

June 1, 2021

Word for YO Wellness

A Newsletter by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition

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The Word

Grief

Yosemite's granite is an ancient blend of quartz, feldspar, and hornblend, pressure cooked millions of years ago under the heat of cooling volcanoes. Through the passing of time and change on a scale incomprehensible to the minds of most mortals, we have been presented with the beautiful walls that make up Yosemite Valley. Layers upon layers of unique geology and lichen create striations in a way that look as though someone took a giant paintbrush and ran it down the valley walls. These layers don't stop in the granite, but continue on to the valley floor where sheets of duff, dirt, rocks, and vegetation fit like puzzle pieces to create the bedrock of our home.

Similar to the walls and foundations framing our lives here in Yosemite Valley, grief is a many-layered process. It is a progression of shapes and colors, needing time to mature and develop before the full outcome can be realized. It can come in short bursts, or linger for decades, changing its face so many times that it can often be difficult to recognize which experiences are a manifestation of grief and which are not.

The Yosemite Community has recently been through a series of intense, tragic events. The month of May filled our park with tears and laughter, cries and silence — the layered, contradictory, and ever-evolving symptoms of great loss. As a tumultuous May transforms into a hot, heavy June, bits of last month's emotions and memories still hide in odd places around the park and within each of us. We can find its blanket covering us during the brightest of days and sunniest of skies, casting us into shadow. It can creep up as exhaustion and disassociation, and change whatever we are experiencing in the present moment into something else entirely. Grief asks us to sit down and be quiet, to process memories and emotions, to lean on others at times and to be alone, too. Although its presence can be debilitatingly demanding, it can also bring forth laughter, gratitude, and a stronger, closer community.

If you find yourself sifting through the complexities of this layered experience, remember to take time to be gentle on yourself. Find moments of stillness, ground yourself in the feeling of your body, and trace the wall's striations. Time changes all things, and despite periods of intensified pressure, it can all come together to form a rather beautiful existence.

By Jetta Blaine

Upcoming Events

Thursday Evening HIIT

Led by Nina Listro

Previously held on Saturday mornings, Nina's HIIT class will now be held on Thursday evenings. Get your blood pumping every Thursday with a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout! No equipment needed, just an exercise mat if you have one. All ages and ability levels welcome. Led by Nina Listro

Every Thursday

5:30 - 6:15pm

There will be no class on 6/16

zoom.us/join

Meeting ID: 819 4104 8953

Passcode: weeklyhiit

Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training

Led by Sharon Miyako, Teagan Plock, Sandy Hernandez & Giselle Diaz

Participants will learn to recognize behaviors that may constitute racism, harassment, violence, bullying, abuse, and more. This session will help give the right tools on how to deal when something like this happens in the workplace or in the street. Keeping our Yosemite communities safe in a constructive and safe manner.

In Person - Led by Sharon Miyako

Wednesday, June 9th

9:00am - 10:00am & 11:00am - 12:00pm

El Portal Community Hall

RSVP but not required

Online - Led by Teagan Plock

Tuesday, June 15th

4:00pm - 5:30pm

Meeting ID: 206 626 9920

Password: wellness1

Mariposa County Survey Meet & Greet

Mariposa County is working with Yosemite National Park to enhance future investments in housing and transportation, and we really want to hear from the Yosemite community. This project is specifically targeted to offering solutions to housing options for employees outside of the park. Share your thoughts in person with the project developers and county representatives.

Tuesday June 22nd

8:00am - 10:00am

Valley Library & the Wellness Center

Can't make it? Fill out the anonymous online survey here:

<https://surveyMonkey.com/r/ZKFVD36>

Personalized Wellness and Self Care Art Sessions

Join Center for Creative Arts therapy instructor Nicole C. for a 1-1 Self Care session. This is NOT a therapy session, rather a personalized offering based in wellness and self-care with an optional Art component. To register for this unique and personalized course, fill out the form at the link below. This program is being offered as a special opportunity for individuals who are looking to explore creative solutions through creative Self-Care and Wellness.

