

### CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

#### OHI in 2015: Laying A Strong Foundation for the Future

*“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts on it will never be dismayed.’”*

— Isaiah 28:16

This Biblical truth applies equally to people and institutions — to endure and flourish, one must first carefully establish a solid spiritual foundation. Trying to build a plan, an organization or a life without a clear direction is futile. Without a vision, where are you going? Without core values or principles, what guides you? These elements must be defined in your heart and mind to create a clear vision for growth and fulfillment.

Our commitment to being an effective God-centered community has remained the cornerstone of OHI since its beginning. We looked to the scriptures to define our core values of holism, generosity, relationships, life-long learning, stewardship and service. Our guiding principles were then, and continue to be, trustworthiness, respect, empowerment and alignment.

Next year Optimum Health Institute (OHI) celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> year as a change agent for human-kind, continuing our mission to improving the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of everyone we touch.

To prepare us for this milestone and following the rhythm of the OHI program, we are dedicating 2015 to being the year of **inspiration, exploration, reflection and integration**. We are prayerfully reflecting on where we have been, where we are, and where we are going as we build on the solid foundation our founders created.

We’re digging deep into the roots of what makes our program elegantly simple and uniquely OHI. We’re evaluating how we can best be of service to our guests, and how we can take the OHI holistic healing program to the next level.

*“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...”*

Matthew 16:18

You are part of this “rock,” part of our mission to change and heal the world by changing and healing ourselves. When we feel whole and healthy in body, mind and spirit, we have a solid foundation for growth and living each moment in gratitude, compassion and God’s grace.

As your needs change, we’ve changed and evolved our holistic healing program and our facilities in San Diego and Austin to best be of service. Some of the foundational work we’re doing is purely physical. We realize that part of creating a safe space for guests to heal and grow requires comfortable, affordable and engaging accommodations. This year we continue the renovations and upgrades to rooms and classrooms at our missions in both San Diego and Austin, Texas.

In alignment with our commitment to a holistic healing program, we’re equally committed to providing guests with an opportunity to celebrate their spirit, and grow in their personal relationship with God. Every OHI class now includes at least a one-minute guided meditation to take guests into a restorative and receptive Alpha state.

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Robert Nees, Jr.

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“The way you help heal the world is you start with your own family.”

— Mother Teresa

As a member of our growing OHI community “family,” you can count on us to continue to provide you with material to inspire, educate, nurture and delight you during our year of strengthening our foundation. In 2015, each issue of our quarterly newsletter will focus on inspiring and exploring our personal growth through self-study in order to *know thyself*, as we are instructed in Psalm 77:6.

In this issue, you will find articles that **Inspire** personal growth through spiritual disciplines, such as journaling and meditation; the importance of body consciousness in the body-mind-spirit connection, and an update on OHI’s progress in refurbishing the interiors and exteriors of our accommodations and classrooms.

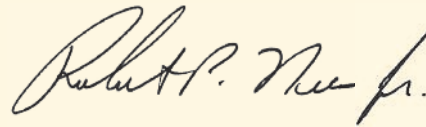
Moving into the summer, our theme will focus on the second step of insuring a strong foundation – **Exploration and Encouragement**, and how to deepen your practice of self-awareness. In the fall, we’ll share practical advice and tools that support the process of **Reflection**. We will end the year, appropriately, with ways to **Integrate** your new-found knowledge and wisdom. In


alignment with the Quaker proverb, “When you pray, move your feet,” this issue will share practical, step-by-step guidance for following through.

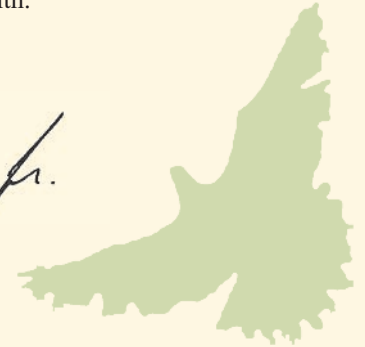
We invite you to join us this year as we mindfully reexamine each aspect of our program and our facilities. How can we enhance your experience with us, and help you know yourself better? Are there any additional classes or practices that could enrich your path to optimum health? How would you like to become more involved with OHI?

We look forward to hearing from you, and continuing to serve you on your path to optimum health.

Yours in prayer,



Robert P. Nees, Jr.  
Senior Pastor and Chairman  
Optimum Health Institute  
of San Diego and Austin 



## Doing ‘The Write Thing’



When a Kansas woman’s 3-year-old grandson was diagnosed with a malignant intestinal tumor, she became the rock -- the calm in the storm for the family. The only time she could let down her guard and work through her feelings of fear was when she picked up her pen and opened her journal.

