

Welcome Back, Bill!!!



Bill Sell, MA, LPC, CGP, Executive Director and Founder of LWT with Lucky the Recovery Dog. Photo by Brooks Witter.

Living Well Transitions is thrilled to announce the return of our Executive Director, Bill Sell, after a year long absence.

As many of you are aware, Bill became ill last October, and shortly afterwards was diagnosed with Ewings Sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. In early November of 2006, oncologists determined that the best course of treatment for Bill would necessitate his immediate departure to the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. Staff, clients, and the community were stunned at the news.

Nevertheless, our program staff was determined to continue to provide top quality care and service to clients. After receiving the news about Bill, our staff came together to discuss how this would impact the program. The question of whether to simply maintain status quo or to continue to grow was of the utmost importance. We decided unequivocally to build on the momentum. We worked tirelessly to not only maintain, but continue to market and develop the program despite the odds. It worked.

"It was a really difficult time for us" reflected Leslie Papa, Clinical Program Director. "But all staff really pulled together and developed a plan of action for communicating with clients, families, and educational consultants, and we simply asked for honest feedback in how everything was being handled. We wanted to ensure that our clients and families knew how deeply we care about what we do."

All of us at Living Well Transitions would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for the love, support, kindness, phone calls, letters, cards, prayers, and warm thoughts sent our way. If you would like to send a personal note welcoming Bill back, please do so via email to bsell@livingwelltransitions.com.

LWT Partners with Local School

Down the street from Living Well Transitions' offices in downtown Boulder, there is a small school making a big impact. September High School has been quietly providing holistically minded secondary education to young men and women in Boulder for thirty-five years. Taking a unique and compassionate approach towards educating students, September High School is a natural fit for Living Well clients seeking to complete their high school education.

Just as Living Well program staff sees the sanity of each client, September High School approaches each student as a unique and valuable individual. "We really educate the whole person," says Dan Fox, MA, LPC, the principal of September High School. "We keep our class size small, so each teacher gets to know each student and works to meet them where they are at individually." This approach has formed the basis of a strong and healthy working relationship between



Living Well Transitions and September High School. Our program managers liaise with school staff and teachers, sharing information on how best to support each client in their journey through high school.

This summer Living Well Transitions celebrated one of our client's graduation from September High School. He had come to Boulder at age 18 with very few high school credits, enrolled in September High School, and after working with dedication and continued support and guidance, walked with his graduating class two years later! What he earned here was far more than a diploma.

Music Therapy a Hit with Clients

Living Well Transitions is proud to announce the hiring of our newest team member, Tyson Rittenmeyer, M.A., MTBC. Along with plenty of smiles and a great sense of humor, Tyson brings with him a wealth of clinical experience in a variety of professional settings. Tyson's training and expertise as an Analytical Music Therapist has added a therapeutic dimension to LWT's clinical services that resonates very well with our young adult population.



"Everybody has a natural rhythm, a heart that beats," Tyson reflects. "What I do is help people to bring out their natural connection to music and rhythm."

Working with young adult clients, Tyson uses music as a vehicle to connect with people individually in a way that reflects their natural interests and inclinations. You may notice how many young adults walk around with their headphones on, fiddling with their ipods. Music is an integral part of many people's - especially young adults' - identity structures. As such, music provides a natural bridge for Tyson to engage them where they are in a manner that invites their passions and interests into the conversation.

Tyson utilizes a range of interventional tools to meet clients. Whether he is instructing them in learning a new instrument, improvising with them in a collaborative exercise, or simply listening to and discussing music with them, Tyson helps clients step out of their own way and discover deeper appreciation for the natural intelligence and capacities they each have. Music creation and appreciation requires that clients get out of their heads and immerse themselves in an engaging way with the present moment. Tyson embodies this view in everything he does, and his contagious enthusiasm has inspired even his coworkers to dust off that old guitar and strum a few rusty chords.

Tyson came to Living Well Transitions from the renowned Denver Children's Hospital where he created curriculum for and facilitated therapeutic groups for children and adolescents in their psychiatric unit. We are all thankful for the contributions he has made to our clinical teams and are honored to count him as our newest clinical staff member.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

Reflections from a former LWT client

"When I came to Living Well, I didn't know if I could handle working, going to school, getting myself to appointments on time. Working with Nina and Britton helped me to see that I can do all of this (work, deal with my family, pay rent, make friends) despite how uncomfortable it feels at first. I learned to notice when I was having anxiety and different ways to think about and work with it. I used to act out, lie, run away - now I know the triggers, the feelings in my body, and how not to go off on negative tangents. I know how to communicate what I'm thinking and feeling and what I need much better. It's a lot different being back home than I thought it would be. I kind of thought my friends would still be here, waiting for me to pick up where we left off. But they're busy trying to figure out their own lives, too. But I'm remembering how you guys at LWT continued to encourage me to work with my anxiety and try to do new things and meet new people, so I'm doing that."

P. C., Chicago, IL Oct. 2007