Limited to first 5 registrants and max of 2 sessions per person. [Wellness and Self-Care Sessions RSVP FORM](#) (or visit yoscommunity.com/events)

Hosted by the Yosemite Wellness Coalition, in partnership with the Center for Creative Arts Therapy.

Other Community Programs

The following programs are being offered by outside organizations not associated with the Pandemic Wellness Coalition. Please note that some programs require a fee to participate.

Balanced Rock

Intelligence of the Core Series (\$)

Led by Catherine Wortmann

In this series we will explore the wisdom of the body through gentle yet powerful, core-centric, yoga asana but also dive into the muladhara chakra (solar plexus), practice breathing to stimulate and activate our agni (digestive fire), and connect with our "gut intelligence". This series is intended to deepen the students' awareness of the power that comes from within, and reshape the concept of "core work" inviting curiosity and intelligence. This series is suitable for all levels of practitioners, modifications are offered. Participants will need a yoga/ pilates mat or a blanket, and space to move.

Every Wednesday in June

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Online via Zoom

\$\$ Purchase Required \$\$ Register at:

<https://balancedrock.secure.retreat.guru/program/intelligence-of-the-core-series/?lang=en>

Balanced Rock

Community Yoga

Join local instructors for our online community yoga class! All levels are encouraged to attend, classes are donation-based. These classes are about YOU and your practice, students are always encouraged to modify as needed for their comfort level.

Every Monday

6:00pm - 7:15pm

zoom.us/join

Meeting Code: 819 0173 4818

Passcode: BRYOGA



Residential Food Waste Diversion Pilot!

Have you ever wished for food waste dumpsters in Yosemite housing areas?

Good news! Mariposa County Solid Waste & Recycling has new compost equipment and they **need your food waste!**

Thanks to the grant funded Yosemite Zero Landfill Initiative, Yosemite Conservancy has teamed up with National Park Service, Yosemite Hospitality, Mariposa County, and other park partners to offer a **Residential Food Waste Diversion Pilot!**

New residential organic dumpsters will be located in El Portal and Yosemite Valley.

Existing Yosemite Hospitality dumpsters are in Tecoya and New Housing areas.

You must enroll in this pilot to access the dumpsters.

We will be GIVING AWAY personal stainless-steel collection bins to folks who sign up.

Enroll and learn more here: [MS Form Link](#)
Complete the form by Monday, June 14th.

Questions? Contact tmoseley@yosemite.org

This project was made possible in part by a grant from the National Park Foundation through the generous support of Subaru of America.



Wellness Programs On Demand

On YouTube, search for the [Yosemite Community Builder](#) channel to find the following programs:

Yoga For Anxiety
Stress Management Workshop
Lifestyle Series
Wednesday Night Yoga

Community Submissions

Yosemite at Night

The noisiness of trees and the whispers of meadow grasses are best heard in the dark. In fact, some wild things here can only be seen at night. Like the tender new undergrowth that seeks protection under the colossal pines; so easily overlooked in the daylight. At night, my small light lands surreptitiously over their budding twinkling leaves as I walk, head down, through the woods trying not to fall.

Of the millions of people who come here to the Valley every year, relatively few of them have gazed upon the waxing moon from the Ahwahnee meadow, or even the full moon. I know this because I stand here at the meadow every month when the moon is burgeoning, and seldom do I see another human body. All those people; they get this close and still miss it. Thank the heavens above that most of them see Glacier Point, Tunnel View, Yosemite Falls, Bridalveil, and Mirror Lake, because the world cries for the healing of Yosemite.

Words elude me to describe the moon over Half Dome. But I can tell you that the mountain itself is shaded; as are those that frame the back side of the meadow - such that the monolith and adjacent crests appear as enormous smokey shadows looming over the meadow. The silver orb of Luna turns the granite aglow on the opposite side; it literally glows. And, like on most nights, there is barely a soul to witness it. Tonight, only me and a single backpacker who is sitting on the ground near the houses along the meadow; his back leaned against a pine tree, with Toby Keith belting out a favorite tune from his music box.

*We'll raise up our glasses against evil forces; singin'
"Whiskey for my men, beer for my horses"*

Like me, I'm sure that he, too, is trying to sort out how a place could be so magical in the dark as this valley.

