



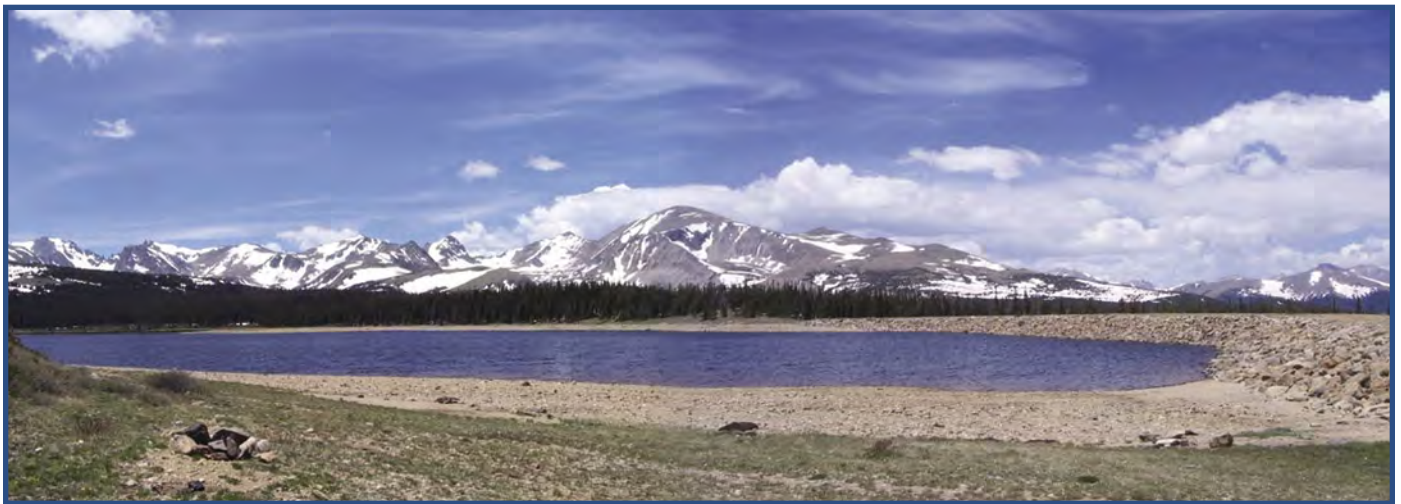
# Wellbriety!

*White Bison's Online Magazine*

Volume 7, Number 6  
June 21, 2006

## **Derry, New Hampshire Friendship Center** Offers a *Medicine Wheel* and the *12 Steps Wellbriety Circle*

See inside this issue



*Rocky Mountain High*

**Welcome to Summer, 2006!**

A view from the Colorado high country.

Left Hand Reservoir in the Indian Peaks wilderness area west of Boulder, Colorado, named after 19th century Arapahoe Chief Niwot (Left Hand)

### **Plus...**

Save these dates for the 6th Annual Wellbriety Conference, **October 26-29, 2006 in Denver, Colorado.**

**Healing the Hurts: Children and Families Speak**

Visit [www.whitebison.org](http://www.whitebison.org) for more information.

### **Plus...**

Visit the all-new White Bison Wellbriety **Discussion Board** on the website, [www.whitebison.org](http://www.whitebison.org).

- Password protected entry
- Lots of new features
- Chat and share recovery/Wellbriety with others on the Journey.



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# Derry substance abuse program aimed at Native Americans

By ELISE CASTELLI

Union Leader Correspondent

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**T**he Derry Friendship Center became the first center in New England to launch a substance abuse recovery program tailored to the needs and culture of New England's Native American community.

The Wellbriety program was started by Colorado-based White Bison, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing recovery resources for American Indians across the country, blending Native American teachings with the 12-step recovery model.

"It's a native way to go after alcohol and drugs for our people ... or anyone who has a problem," said Howard Martin, who is a "Firestarter" or group moderator for Wellbriety.

The Friendship Center, located at 45 East Broadway, chose to offer space to the Wellbriety program as part of its mission to provide barrier-free access to recovery programs, said Jim DiSalvo, the center's executive director and president.

Having a variety of programs available allows clients to find the group that fits their needs. "With peer support programs, one size does not fit all," he said. By offering a choice, "we're helping people stay abstinent from substance abuse and to grow as a person."

In the coming months other alternative programs will be added to the center's calendar, including a support group for women recovering from substance abuse, he said.

Through the White Bison program, the 12-Steps taught by Alcoholics Anonymous are augmented by cultural aspects

such as drum groups, sweat lodges, singing, traditional dance, traditional language and local Elders as part of the Medicine Wheel, an American Indian teaching about creation based on the four points of the compass or the four ancient elements.

Martin, a member of the Mi'kmaq nation, said sweat lodges, where members talk out their problems in 200 degree rooms infused with sweet grass, will be an important part of his Wellbriety teachings. "We're trying to cleanse ourselves," said Martin, who has been sober for 30 years.



