


Inspired Woman

HEALING



**PRESCRIBING A DOSE
OF LAUGHTER**

**SHANNON BINSTOCK:
KEEP MOVING FORWARD**

**MOM WAS RIGHT:
HAVE SOME CHICKEN SOUP**

**JANUARY 2018
COMPLIMENTARY COPY**

*Shiloh
Dupper*

THIRD TIME LUCKY

Total HEALTH RESTORATION FOR *Weight-Loss*

BY DR. KIRK R. BLACKWOOD



Restoring your health from:

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- PAIN RELIEF
- THYROID ISSUES
- WEIGHT LOSS
- FIBROMYALGIA
- NEUROPATHY
- MALE/FEMALE HORMONE BALANCE
- IBS
- RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME
- TOBACCO FREE

Today more than ever there are weight-loss programs ranging from diet and exercise, to eating only pre-packaged processed foods or cabbage soup. Diets that involve meticulously counting calories and weight-loss machines that promise results. The truth is that for most Americans getting "results" is only half the battle.

Despite more research, technological advances and new weight-loss methods, the dreaded "gain loss cycle" continues to be at the root of the obesity epidemic. Depending on the source, it's estimated that as many as 95% of Americans who lose a significant amount of weight, go on to...you guessed it...GAIN IT BACK!

Statistically in our culture, it's almost impossible to lose weight and keep off for more than 5 years. For more proof look at the popular TV documentary "My 600 Pound Life." At the beginning of each episode they state that each participant that undergoes weight-loss surgery will have a 5% chance of long term success! ND Life Spa has had the opportunity to treat many patients that have been through weight loss surgery. Patients like Steve R. lost 60lbs in 12 weeks with ND Life Spa. He stated that he lost weight a lot faster on our program compared to after his surgery. This is exactly why at ND Life Spa we have a unique approach to weight-loss that has allowed us to receive consecutive awards for Best Natural Weight Loss Clinics in Bismarck.

Did you know... The thyroid gland (important for fat burning) is controlled by nerves in the brain stem. ND Life Spa has medical technology to measure how this area of your body is functioning. A few months ago, we had a patient start our thyroid treatment protocol that had just been diagnosed with hypothyroidism and Type 2 diabetes by her medical doctor. She was advised to start medications for both ailments. Before starting the prescriptions, she was determined to first try our natural treatments at ND Life Spa. After completing our treatments, she was re-tested at another clinic and received in her words, "a clean bill of health." Her thyroid and blood sugar levels were both normal and she'd lost 30 pounds of fat in the process of getting well. Look for Amy's health miracle video testimonial on the ND Life Spa Facebook page @ndlifespa.

SUCCESS STORY
MARY KAY LOST 100 LBS!



Now I'm going to reveal the secret of why our patients are successful at weight loss and show you why we regularly see countless health miracles with our amazing patients, as they drop the weight once and for all.

The answer is simple and beautiful. It's Total Health Restoration. When the human body is healthy and balanced it tends to move towards its ideal weight, and stay there. It makes sense to get people well.

At ND Life Spa we accomplish this in a variety of ways. We are experts in gut health and the immune system. We work with world renown Naturopathic Doctors from Solutions4 that are leaders in the field of clinical detoxification, holistic nutrition, herbology and more (www.solu4.com). Furthermore, I am a board-certified D.C. and I can identify and address a person's fat burning weaknesses. Things like: sluggish thyroid, hormone imbalance, candida, poor sleep, chronic pain, adrenal fatigue, stress, toxicity and more. I personally struggled for years with most of these symptoms but was fortunate enough to experience the kind of total health restoration that I now use to get my patients healthy and fit. I lost over 30lbs and have kept it off for a decade now, easily and effortless.

With ND Life Spa's unique holistic approach, we typically see health issues resolve with our weight-loss patients, and conversely, we typically see permanent weight loss with the patients that are being treated for health issues.

If this is starting to give you hope and you want to learn how to become a fat burning machine, or maybe you're looking to regain your health naturally like I did; contact us at ND Life Spa. Bring in this article and receive your initial evaluation for only \$25. (Valued at \$125)



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Dr. Kirk R. Blackwood

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Volume 18, Number 1

Inspired Woman magazine
3801 Memorial Highway
Suite A, PMB 108
Mandan, ND 58554

PUBLISHER

Inspired Woman
Enterprises, LLP

EDITORS

Jody Kerzman
Marcy Narum

DESIGNER

Tiahna Kirsch

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos by Jacy

ADVISORY BOARD

Beth Anderson
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We proudly support local business. Printed by:



Inspired Woman magazine is published monthly by Inspired Woman Enterprises, LLP.
Mailed copies are available by subscription. Subscription information is available on
our website, inspiredwomanonline.com.
Contact us at jody@inspiredwomanonline.com or marci@inspiredwomanonline.com.

