

Sierra Tucson Supports the Ice Breaker Run For Mental Health Awareness Month

Written by Karah Van Kammen

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By Sierra Tucson

Some journeys are historic because of the distance. Others make history because of what happens along the route; the participants involved; or the impact they will make. Currently underway, six individuals are embarking on the Ice Breaker Run—a 24-day, 3,100-mile journey across the United States—for all of those reasons. These runners seek to shine a light on the barriers between mental illness and mental health.

The Ice Breaker Run is expected to establish a new world record for a 6-person relay team, but that's not what makes this run unique. The participants in this run are not ordinary runners; they are extraordinary for as many reasons as there are miles to cover. One very special reason is that they have all cleared the hurdles inherent along the path of recovery. Having suffered from various mental health issues – addiction, depression, PTSD, eating disorders, and anxiety, to name a few – they will end their journey in our nation's capital to make a statement about recovery. More important, they are taking the recovery conversation on the road, and throughout the trek, they are looking to enlighten others and give hope to many.

Each day, the Ice Breaker team will welcome a guest runner, ranging from celebrities to residents of the communities they run through. So when guest runner and [Sierra Tucson](#) alumnus Adam Sud (pictured below) invited Sierra Tucson to get involved as a co-sponsor for the run, Alumni Relations Manager Tim McLeod knew it was just the kind of community involvement that would have a lasting impact. “When individuals enter Sierra Tucson, they become part of our alumni family. It makes complete sense then, when an alumnus requests our support in his effort to carry the message of hope and healing, that we leap at the opportunity to help.”

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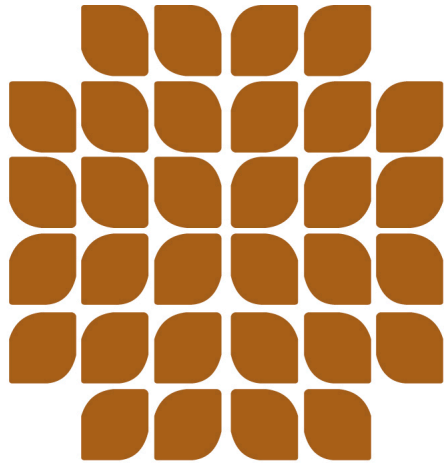


Starting in California, the Ice Breaker team will cross into the Grand Canyon State, home of Sierra Tucson. And while the majority of the journey will still lie ahead once they arrive in Arizona, so much ground will have already been covered because all along the way, their highly publicized run is bringing many stigmatized issues to the forefront. Even after the group reaches Washington, D.C., culminating at Mental Health America's (MHA) 2016 Annual Conference (where Ashley Judd will welcome them), the momentum will continue, way beyond the miles logged.

Guest runners of the Ice Breaker Run will include celebrities like former NBA legend Chris Herren (known as the Basketball Junkie) and Ken Seeley, star of the hit A&E show Intervention; as well as everyday people who have struggled with mental illness. These individuals will openly discuss their stories of overdoses, incarceration, and debilitating depression to those they meet. More important, they will listen to others who are struggling with similar issues and offer guidance and support.

"Everyone has a story to share. The Ice Breaker Run team wants to help others by lifting the cloud that hangs over the mental health issues they have experienced," says McLeod. "What I love is that their stories will be told all throughout their journey. We hear these similar stories each day at Sierra Tucson, where individuals come to rid themselves of those demons and change their lives. That is why it is so important for us to support this run."

For more information about the Ice Breaker Run, visit www.icebreakerrun.org.



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