By Lola Norbury



CAN
By Danny Range
1991-2021

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

Wellness News

Recipe

For Yo Wellness

This month's ingredient:

Avocado

It's healthy, it's weird looking, and it's local: you can't go wrong with California's favorite fatty fruit: the avocado. 90% of the U.S.'s avocado crop is grown in California, but its roots go back to ancient Mesoamerica. The word *guacamole* actually comes from the Aztec word for "avocado sauce," *ahuacamolli*. Since most of us already know how to make guac, here's a recipe for a fun alternative.

Herby Avocado Hummus

- 1/2 large ripe avocado
- 1 15.5 oz. can chickpeas, rinsed & drained
- 1/3 cup tahini, well mixed
- 1/4 cup + 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 1 cup cilantro leaves
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)

1. Blend all ingredients except oil and pumpkin seeds in a food processor or blender. With the motor running, drizzle in two tbsp of olive oil, then continue to process until very light and creamy, about 1 minute.
2. Taste and add more salt, if needed.
3. Transfer to a shallow bowl. Top with pepitas and cilantro and drizzle with more olive oil.

Borrowed with slight modifications from Bon Appetit:
<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/herby-avocado-hummus>

10 Tips to Manage Re-Entry Anxiety Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Practice Being in the Present Moment

Take a few minutes a day to pause and practice mindfulness. Mindfulness involves non-judgmental attention to and awareness of the present moment. Mindfulness practice can help reduce anxiety symptoms and enhance emotional well-being. Certain studies show that mindfulness based interventions can create positive brain changes. One example of a simple mindfulness based practice is breathing exercises which can help one feel calm and grounded. This occurs through activation of the parasympathetic nervous system which is linked with relaxation. Lowering of heart rate and blood pressure, lowering of stress hormone levels, are some of the other effects seen with mindfulness practice. Optimal benefits can be achieved when practicing regularly, even if it's only for a few minutes a day

Recognize What You Can Control

Many people are experiencing a sense of lack of control during this pandemic. Doing simple, but, important things such as following COVID-19 guidelines (from authentic sources, such as CDC) can help you regain some sense of control in otherwise uncertain times. Recognizing and working on what you can control, can be a valuable step in overcoming anxiety.

Pay Attention to Your Unique Situation

It's important to consult your physician before making any re-entry decisions or plans. Your physician would take into account your age, medical conditions and your unique circumstance to determine your risk level, and make recommendations for next steps accordingly

Engage in Something Fulfilling

Engage in something you find fulfilling, even if it is only for a few minutes a day. Playing a game with your child, listening to your favorite music or playing a musical instrument, exercising, painting/drawing, or helping an elderly neighbor (while maintaining physical distancing) are some examples of activities that can be fulfilling, depending on your individual interests. This can help you be more engaged in meaningful life activities, contributing to enhanced emotional well-being.

Take a Gradual Approach

If required to resume certain activities, doing it gradually, one step at a time (while following guidelines), rather than rushing into things full force, is likely to work better. Gradual, as opposed to sudden resumption of an activity, is the preferred approach for anxiety. Don't pressure yourself or compare with others in the process. Besides, prudence and caution are strengths in a pandemic.

Journal

Even a few minutes a day (eg. 10-15 minutes a day) of journaling may be beneficial. Journaling in the form of free flowing writing (where you write whatever thoughts and feelings come up), can help you gain perspective, clarity and understand your thoughts and emotions better

Schedule Time to Worry

Scheduling a time during the day for worrying can be a useful strategy to manage anxiety. Select a time which you schedule as a 'worry period' for 20-30 minutes every day. When worry related thoughts arise during other parts of the day, postpone those to the worry period. Reflect on and consider your worries during the 20-30 minutes of worry period you've scheduled daily. This technique tends to be more helpful when practiced regularly.

Practice Gratitude

Gratitude based interventions can be helpful for anxiety. Particularly in a pandemic, when plans seem to be going awry, writing down about things one is grateful for, is a valuable exercise that can offer a bigger picture perspective.