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SCHOLARSHIP FUND

\$37

12 issues delivered by the first of each month

Mail checks to:

Inspired Woman Enterprises, LLP
3801 Memorial Hwy Suite A PMB 108
Mandan ND 58554

"She believed she could, so she did."



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**"But I will restore you to health and heal
your wounds, declares the Lord."**

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Henry Blakes
METEOROLOGIST

Molly Martinez
ANCHOR

WATCH WEEKDAYS AT 9:00PM

Editors' Notes



People often ask how we find stories to fill these pages each month. I always smile and tell them that's the easiest part! Marci and I are fortunate to know many people from many walks of life and from many parts of North Dakota and beyond. We've come to believe that everyone truly does have a story to tell and we are honored to share so many of those stories with you each month.

This month's issue hits especially close to home for me. I grew up in Bison, South Dakota, a tiny town of 336 people in the northwest corner of the state. With a population that small, it's hard to believe that two of the women featured in this month's issue also grew up in Bison! It is a privilege to share their stories. Our cover girl (and Bison girl) Shiloh Dupper is truly an inspiration. Her family's story and her strength through it all will have you reaching for the tissues. Lorena

Poppe is also a native of Bison. Lorena is one of the women in this month's Look What She Did feature; read how she is helping children and young adults with autism; it is work that is near and dear to my heart.

Of course there are more inspiring stories of healing in this issue. I hope you'll make time to read them all and if you're searching for healing and strength, I hope you'll find inspiration on these pages.

As always, thanks for helping us make this magazine a reality. I have a feeling 2018 might just be the best year yet for Inspired Woman magazine!

Jody



I was telling someone recently how every year seems to pass more quickly than when we were younger. Each one is a blur. I can't even remember when boredom was an actual thing, can you? Our battle cry now is, "I'm so busy!" We proudly proclaim it and wear it like a badge of honor.

Early in 2017, I decided that being busy was two things: exhausting and a choice. I had overcommitted myself. I was overwhelmed and lacked focus. I was reminded of a Chinese proverb I had heard many times: *A man who chases two rabbits catches neither*. I wasn't chasing two rabbits; I was chasing a litter. So I made a choice to begin simplifying my life. It wasn't easy. I have said "No" to things when I wanted to say "Yes." But the choice has been renewing and healing.

Healing our lives, our bodies, our minds, and our relationships takes time and effort. We have some extraordinary stories this month of people who share their painful, yet healing experiences. You will be reminded how fragile life is. Our cover story will make you hug your husband and children tighter. You'll read about the healing benefits of meditation and massage, laughter, and ozone and oxygen therapy. Plus, you will learn why chicken soup really is good for you when you're sick.

When we are "so busy," we tend to neglect ourselves and our wellbeing—not to mention the people in our lives who matter most. Why not try a little "less busy" and experience some of the wonderful things you'll find in this issue. It could be a year we see pass more clearly, less quickly, and without the blur.

Marci

The mission of Inspired Woman is to celebrate, encourage, empower, educate, and entertain women.

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ONE GIVING HEART

by Pam Vukelic

Can food heal? Can food prevent illness? Can food treat symptoms?

There is no shortage of information on the topic. A quick online search will give you a list likely to include blueberries, dark chocolate, freshly brewed tea, apple cider vinegar, red wine, and chicken soup. Yes, chicken soup.

It's the flu season and we know to wash our hands frequently, stay home if we are sick, drink plenty of fluids, and to break out the stockpot to make a batch of chicken soup if we do get sick. Is there anything to it or is it just a placebo?

There is real scientific research on chicken soup, most notably by Dr. Stephen Rennard at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Using 14 different soups including homemade chicken soup made from his wife's Lithuanian grandmother's recipe (see below) as well as canned soups such as Campbell's and Progresso, he determined there is something to the notion that chicken soup is good treatment for cold symptoms. It is not clear how it works, but it apparently is clear that it does. It makes you feel better by calming inflammation in the body. It helps to reduce symptoms such as achiness and stuffiness.

