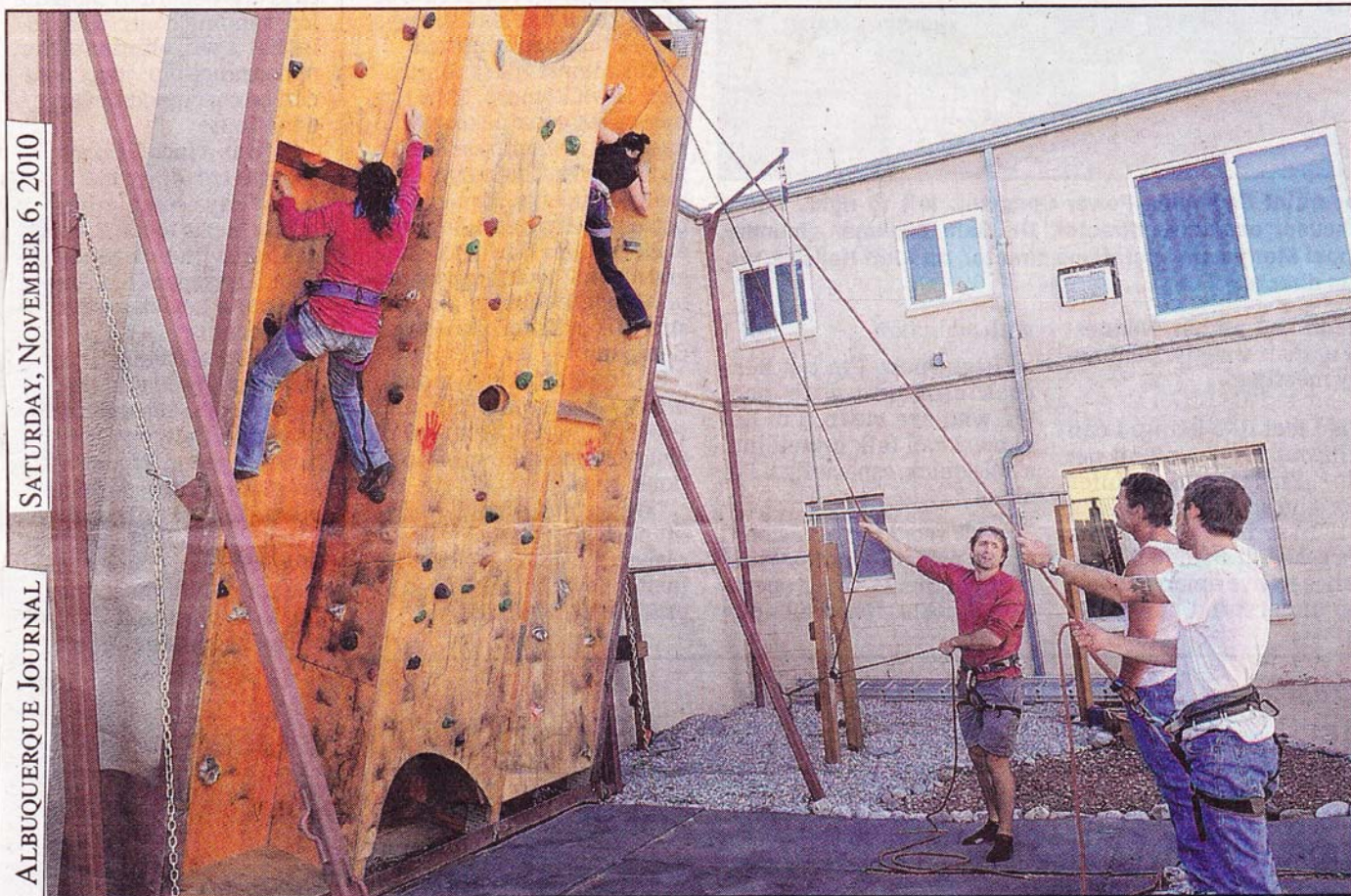


# Gaining Power

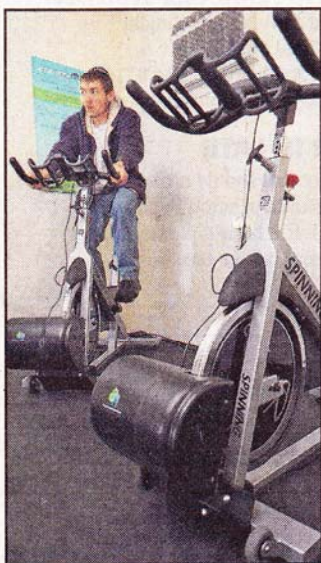
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JIM THOMPSON/JOURNAL

Staff and residents use a climbing wall in the courtyard of Endorphin Power Company, an 18-unit transitional housing facility for recovering addicts.

A resident at Endorphin Power Company powers an electrical generator as he rides a stationary bicycle. The power flows into the PNM electrical grid.



## Complex for recovering addicts makes use of its residents' exercise

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Albuquerque Journal

BY OLIVIER UYTTEBROUCK  
Journal Staff Writer

The Endorphin Power Company encourages recovering addicts to exercise and make a useful contribution to society. It's now living up to its name.