During the boy’s surgeries, chemotherapy, and eventual recovery, she wrote about her panic, anger, helplessness and hope. This

daily “time out” to record her feelings brought her peace. She realized, in retrospect, her discipline of daily journaling nourished her spirit and strengthened her soul.

All you need to start journaling is paper, a pen, and a few moments to jot down what’s on your mind or in your heart. People quickly discover what a powerful healing tool it is. Journal writers become more self-aware. They’re able to reflect, get in touch with their deepest fears and highest hopes, and release stress. Through honestly addressing what’s unfolding in their lives, they’re building a firm foundation for positive change and growth.

A potentially transformative journaling and meditation exercise taught at Optimum Health Institute helps guests resolve painful issues.

First, ask for Divine support and guidance. Recite the Lord’s Prayer, or visualize yourself in a bubble of white light. Through deep breathing, move into a more relaxed and receptive mental state. From this place of introspection, write about a troubling issue from your perspective.

Then, write about the same issue, but from the opposite perspective. Finally, address the same issue a third time, but now from a completely neutral perspective. Writing from a different point of view can frequently provide answers for how to bring an undesirable situation into healing balance.

## Are You Listening?



I believe that God speaks to each of us, when we are contemplative and open enough to listen. When I was healing from a prognosis of “terminal” cancer in 2010, I relied on God’s whispers through alpha, journaling and body awareness to guide my way back to health.

Reading back through my journals from 2010 helps me reflect on where I used to be and where I am now in life. In **The Artist’s Way**

author Julia Cameron suggests writing 750 words every morning. At first there was a lot of emotional “dumping” in my morning pages, but eventually jewels of wisdom began to emerge. I would often write letters to God, asking questions and sharing concerns. If I didn’t get an answer right away, I would almost always encounter signs later that day or the next that helped reduce my anxiety and gain clarity and peace about my course of action.

We define alpha (Optimum Health Institute’s style of meditation) as a state somewhere between prayer and meditation, where you can both talk to and listen to God. On more than one occasion, God has spoken to me directly in the alpha state. A couple of months after I began practicing alpha at OHI, God reassured me not to spend any energy worrying about my recovery. Instead, I was directed to walk alongside others on their healing journey, inspiring and encouraging them. The seed was planted for my new career at OHI.

OHI transformed me from a powerless victim who had been told by my oncologists I had a “zero percent chance of survival” to a powerful victor by changing my awareness of the body’s amazing ability to heal. Dr. Bruce Lipton says, “The moment you change your perception is the moment you rewrite the chemistry of your body.” I believe God has given each of us the spiritual gifts of intuition and body awareness (what I call body wisdom) to use in our healing. God is speaking to you — are you listening?

Peg Harvey  
Director, Program Development & Training

## Meditation: The Gift You Give Your Body, Mind and Spirit

When a spunky 6-year-old Johnson City, Tennessee girl got the sniffles, her mom didn’t think too much about it. But the next day, the little girl couldn’t move her legs. She was rushed to Children’s Hospital in Knoxville as paralysis quickly spread to her hands, then arms.

Even though the child was paralyzed and on a respirator, the girl stayed calm throughout her ordeal, listening to the guided meditations for kids her mom put on a loop on her iPod. She’s back home now, fully mobile, and expected to make a complete recovery.

Meditation releases stress and negative feelings, increases self-confidence and awareness, and brings the body, mind and spirit into gentle balance. By mindfully turning our focus inward, we can touch into a state of peace and grace that helps us solve problems, get clarity, and achieve optimum health.



From sitting in mindful silence, to listening to a guided visualization, to toning in a group to simply lying quietly in bed before you get up, meditation is anything that lets you quiet your mind through contemplation and reflection.

In some communities, police officers meditate with members of the community. Fortune 500 companies like Ford, Google and General Mills teach and encourage meditation to their executives and employees. Even both Super Bowl teams this year meditated before and during breaks in the game.

The spiritual discipline is so popular there are quite a number of free meditation music and sound apps through [play.google.com](http://play.google.com). Select the sound you

want — nature, wind chimes, chanting monks or many others — and set the amount of time you want them to play. You’ll be able to tap into your inner peace any time, and place.