Avoid Alcohol

Many people find themselves leaning on alcohol to cope with anxiety. It can start with a seemingly benign drink, and burgeon into something problematic. Get professional help if you find yourself in this scenario. Many people feel like these substances are helping in the moment, but, they are likely to increase anxiety and adversely impact brain health in the long term. If you have been diagnosed with an alcohol or other substance use disorder, or are struggling with alcohol or other substance use, follow through with treatment as recommended by your treating clinician and make any changes in consultation with your clinician.

Stay Connected

The pandemic has caused many to feel isolated. We know that social connectedness is a positive, protective factor for mental health. The good news is that technology makes it possible to stay connected with friends and family members, while exercising physical distancing, so, stay connected.

For more information visit:

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/10-tips-manage-re-entry-anxiety-related-covid-19>

Activities



The Pandemic Wellness Coalition is proud to sponsor the 2021 Yosemite National Park Virtual Dogwood Dash 5K! There is no fee to participate; all you have to do is run a 5K sometime the month of June. We've included several 5K recommended routes for you to choose from. You can run one of them or make up your own route.

If you'd like to commemorate the event, we've set up a website where you can purchase t-shirts. The shirts were designed by talented local artist Carolina Vega and are available in children's, men's, and women's sizes. The shirts will ship straight to your door, and no profit will be made by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition from their sale.

Order your shirts at:

www.customink.com/g/ynp0-00ce-xdta

.....➤ **Recommended Routes** ◀.....

El Portal: El Portal Community Hall west on Foresta Rd, right turn at Barium Mine Rd, left turn at Rancheria Flat Rd, left turn at Foresta Rd and back to the Community Hall.

Tuolumne Meadows: Dog Lake Parking Lot south over Twin Bridges, turn right and head west along the JMT, enter the campground and follow the A-loop through the Campground, turn right along Tioga Road, turn right along the PCT and back to Dog Lake Parking.

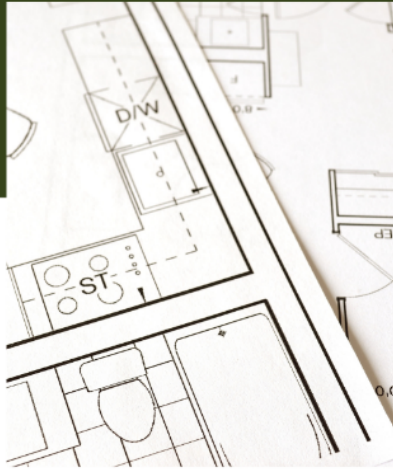
Wawona: Run the Wawona Meadow Loop Trail. Remember this trail is a little more than 5K, so either walk the last 1/2 mile, or, if you're feeling strong, enjoy the burn!

Yosemite Valley: Visitor Center Day Use Parking Area west to the Lower Falls Bus Stop via Visitor Center bus stop, south across Superintendent's Bridge to bike path paralleling Southside Drive, east on this bike path to Stoneman Bridge, left turn across Stoneman Bridge and back to the Visitor Center Day Use Parking Area.



Resources

Yosemite Staff & Residents:



MARIPOSA COUNTY WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK FOR AN INTEGRATED MOBILITY & HOUSING STRATEGY.

Mariposa County is working with Yosemite National Park to enhance future investments in housing and transportation, and we really want to hear from the Yosemite community.

Follow the link below, to an online survey where you can share your thoughts on these topics. Responses are anonymous, and will be extremely helpful for this community planning effort.

Stay tuned for more information about opportunities to share your thoughts in person on June 22nd.

Scan the QR code
or fill out the survey here:



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZKFVD36>

If you have any questions or additional ideas, please feel free to reach out to:

Mikey Goralnik
with Mariposa County Planning Department:
mgoralnik@mariposacounty.org
209.742.1222



Resources

Yosemite Medical Clinic
209-372-4637

Mariposa County Health & Human Services
24-hour Crisis Hotline
209-966-7000

Crisis Text Line
Text 741741



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.amariposafellowship.org>

Coronavirus Sanity Guide
<https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirusanxietyguide>



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. Each issue includes recipes, articles, community submissions, special events and more from your fellow park locals. Have a special request or an art submission? Contact yos.communitybuilders@gmail.com for more information!