Before Europeans brought alcohol and medications to America, the sweat lodge was used throughout history to "sweat out grief" and other problems, he said. The Wellbriety program brings back the native values and practices to help people face their problems in life, he said. "It gives us all power when we use earthly and normal things in life," he said. "We talk about solidarity and pulling Indians together to get somewhere in life."

While sweat lodges will be held off site, the center will provide the space for White Bison to host discussions and teachings on the Medicine Wheel and its application toward recovery, said DiSalvo.

The Friendship Center serves 800 people a week with the aim of being proactive toward combating substance abuse, said Vice President Todd Strugnell.

"There are vanishing options," he said. "We're creating an environment where community can see us as being open to new ideas."

For more information about Wellbriety or other programs offered at the Friendship Center, call 603-432-9794 or visit [www.derryfriendshipcenter.org](http://www.derryfriendshipcenter.org). 🍀



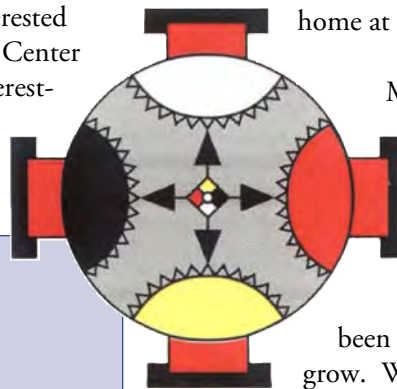
# Derry Friendship Center Hosts a Wellbriety Circle in New Hampshire

There is a Wellbriety Movement *Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps* Circle meeting weekly on Thursday evenings in Derry, New Hampshire. By mid June, there have been a total of four Circles held in Derry, each facilitated by local White Bison-trained Firestarter Howard Martin, a member of the Mi'kmaq nation. The regular events are a good way to bring in Summer 2006 as well as offering a model for how Firestarters Circles can be hosted by community-based recovery support organizations such as the Derry Friendship Center. How did it all get started?

"We had a couple of Mi'kmaq people coming here and we found out that they were Firestarters, so we kind of cornered them and asked them if they would be interested in starting a meeting," says long-time Friendship Center inspiration, Bob McFarland. "We have been interested in getting diversity here. We're always looking for diverse recovery methods. We're open to all of it. We are a service provider for our

community, and these diverse methods give the person in recovery a choice."

The Derry Friendship Center is a private, non-profit facility in Derry that has offered drug and alcohol recovery resources for over 25 years. Yet it's only in the last few years that the spirit of the new recovery movement with its emphasis on peer-to-peer recovery support organizations has taken hold at the Friendship Center. The Center has always offered AA and NA meetings, and still does, but it seeks to diversify the kinds of meetings for those seeking recovery from alcohol and other drug problems. That's how the White Bison Wellbriety Circle found a home at the Friendship Center.



McFarland explains that the Center contacted the local Native American population when they were ready to launch the new alcohol and drug recovery meeting. They've had a good start.

"Between 15 and 25 people have been coming," he says. "We expect that to grow. We've had replies and comments from all the Nations around here in New England, and they've all expressed an interest in sending their people. We researched the Wellbriety program, decided to bring it here, and sent out the e mails announcing it because we are looking for diversity."

The Center also arranged for participants in the circle to purchase the book, *The Red Road to Wellbriety: In the Native American Way*, which is a companion to the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Step Program. Click here for more information.

The other part of the "model," is the example the people of New Hampshire are setting for media coverage for the new program. To its great credit, the New Hampshire Union-Leader decided the presence of a Native American-focused recovery activity was newsworthy, doing a story on it in the April 21, 2006 Union-Leader (please see the pre-

## Derry Friendship Center Mission Statement

**The Center's mission is to provide an alcohol and drug free environment for rehabilitative support, referral information for those seeking recovery, and social activity, on a drop-in basis; to promote and provide awareness, education and advocacy; and to provide an affordable place for peer support recovery groups to meet.**

603-432-9794 • [www.derryfriendshipcenter.org](http://www.derryfriendshipcenter.org).



# Derry Friendship Center Hosts a Wellbriety Circle in New Hampshire

ceding story). They reported the good news! It's an example of print media stepping up to give addictions recovery positive coverage when they see the chance.

The Derry Friendship Center looks forward to adding other diverse recovery approaches to its service offerings. Now the slate includes AA, NA, White Bison Wellbriety, and Women for Sobriety (WFS) meetings. Bob McFarland looks back on his long relationship with the Center and

says, "I've been here for 26 years. You could call me the old buffalo, the old walrus, or the big frog. I ran the place until we realized we couldn't support it with just AA. We decided we had to do something different so this is what we did. We look forward to including other recovery support organizations in the future." ✚

*Richard Simonelli*  
*Editor, Wellbriety! Online Magazine*

