

# Word for Yo' Wellness

November 1, 2020

A Newsletter by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition

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## The Word

### Changes

Here we are, riding the shoulders of fall inch by inch closer to winter's doorstep. Change is seldom more apparent during autumn than it is any other time of year, and we are rewarded by Yosemite's stunning display as it molts in preparation for winter's dormancy. Not unlike nature, we, too, often head into dormancy this time of year. Long hours by the river often get replaced by long hours indoors as temperatures drop and the sun spends less time performing across our sky.

As we travel alongside nature into the upcoming months, we can take inspiration from that which is around us. We can take stock of the layers we have shed through this unprecedented year, and we can find joy in the seeds we have planted that will sprout alongside spring's new growth. Personal change is something that comes from deep within, and it takes time and care to germinate fully.

Throughout November, it is important to give ourselves the care and nurturing we need. It is important to find glimpses of summer by allowing the sun to kiss our face a bit everyday (this is especially true if you in the south side of the valley), to walk alongside the ever changing Merced River, and find stillness in the breath as we experience fall's distinct aroma. Allow yourself to be suspended in time by journeying alongside the ageless oaks and cedars that stand like sentinels in our home, and feel the effect of the crisp evening air on your skin. Autumn's presence is a demanding, full sensory experience, and perhaps one of the luckiest times to find yourself in Yosemite National Park.

By Jetta Blaine

*Word for Yo' Wellness is brought to you by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition, an employee resource group (ERG) with members from many of Yosemite's park partners and hosted by the National Park Service. Look for our newsletter the first and fifteenth of every month for recipes, articles, community submissions, special events and more from your fellow park locals. Have a special request or an art submission? Contact [yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com](mailto:yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com) for more information!*

# Upcoming Events

All events brought to you by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition.

To protect the health of ourselves and our community, events are limited to 10 people or fewer, by order of arrival. Masks and social distancing are required.

## Weekly Meditation

25 minute meditation groups  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

Every Thursday  
1:15 pm & 2:00 pm  
Yosemite Valley Auditorium

## Evening Meditation

(Yoga Nidra/Daily Integration)  
Wind down from the workweek.  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

November 13th & 20th  
5:00pm-6:00pm  
Degnan's Loft

## Naturalist Meditation

Ground yourself in nature and the present moment at at this naturalist stroll.  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

Tuesday, November 17th  
12:00pm - 1:00pm  
Superintendent's Bridge  
(across from the chapel)

## Lifestyle Series Dialogue

A series on everyday lifestyle practices to live a more healthy and fulfilling life, inspired by the ancient yogic principles of the Yamas, Niyamas, and Ayurvedic Medicine.  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

November 10th & 24th  
5:00pm-6:00pm  
Degnan's Loft

## Community Fireside Chats

Community Chats are for gathering together in person to check-in and connect. These are peer-led by different facilitators and are meant to foster in-person community and well-being. These are outdoor events so bundle up!

November 18th & November 27th  
7:00pm-8:00pm  
Indian Cultural Museum Fire Pit  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

Thursday, November 19th  
5:00pm-6:30pm  
Indian Cultural Museum Fire Pit  
*Led by Jenni Buczko*

Sunday, November 15th  
7:00pm - 8:00pm  
Stables Fire Pit  
*Led by Erin Callahan*

## New Moon Astronomy Talk

A meditative night stroll and star talk.  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

Saturday, November 14th  
7:00pm-8:00pm  
Ahwahnee Wedding Lawn

## Full Moon Astronomy Talk

A meditative night stroll and star talk.  
*Led by Jetta Blaine*

Monday, November 30th  
7:00-8:00pm  
Ahwahnee Wedding Lawn

## Letter Writing Party!

We send texts, emails, and messages, but remember when we used to write and get letters?! Come and gather together to write letters to friends and loved ones. Especially during these more isolating times, it's helpful to remember that connection is key and letters are just plain awesome!  
*Led by Jenni Buczko*

Thursday, November 12th  
5:00pm-6:30pm  
Degnan's Loft

*Supplies will be provided or you're welcome to bring your own.*

For more events, visit [www.yoscommunity.com/events](http://www.yoscommunity.com/events)

# Community Submissions

For a chance to feature your personal artwork, poetry, articles, or short stories in our newsletter, please send your submission to [yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com](mailto:yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com)



Photo Submission By Britain Peters

I lasso the stars  
& pull them onto my belly.

I shake the ash off my heart  
& darkness from my fingertips.

Fire burned here:  
In my soul.  
& outside:  
It consumed the forest.

It was ravenous.  
Only to make room for beautiful things to grow.

The sky opens  
& my body uncoils.

Like leaves unfurling,  
To welcome spring's soft kiss.

Light permeates each crack  
& crevice.

The broken begins to mend,  
One soft cell at a time.

Sweet relief.

There is resilience in healing.

In these moments of bliss  
I'm thankful for every crippling doubt  
That led me to this.



Photo Submission By Giselle Diaz

## Healing

-by Ashley McComb

from her upcoming book "The Hummingbird  
Musings"



# What is RDI & ERG?

The Relevancy, Diversity and Inclusion (RDI) Council is an NPS initiative to commit staff and resources to create a better workplace for all members of the Yosemite community, where shared values and unique assets are celebrated and utilized in equal measure to help us better fulfill our mission for the American people. The council is primarily a tool to better oversee and communicate about projects aiming to instill and maintain the values of relevancy, diversity, and inclusion (RDI) not only within the National Park Service but for all partners of Yosemite National Park.