"A variety of soup preparations were evaluated and found to be variably, but generally, able to inhibit neutrophil chemotaxis," Dr. Rennard says. "The current study, therefore, presents evidence that chicken soup might have an anti-inflammatory activity."

This study was done in 2000 and has been cited in thousands of articles since then.

Another study, done by Mount Sinai researchers, examined the likelihood of the positive effects of eating chicken soup being the result of a placebo effect. They determined that the effect of chicken soup on the movement of mucus was something that helped people feel better. This was in contrast to volunteers who drank hot water or cold water.

Grandma's Chicken Soup Recipe

- 1 5-6 pound chicken
- 1 pound chicken wings
- 3 large onions
- 1 large sweet potato
- 3 parsnips
- 2 turnips
- 12 large carrots
- 6 celery stalks
- 1 bunch parsley
- salt and pepper to taste





Wash the chicken well, inside and out. Put in large stockpot, cover with cold water, and bring to a boil.

Add chicken wings, onions, sweet potato, parsnips, turnips, and carrots. Bring to a boil again, then simmer for 90 minutes. Skim foam from surface as it accumulates. Add the parsley and celery; cook 45 minutes longer. Remove the chicken (reserving the meat for some other purpose). Use an immersion blender to puree soup. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Note: Chicken soup is sometimes referred to as Jewish Penicillin so matzo balls are a logical addition. Use club soda as an ingredient and they will float in the soup. Garnish with dill.

A few additional tips:

- Remove visible fat from chicken.
- Wrap the chicken in cheesecloth before placing it in water for easy removal of the meat and bones from the hot liquid.
- Use an immersion blender to puree the finished product. There is risk associated with placing hot food in a standard blender.
- Italian parsley has a better flavor than curly leaf parsley. Reserve curly leaf parsley for garnishes.
- Don't bother to peel the vegetables, but do wash them well, and cut into large chunks. Put on your Veggie Gloves or exfoliating gloves to scrub them.
- Use both the stalks and leaves of celery.
- The chicken can be used in a pot pie. Make a medium white sauce, stir in frozen mixed vegetables, and chicken. Place in a small oven-proof bowl. Top with a square of puff pastry and bake. You could also use it to make a pizza. Use your favorite crust (mine continues to be naan bread), top it with Alfredo sauce, chicken, and mozzarella cheese.

By the way, if you do decide to do some research on healing foods, keep the CRAAP Test in mind. Developed by California State University, Chico, five criteria are defined for use in evaluating information. Is it timely (current), does the information apply to the topic (relevancy), what is the source (authority), is it truthful and correct (accuracy), and does the information exist for the right reason (purpose)? *W*



Pam Vukelic is an online FACS (Family and Consumer Science) instructor for the Missouri River Educational Cooperative. Pam more and more appreciates foods that not only make you well, but also keep you well.



JANE SCHREK

A Bismarck State College professor's work has been published by Boston College. The scholarly journal, "Religion and the Arts" selected an article entitled "Theological Voices in Wendell Berry's Fiction," by Jane M. Schreck, professor of English at BSC. The article examines the theological thinking Berry articulates in his essays and aligns his ideas with those expressed by characters in his short stories and novels. This is the third scholarly article about Wendell Berry that Jane has had published. Jane says she thinks writing the articles has made her a better composition teacher.

"This kind of writing, researching, and submitting for publication has changed how I teach. I'm a little more precise in the things I do. I have immediate experience in this and I hope it's good for my students," says Jane. "BSC is a teaching institution. Typically we put our professional emphasis on the students and on good teaching. There is no expectation that I do research or try to be published. I choose to pursue publication because I think the world would be a better place if people knew more about Wendell Berry. The additional benefit is that it has improved my teaching."

Berry is an American novelist, poet, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer. Jane holds a doctor of philosophy degree in teaching and learning in higher education from the University of North Dakota, and this article continues and expands the research she did for her dissertation.



LORENA POPPE

Although her college degree is in business management, Lorena Poppe has found her passion helping kids and young adults who are diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities. Lorena opened Poppy's Promise in September, a business that meets them and their families where they are on life's journey. The goal is to develop person-centered services that result in truly meaningful outcomes.

Poppy's Promise provides services—including respite care, in-home support, and applied behavior analysis—to kids and young adults who have autism and other developmental disabilities. And so far, Poppy's Promise is off to a very good start.

"Though we have just gotten started, we are already providing services to several kids and families. We want to help everyone we can, so we are looking to hire more behavior therapists and direct support professionals so we can help more kids and young adults."

