writing circle focused on new beginnings. Cost is **\$25**. Lisa's invitation: *"Let's breathe and dwell in stillness and possibility together as we write down intentions for an as yet unknown future. With the energy of the New Moon, we'll use ritual and writing prompts to plant seeds of possibility."* To learn more, please [click here](#).

VIDEO: YOGA NIDRA RELAXATION

Yoga Nidra is a form of meditation that helps with insomnia, anxiety, stress, adrenal fatigue, ptsd and so much more. This 30-minute video will guide you through a relaxation and visualization for the element of earth, the root chakra, and wind/air element elevation. A gentle forest visualization will calm, ground and balance you. Close your eyes and allow yourself to be guided into deep relaxation.





So, as we all continue to age in place, I encourage you to envision yourself in your elder circle responding to any of the questions listed above and know that someone cares. (And if you don't attend a circle regularly, create a virtual one in your mind of those you'd love to have near you!) This too shall pass and we will be amazed at the changes that will be brought about which hopefully will address in a broader way possible the role and value of elders in our society, where ever we are aging in place.

~ Deb Knox



Deborah Knox is the owner of Life Work Transitions, a coaching and consulting firm supporting career, mid-life and end-of life transitions.

For more information please go to www.lifeworktransitions.com or contact Deb directly at



PANDEMIC CHECK-UP

The following is an excerpt from Kathleen Roberts' latest blog. Read the full blog post [here](#).

As may be true for you, I've been struggling off and on lately with feeling "stuck", depressed, angry, stressed..... focused too much on everything that is wrong and hanging out too much in my own head! But today [...], I was listening to the message from my spiritual community (Aldea) and it was the story of the 6 blind men and the elephant. It's an old and favorite parable about what happens when we notice only one piece of something larger and *think* we know the whole story, the whole Truth.

It was a very good "Aha!" moment for me because that's where I have been stuck. I have been focused on one piece of the puzzle – whether it's about the pandemic, politics, the world, the future – I have been seeing one small piece and getting stuck there. The part that I am seeing is NOT the entire elephant, and I can't understand what an elephant is by only seeing/feeling one part. The message helped me pull back and realize that no matter what the situation, there is a larger puzzle to be discerned. I may not know what that puzzle is, but simply knowing that there is always more to understand, more to know, more to discover, helps me to become more fluid, less rigid.

I also listened today to a favorite podcast: *Ten Percent Happier*

TUCSON PARKS & REC AT-HOME BINGO

Tucson Parks and Rec has a fun bingo game you can do at home, in your backyard and around your neighborhood - and the best part is, it's **free!**

Click on the picture below to view and print the full-size bingo game.



At Home BINGO



with Dan Harris. I highly recommend his podcast, and today's interview was with David Kessler, a therapist, and author on the subject of grief. He talked about how many people are experiencing grief in all its phases, colors and nuances, but don't know how to name it. Again, it was a message I needed to hear and a couple of useful take-aways from this interview I'd like to share:

**** Learn to just *feel your feelings* whatever they are, acknowledge them, let them wash through you and they will pass. [...]**

**** *Moving your body helps to process emotions.* [...]**

**** Sharing your feelings with others is another important thing – you are not alone! [...]**

We all tend to get stuck in our story – actually, just one page of that story perhaps -- forgetting that the story/Life is ongoing, ever-unfolding and ever-changing. This will pass. Hopefully, as individuals and as a nation, we will learn a more compassionate and cooperative way to live.

~ Kathleen Roberts

