



Rewire Yourself With New Opportunities [RYNO]

An 18-month Level 2 Recovery Housing program for first-time offenders transitioning from addiction and incarceration, set in a highly supportive mobile home village in Questa, NM

Overview: Starting July 2022, we aim to have six participants move into two three-bedroom mobile homes at the newly-redesigned RYNO Transitional Living Village in Questa, NM for an 18-month pilot program. The RYNO Program will provide support to participants to fulfill the conditions of their release, such as: Weekly hours of community service; regular written reflections; regular drug testing; transport to required meetings; paid employment to pay required court costs and other expenses, and other requirements. We expect to expand and sustain the program in future years, but need your help!

The Need: Many offenders in northern NM fail their conditions of release from incarceration or Ankle Monitoring because they don't have a vigilant, resourceful, and inspiring community supporting them. They lose hope, they lose track, they lose focus, and they fail to meet the strict conditions of their release. At the RYNO Transitional Living Village, first-time offenders will live in a Level 2 supportive and supervised co-housing environment and participate in a rich program, all the while being mentored by peer counselors, rather than living in unsupported & unhealthy environments.

What sets our RYNO Recovery Housing program apart?

We offer employment and job training on site.

**Our residences aren't isolated, but rather nested in a supportive village setting.
Our program encourages deep cultural citizenship & environmental sustainability.**

Program Description: the RYNO Program provides deep opportunities for skill building, positive living and personal transformation. Inspired by La Plazita in Albuquerque [laplazitainstitute.org], we hold that “*la cultura cura,*” that *the culture cures*, and that helping locals from Northern NM to re-integrate with healthy cultures, healthy habits, healthy home places and a healthy ecosystem is a primary path to heal fragmented lives, family systems, and communities.

Some life-giving experiences RYNO offers are:

- Employment through the Repurposing Plastic Project [an emerging on-site business]
- Job skills in woodworking, masonry, earth-building, plastering and construction [on-site]
- Engagement with the RYNO Farm & Orchard [on-site]
- Using the *acequia* system for growing food and learning how precious water is in our community.
- *Temezcal* sweat lodge and ceremony; adobe restoration; mural workshops; creative arts
- Field Trips to inspiring local sites demonstrating hands-on alternative ways to live
- Wilderness Immersion: river, mountain and canyon environments
- Ongoing sessions such as TILT’s “Becoming People of Place” five-part podcast series
- Watershed Way spiritual & educational meetings, connections with earth care and eco-responsibility
- 12-Step Meetings and support groups
- Pathway navigation and one-on-one life coaching from men in long-term recovery, to deal with the daily frustrations, temptations and quandaries as one transitions away from drugs & crime toward healthy choices, positive growth, new allegiances and affiliations, and spiritually-rooted sober living

Nuts & Bolts

The Problem: Northern New Mexico is...the SUD rates in our rural communities are ___ and the overdose rate is _____. Those who are homeless or incarcerated _____. Currently, there is no Recovery Housing program of this kind in our region and very, very few resources are available to the population we intend to serve.

Staffing

- Daniel “Ryno” Herrera—Overall Program Management and Site Management
- Todd Wynward—Program Assistance; Outdoor Trip Leadership; Project Coordination; Administration
- Site Steward—program assistant and residential caretaker, on-call 24/7
- Clinicians, counselors, social workers to visit participants and provide services on site as needed
- Specialists to teach skills or provide expertise as needed
- Americorps-type service workers to support programs, projects or outings as needed

Employment & Training is available through our emerging on-site business, the Repurposing Plastic Project. In addition, we offer opportunities to learn and practice handyman skills and trades as we maintain an operating trailer park. In 2022, we plan to construct a new tiny home, several privacy walls, and structures of adobe and timber frame.

Location, Land & Buildings: The two-acre residential site is located right in the heart of the Village of Questa [2380 Highway 522 Questa NM 87556]. Currently, the property includes six mobile homes and approved sites for up to six more, as well as a 3000 sf roadside storefront commercial building, a ruined adobe structure awaiting reconstruction, three mature apple trees, garden spaces, and an irrigation acequia. In the near future, our site could host up to a dozen homes and thirty people, who intentionally seek to embody vibrant community, sober living and healthy life ways.

Timeline: We envision opening our doors to our first six residents July 1, 2022. During the first six months of 2022, our planning team intends to secure funding for our first 18-month pilot program; confirm collaborating agencies to provide both referrals and specialized services; grow local support in the Questa community; refine our application and acceptance process; complete operational best practices; hire and train staff; make site improvements and confirm site use agreements; finalize program details; and handle a myriad of other issues as they arise.

Budget: see attached spreadsheet.

Funding sources: we expect our primary funding source for our first 18-month pilot project will be Taos County LEAD. We will also seek funding from local government entities, grant making organizations, donor contributions and from the participants themselves.

Invested Stakeholders, Potential Partners and Community Support: this program is being incubated and supported by LEAD, the Fletcher Group, and the 501c3 non-profit TiLT [Taos Initiative for Life Together]. Additional potential partners we’d like to collaborate with include Vida del Norte, Golden Willow, Rio Grande Treatment Center, the Mountain Center, the LOR Foundation, Taos Community Foundation, the Taos County judicial system, and Mountain States Mennonite Conference. We will rely on partners like these for funding, referrals, program support, medical and clinical services, additional employment and job training, transportation provision, additional permanent housing options, and more.

If you’ve read this so far, that means we consider you an interested ally. Thanks in advance for joining us on this journey, and for the support you’ll be providing as we turn this vision into a reality!

With deep gratitude,

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