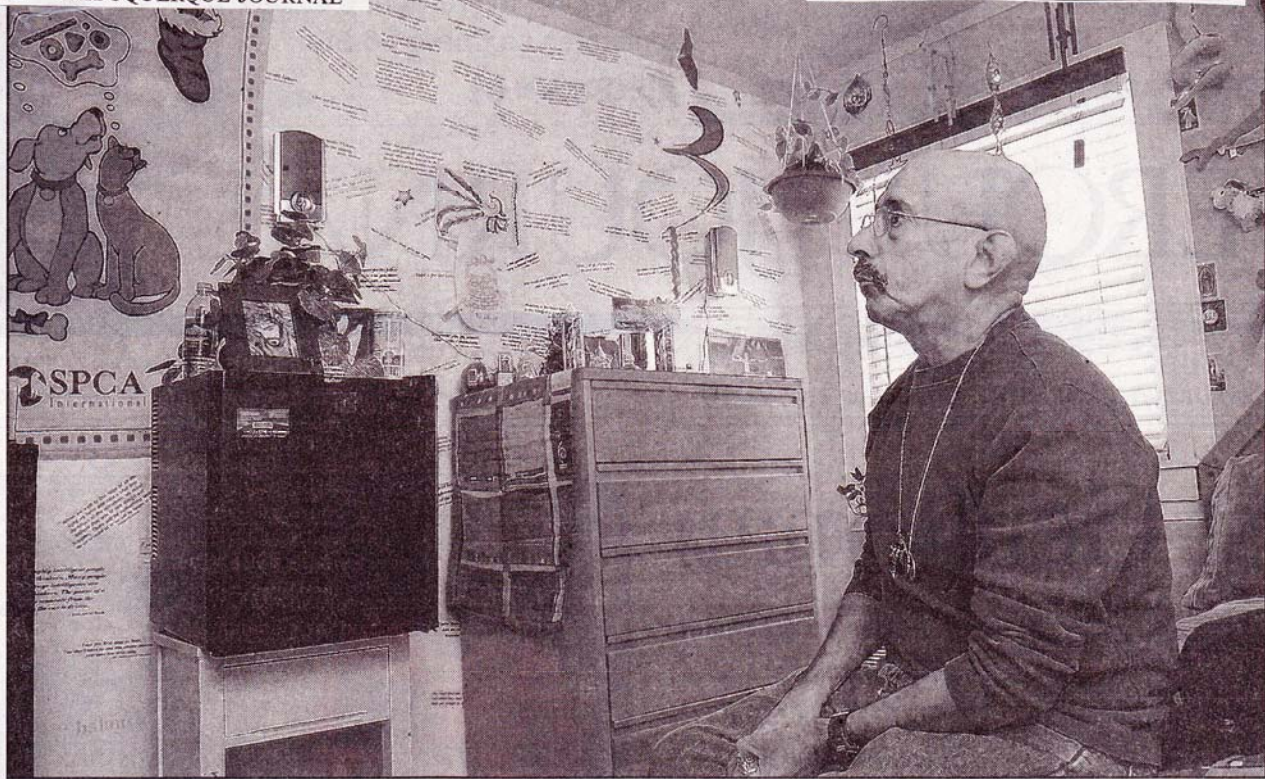
Residents in the 18-unit complex can use generator-equipped bicycles to pump electricity into the power grid. But residents say the real energy source at Endorphin Power Com-

pany comes from the relationships they form as members of tight-knit community of recovering addicts.

Dr. Sam Sliselman founded Endorphin Power Company in 2002 with the intention of helping addicts escape lives of drug and alcohol abuse. The nonprofit's name reflects Sliselman's vision of a gym equipped with exercise machines that generate electricity.

Endorphin Power Company bought five stationary bicycles equipped with

See EXERCISE on PAGE A2



JIM THOMPSON/JOURNAL

Dave Romero, a recovering crack cocaine addict, sits in his room at Endorphin Power Company. The walls are covered with positive sayings.

## Exercise Put to Good Use

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electrical generators last month. Sliselman on Friday didn't want to make too much of the bike generators.

"An hour workout (on a bike) powers a 100 watt light bulb for about an hour," he said.

The bikes are part of a long-range plan, funded by a \$100,000 grant from the McCune Charitable Foundation, that includes solar photovoltaic panels to produce electricity and a solar/thermal system to heat water for the complex.

The real significance of Endorphin Power Company has little to do with electrical generation.

"I basically got to a place in my life where I had two options: die or get help," said Savannah Phelps, 24, who has struggled with methamphetamine addiction since age 17.

Phelps became the newest resident in the two-story complex at Zuni and Cardenas SE after other residents



Leaders of Endorphin Power Company, left to right, Janice Mancuso, executive director, Dr. Sam Sliselman, founder, Carmel Merryman, operations director, and Jeff Holland, program director.

voted to admit her Wednesday at their weekly "community meeting."

"If I feel like using, I can walk out my door and get help," Phelps said minutes after she scaled a climbing wall in a courtyard. She expressed gratitude for the chance to live among people who understand her battle

with addiction.

"Right now, I'm out here rock climbing with people who are clean. I'm not alone. I can talk myself into a hole quick, especially if I'm alone."

Aside from the occasional grant, private donations and rent payments cover operational costs. Residents pay

\$430 a month for a small, private room.

Residents interview and approve prospective residents, said program director Jeff Holland.

"We get applications every day," Holland said. "We don't just take anyone."

Residents are required to be drug-free for at least 45 days before they are admitted.

"It's almost like a family," said Dave Romero, 53, a former crack cocaine user who has lived 11 months at Endorphin Power Company. Like many residents, Romero hit bottom during a 23-day stay at Bernalillo County's drug and alcohol treatment center, or MATS, located across the street from Endorphin Power Company.

Residents take responsibility for one another and report anyone suspected of drug use or other rules violations, he said.

"We're not afraid to get in people's faces — with respect, of course — and let them know that they need to pick it up," Reed said.