## Positive Changes Creating a Strong Foundation

As part of our Friday morning Testimonials ritual at the Optimum Health Institute, we collect guest surveys that contain valuable feedback from our new guests and returning community members. Every week, we read every single comment and use the feedback to guide us on making improvements to our guest experience. As you might imagine, a lot of the comments are positive and tell us that we are meeting or exceeding our guests' expectations. And other comments prompt us to make improvements to our program classes. But what we've heard most frequently and consistently in the survey feedback, as the top three things you'd like us to address are:

1. Affordable pricing so that you can return year-after-year
2. Continued room and facility improvements and upgrades
3. Added variety and improved taste of the food

### Thank you for your feedback - we heard you, loud and clear!

To address the affordable pricing and continued improvements to the rooms and facilities, we recently rolled out a new pricing structure at OHI San Diego. With this new pricing structure, guests now have a choice of selecting a variety of room accommodations at more-flexible pricing. For guests that are more budget conscious, we offer standard rooms and townhouses where we actually decreased prices \$170 less than last year's prices. There are a limited number of rooms and townhouses featured at this low price so these guest accommodations tend to get reserved early and often.

On the other end of the spectrum, we've been upgrading select rooms and townhouses with new amenities. Additionally, these guest accommodations tend to have more desirable locations. While our deluxe rooms and townhouses were given a simple facelift with new furniture, our premium rooms and townhouses have received a more extensive renovation consisting of new laminate flooring, new furniture and furnishings, new heating and air-conditioning units and updated bathrooms. Our recent renovations also include environmentally safe paints, new carpeting and lamps with energy-efficient LED lighting. We are also selecting as many products and materials as possible from sustainable resources.

And we didn't just make changes at OHI San Diego...at OHI Austin we have made significant improvements to the landscaping and grounds. And more recently, we reconfigured some of guest rooms to provide more King and Queen rooms with private baths.

At both locations, we embraced your comments about the food. We heard you when said that you'd like more variety in the menu and better-tasting food. As a result, we are currently creating a new 21-day meal plan where each day for three weeks, guests will enjoy a different meal – no recipes will be repeated during that time, ensuring a new palate-pleasing experience with each visit to the dining hall.

And to address your comments about "better tasting food", OHI Austin's Kitchen and Grow House Manager, Amber Santa Cruz, says we'll be serving up delicious changes with several new salad dressings; recipes offering more diverse ingredients while adhering to the detoxifying meal plan; attractive and innovative food presentation and more locally produced best-quality organic ingredients. Additionally, the OHI kitchen will be serving soups warmed to a comfortable 105 degrees – the safest temperature for foods while preserving all the nutritional value. Acting on guest suggestions, Amber said the kitchen also is now mixing exotic spices into seed cheeses and other foods, serving up the intriguing flavors of India, Italy, Mexico and more classic cuisines.

Other eagerly anticipated creations coming soon from OHI kitchens include breakfast green smoothies and juices, sub sandwiches on chewy dehydrated onion "bread," and flavor-rich salad dressings. All the new offerings comply with OHI's detoxifying food guidelines, Amber said, and don't add any calories or fat.

These are just a few of the suggestions we at the Optimum Health Institute (OHI) received from guest surveys last year, and we're happy to say we're now implementing these suggestions, and more. It's all part of our 2015 commitment to provide a solid foundation for positive change and optimum health.

Visit our website at [www.optimumhealth.org](http://www.optimumhealth.org), or call us at (800) 993-4325 to make your reservation.



OHI San Diego's Premium Townhouse Living Room



OHI San Diego's Premium Townhouse Bedroom



OHI Austin's Cozy Large Bedroom



OHI Austin Kitchen Manager, Amber Santa Cruz

## Scholarship Spotlight: The Gift of Living a Full Life

There are some people who, the minute we meet them, we realize they're special. This is the story of one of those people.

The gentleman was a spirited 80 years young when he arrived at OHI in April 2013. Doctors had diagnosed him with liver and lung cancer, and given him just two months to live.

When I met him, I was struck by how personable, engaging and positive he was. It wasn't that he was afraid of dying – it was that he still had one more river to raft. He and his wife of 50 years had rafted every river in the country, except for the Mississippi. They had saved the largest river for last, and he didn't feel he could leave this life in peace until the two of them shared this final adventure.

While he didn't come to OHI expecting a cure, he did hope to gain enough strength, and time, to create one more joyful memory for his wife and family.

In line with OHI Scholarship eligibility requirements, the man paid for the first week of the OHI program, then applied for and received a scholarship for the second and third weeks.

To everyone's delight, he found that the food, wheatgrass, fellowship and information he gained made him feel better than he had in 30 years. He not only regained enough strength to do the Mississippi rafting trip – he was still living seven months later, and feeling great.