*- RDI -  
Relevancy  
Diversity &  
Inclusion*

Allies for Inclusion is a facilitated dialogue program under the RDI umbrella that engages employees in discussions on critical topics and issues for creating a more diverse, inclusive, and relevant organization. Creating an internal conversation on RDI is critical for the success of the National Park System to sustain itself as a valued part of American society. NPS and Park Partners are trained as facilitators and work together in small cohorts to create dialogue opportunities for their parks/programs/offices.

*Allies for  
Inclusion*

Accordingly, the council aims to support the park and park employees with ideas and issues related to RDI. Yosemite’s RDI Council works on empowering employees to create change through Employee Resource Groups. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led affinity groups that serve as a resource for members and organizations by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Other benefits include the development of future leaders, increased employee engagement, and expanded marketplace reach.

*- ERG -  
Employee  
Resource Group*

While there are a variety of ERG’s in Yosemite not all are currently active. ERG’s are grassroots efforts and can be great opportunity for peer led groups. The ERG’s that have been started at some point in time have been Women’s, BIPOC (black indigenous & persons of color, LGBTQ+, Veterans and the newest and most active is the Pandemic Wellness.

*Are you interested in volunteering part time with an ERG?  
Contact [Jamie\\_gonzales@partner.nps.gov](mailto:Jamie_gonzales@partner.nps.gov) for more info.*

# Wellness News

## Recipe For YO Wellness

This month's ingredient:

### PUMPKIN

Did you know pumpkin is nutrient powerhouse? It's high in antioxidants, minerals, and immunity-boosting Vitamins A & C. And don't forget those seeds: roasted pumpkin seeds contain high levels of zinc and tryptophan, which your body converts to serotonin. So don't toss those seeds; instead, roast them into crunchy little kernels of happiness and wellbeing.

## Dairy Free Pumpkin Spice Coffee Creamer

**2 cans organic coconut milk**

**4 tbsp. pumpkin puree (canned or home-roasted)**

**2 tbsp. Maple syrup (more, if you like it sweet)**

**1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice**

**1 tsp. cinnamon**

**1/2 tsp. vanilla extract**

1. Combine all ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat. Wisk to combine.
2. Taste and add more spices or sweetener, if needed.
3. When perfect Pumpkin Spice Goodness is achieved, transfer to a large mason jar or other heatproof container and allow to cool.
4. Store in the refrigerator (for up to one week),
5. Shake before use. Add 1-3 tbsp. to your favorite coffee or tea.

## 10 Things You Can Do For Your Mental Health During the Pandemic

*Adapted from University of Michigan's University Health Service  
<https://uhs.umich.edu/tenthings>*

### 1. Value yourself

Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects, or broaden your horizons.

### 2. Take care of your body

Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health. Be sure to eat nutritious meals, drink plenty of water, exercise, which helps decrease depression and anxiety and improve moods, and get enough sleep.

### 3. Connect with good people

People with strong family or social connections are generally healthier than those who lack a support network. Take time to connect with supportive family members and friends, or seek out "Covid-conscious" activities where you can meet new people, such as a club, class or support group.

### 4. Give yourself

Volunteer your time and energy to help someone else. You'll feel good about doing something tangible to help someone in need — and it's a great way to meet new people.

### 5. Learn how to deal with stress

Stress is a part of life. Practice good coping skills: Try One-Minute Stress Strategies, do Tai Chi, exercise, take a nature walk, play with your pet or try journal writing as a stress reducer. Watch something funny! Research shows that laughter can boost your immune system, ease pain, relax your body and reduce stress.

### 6. Quiet your mind

Try meditating, Mindfulness and/or prayer. Relaxation exercises and prayer can improve your state of mind and outlook on life. In fact, research shows that meditation may help you feel calm and enhance the effects of therapy.

### 7. Set realistic goals

Decide what you want to achieve academically, professionally and personally, and write down the steps you need to realize your goals. Aim high, but be realistic and don't over-schedule. You'll enjoy a tremendous sense of accomplishment and self-worth as you progress toward your goal.

### 8. Break up the monotony

Although our routines make us more efficient and enhance our feelings of security and safety, a little change of pace can perk up a tedious schedule. Alter your jogging route, plan a road-trip, hike a trail you've never tried before, or redecorate your living space.

### 9. Avoid alcohol and other drugs



Keep alcohol use to a minimum and avoid other drugs. Sometimes people use alcohol and other drugs to "self-medicate" but in reality, alcohol and other drugs only aggravate problems.

### 10. Get help when you need it

Seeking help is a sign of strength — not a weakness. And it is important to remember that treatment is effective. People who get appropriate care can recover from mental illness and addiction and lead full, rewarding lives.


# Resources

Health News from the Yosemite Medical Clinic

**FREE FLU VACCINATION IN WAWONA**

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• **DATE** •  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 2020

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• **TIME** •  
12PM-3PM

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• **PLACE & DETAILS** •  
Wawona Community Center  
Vaccination for 6 months and older  
Mask required at all times  
Wear Short Sleeves or loose-fitting shirt  
WALK-INS only / No Drive-Thru

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**COMMUNITY SERVICE BY  
YOSEMITE MEDICAL CLINIC**

## Resources

### What is Mental Health?

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>



Get Immediate Help

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help>



### National Suicide Prevention

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



### Veterans Crisis Line

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

### Alcoholics Anonymous

Mariposa & Sierra Foothill Chapter  
24 Hour Hotline

**209-966-3110**

<http://www.aamariposa-fellowship.org>

## DIY Yoga & Meditation

### 13 Minute Talk and Meditation

[https://www.tarabrach.com/?powerpress\\_pinw=10488-podcast](https://www.tarabrach.com/?powerpress_pinw=10488-podcast)

### Full Body Yoga Stretch

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-L\\_kai34go&ab\\_channel=FightmasterYoga](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-L_kai34go&ab_channel=FightmasterYoga)