His wife shared how fantastic the trip was, and how blessed her husband felt to have the opportunity to do the entire OHI healing

program. The experience gave him more precious time than he could have imagined.

It was several more months before he went into hospice, and he had time to accomplish everything he wanted to do.

To me, that's the true essence of the OHI Scholarship program. It's being of service to people who are working to balance health opportunities, and realizing that "healing" can take many forms, depending on what an individual's personal situation is. For this gentleman, the healing he received through his scholarship was living his life to the fullest, with grace and dignity to the very end. His three weeks at OHI gave him time to finish what he wanted to do, enriching every moment he had left and bringing joy to all those around him.

Daily, I get to see how the OHI Scholarship program is such a healing and humbling service to people. The dollars donated are more than just dollars. They're the gift of life.

When you give to the **OHI Scholarship Fund**, you are giving the gift of healing to OHI community members who require financial assistance. Please consider a one-time donation or a sustainable monthly contribution of \$19.99. **Your generosity will directly benefit those in need of healing.**



Larry Taylor  
Executive Director,  
OHI San Diego

## The Greatest Gift of Love is the Gift of Healing

The **OHI Scholarship Fund** was established to help those who have a life-threatening health opportunity and require financial assistance. The OHI community relies on **acts of kindness and generosity** to support those in need.

Thanks to your support in 2014, we were able to provide **115 scholarships**, which represents a 26% increase given in the previous year. Our overarching **goal for 2015 is to raise \$500,000 in scholarship funds.**

You can give the gift of healing for those who are ill, and in need by supporting the **OHI Scholarship Fund** by making a:

- One-Time Donation
- Sustainable Monthly Contribution

### Three Ways to Give

1. Donate by mail: Use the **newsletter donation envelope**
2. Donate online: **www.optimumhealth.org**
3. Donate by phone: **(800) 993-4325**

Optimum Health Institute is a non-profit, religious organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

## Body Movement/Body Awareness

When a young New York City man was hit by a drunk driver, every bone in his body was broken. His doctors said he'd never walk again. His body was crushed, but his spirit was not. Every day, he willed himself to push a little bit harder through the pain, retraining his muscles to respond to his brain's commands.

At first he could only sit upright on a rebounder trampoline with assistance. Slowly, he was able to sit unsupported, then to bounce slightly, still seated. Today the man is a master Tai Chi instructor, teaching students without any hint he had ever been hurt.

French philosopher and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."

How we move, what we eat, what we think and how we feel are intertwined on a molecular level. If our mind and spirit feel "detached" or "separated" from our bodies, our bodies frequently translate that lack of awareness into a physical imbalance of some kind, like fatigue, an unhealthy weight, or even a chronic illness.

A certified yoga and fitness instructor in New Orleans said people of all ages usually underestimate what their bodies can do. "They'll start to accept the idea that their movement is limited in some way," she said.

"I tell them to only move as long as they feel comfortable. Every time, they can always do more than they thought they could."



The thrill of even a small victory over physical limitations spurs the release of "happy" chemicals in the brain, releasing stress, lowering blood pressure and pain levels, and helping clients achieve more confidence and a healthier foundation.

## Renee Miller-Rangel's Slice of Heaven



In 2013 I was mentally, physically and spiritually at the end of my rope. I was ready to leave my family, get a divorce, escape to another world and forget about the life I'd been trying to create. I was on a seriously self-destructive path.

When I heard about OHI I had no idea about the dietary aspect, but I read how it focused on spirituality and

helping you find your higher power. I knew that was the only thing that was going to save me.

The grounds at OHI Austin are beautiful, the gardens are gorgeous, and there's a perfect serenity trail, with peaceful, meditative nooks and crannies, and spots for quiet time.

The entire staff is invaluable. They were all dedicated, educated, genuine, and here to meet our needs. They make sure we're getting something out of this program.

I was ready to let the mental fuzziness of the outside world go, and get in touch with my spirituality. I didn't expect to find God but I did, and I've carried that with me. There was an inherent change in me and how I live my life. My children are happier, and I'm more able to let them express and be themselves. I let go of a ton of personal anger I'd been using against my family. Even other people are aware of the change.

Now I'm so much more comfortable, and I don't feel like people are out to get me when I walk into a room. I've released that mentality of judgment and anger, and it's been incredible. OHI is a little slice of heaven on earth.

You can view Renee's video testimonial along with other OHI guest testimonials on **OHI's YouTube Channel at [www.youtube.com/optimumhealthinst](http://www.youtube.com/optimumhealthinst)**



## OUR OFFERS

### For our community members who have completed the Program

Get a FREE room when you book your 4th week within a 12-month period. Oh and better yet, when you book your 4th-week stay, bring a friend or loved one who has never stayed with us before and they pay only for the program tuition. **Some restrictions apply.**

### Extended Stay Savings

Stay in any best-available, single or double-occupancy room and receive 10% off your entire 3 week stay or 5% off your entire 2 week stay. **Some restrictions apply.**

### Early Bird Special

Ideal for the one who plans and books early with us. Receive \$100 off any best-available, single-occupancy room for your 1st week when you book your reservation 3 weeks in advance. **Some restrictions apply.**

### Find Out More

Call us toll free at **(800) 993-4325** to speak to one of our expert reservation staff for details or see all our offer details on our website at [www.optimumhealth.org](http://www.optimumhealth.org)

**Internet access now available in select rooms at both OHI locations.**

## Connect & Share. Let's Get Social!

**Our best way to share OHI news and special offers is through email.** We offer our OHI Community some great savings throughout the year, but in order for you to be eligible to take advantage of the exclusive email offers we must have your valid email address on file.

Want to receive email offers from us? Then please call us to update your email address at **(800) 993-4325** or email us at [optimum@optimumhealth.org](mailto:optimum@optimumhealth.org)

To support our OHI community we have expanded our communication lines to include various social media platforms. We invite you to take a few minutes and check out our new social presence.

### Optimum Health Institute Blog website

Our OHI blog site is located at [www.optimumhealthusa.com](http://www.optimumhealthusa.com) This is a robust site with great information on incorporating the OHI program into your daily life, articles on healing, nutrition and creating balance in your life.

### Facebook

Make sure to stop by and “Like” us and join one of our groups. To view information shared on any of our group pages you must first join that particular group.

- Facebook Page - Visit and “Like” us on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/OptimumHealthInstitute](http://www.facebook.com/OptimumHealthInstitute)

On this page we post offers, links to our blog articles and any new updates about OHI.

- Facebook Groups - The OHI groups were set up to encourage conversation and support to guests who become members of the group. We have three OHI group pages. To find our groups just enter “Optimum Health Institute of Austin”, “Optimum Health Institute of San Diego” or “Optimum Health Institute Missionaries” in the Facebook search bar.

### Twitter

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/optimumhealthus](http://www.twitter.com/optimumhealthus) By “Following” us on Twitter, you will be updated when any new articles, offers or announcements are posted to our Optimum Health USA blog site.

### YouTube

Our OHI YouTube Channel is [www.youtube.com/optimumhealthinst](http://www.youtube.com/optimumhealthinst). On this channel, you will find our Optimum Health Institute of San Diego and Austin guest testimonial videos!

### LinkedIn

Connect with us on LinkedIn.

OHI has gone social to better connect and support our OHI community! Come on in and connect with us...it will be fun!



**A Mission of  
The Free Sacred Trinity Church**

The Free Sacred Trinity Church and its subordinate religious missions, the Optimum Health Institute of San Diego and the Optimum Health Institute of Austin, are not-for-profit organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

#### Support OHI's Mission

We are a non-profit religious organization and your donation is tax deductible. On behalf of all those who benefit from the OHI Scholarship Fund, we offer our gratitude!

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### VISIT WITH US:

Visit our weekly Open House every Sunday starting at 4:00 p.m. in San Diego and Austin. The OHI Program offers visitors, guests and adherents a personal tour of the facility, lecture, prayer circle and an all raw vegan meal. A \$3 donation is appreciated, but not required.

### CONTACT US:

We'd love to hear from you. To receive special offers and updates, email us at [newsletter@optimumhealth.org](mailto:newsletter@optimumhealth.org) or call us at (800) 993-4325. For more information about the OHI Program, please visit our website at [www.optimumhealth.org](http://www.optimumhealth.org)

### OPTIMUM HEALTH INSTITUTE

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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#### OHI - San Diego

6970 Central Avenue, Lemon Grove, CA 91945  
(619) 464-3346 or (800) 993-4325

#### Our Mission

We serve as a change agent for human-kind by improving the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of everyone we touch.

#### Core Values

Holism, Generosity, Relationships, Life-Long Learning, Stewardship and Service.

#### Guiding Principles

Trustworthiness, Respect, Empowerment and Alignment.

## The Five P's to Optimum Health

**Purpose** to achieve a natural balance and reconnection to the Divine.

**Positive** mental attitude that supports the healing process.

**Persistence** in following the holistic disciplines of the OHI program.

**Patience** with your body and yourself, as you allow your body-mind-spirit to heal.

**Prayer** to a higher source who will share the load with you.