As for the name, Poppy's Promise, Lorena says it holds special meaning.

"My last name is Poppe, and while it's spelled different, I've always loved the flowers. When I first started thinking about opening this business, I started researching poppies, thinking maybe I'd be inspired for a name. I found out that blue poppies symbolize imagination and success. Blue is also the autism awareness color, and the word 'promise' symbolizes our dedication to help everyone have a brighter future."

Learn more about Poppy's Promise by calling 701-204-7870. They're also on Facebook: search Poppy's Promise.



KAITLIN BOHLANDER

When Kaitlin Bohlander's brother was killed in an accident in 2016, Kaitlin was overwhelmed with grief. She says her grief often came across as forgetfulness.

"I remember I was printing some pictures for the wake and I was looking for my debit card. I could not remember how to use it," says Kaitlin. "I remember thinking, 'I don't want anyone to know I'm grieving, but I want them to understand why I'm acting so strange.' And then you think, 'how can anyone not know what's going on?'"

Her grief gave Kaitlin an idea; she designed "grief pins" for people to wear as long as they need. The pins are simple: a light blue pin that says simply "Be gentle with me; I am grieving." Kaitlin received Thrivent

Action Team Funding, which she then matched with her own money, to print the pins. She has printed 300 pins so far.

"They are free. I encourage people who are grieving to pick one up and wear it as long as they need. When you're done, I'd ask that you pass it on to someone else who can use it, or return it to where you got it so someone else can use it."

Kaitlin stresses the pins are not intended to be a conversation starter; rather, they are a social signifier to alert people to be a little extra patient and compassionate.

Grief pins are available in Bismarck at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and at Eastgate Funeral Home. To learn more, contact Kaitlin at 701-214-3922.

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THE HEALING POWER OF SITTING STILL

by Noreen Keesey | Photography: Teresa Terry



"I can't just sit for five minutes!"

I have heard this more than once since I began my meditation teacher training and started talking with people about meditating. We live in a time where people are busy, and multitasking seems an absolute necessity. As implementing a meditation practice can seem daunting, it may be helpful to explore some reasons one might want to do so.

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) within the National Institutes of Health conducts and supports research on complementary health products and practices. The list of conditions for which meditation is being studied for effectiveness is surprisingly long. Evidence shows that it may reduce blood pressure, ease symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, and positively impact anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Other areas of study include the management of chronic pain, reducing stress and stress induced inflammation, supporting addiction treatment, easing migraines, and much more. In addition to the potential health outcomes, meditation can improve decision making, increase mental focus, facilitate learning, have a positive impact on managing anger and symptoms of post traumatic stress, and help kids manage the symptoms of attention deficit disorder. The possibilities of beneficial outcomes without worries of side effects and drug dependency make meditation an intriguing area of study, and research into its effectiveness is ongoing. It is, of course, recommended that you discuss your interest in complementary health practices with your physician.

There are many forms of meditation; experiment and find one that works for you. Get curious and be willing to try different things. When I started a formal practice, I sat on a cushion and meditated

"Meditation can help us embrace our worries, our fear, our anger; and that is very healing. We let our own natural capacity of healing do the work."

—Thich Nhat Hanh

in a small closet in my home. I found the space confining and, due to joint pain, was uncomfortable sitting with my legs crossed. When I started meditating in my living room while sitting in a comfortable chair, it made a significant difference in the frequency and length of my meditation sessions.

Having a consistent place to sit can make meditation easier, as the familiar environment creates cues that help you to relax. As you get more comfortable with your practice, you may find that you can meditate anywhere. The red rocks of Sedona, Arizona were a beautiful backdrop for my meditation practice recently. There are many peaceful, inspiring spots and it is pretty easy to find a rock to sit upon. I found it to be a vast improvement over the meditation closet.

Why wait any longer to start your practice? Find a place to sit, get comfortable, and close your eyes. Pay attention to your breath. When you notice your mind has wandered, bring your attention back to your breath without judgement. Note the thought and return to your breath. Try starting with five minutes each day and see what happens. Play around with your practice a little. You can try different times of day, vary the length of time, add soft background music, or put some soothing essential oil blends into a diffuser. Sit in a chair or on a pillow and wrap up in your coziest blanket. Before you know it, your meditation time may become a healing ritual that you cherish. *M*



Noreen Keesey has incorporated meditation techniques into her daily life for decades. She is now learning to teach others how to access the many benefits of the practice.



JANUARY HOME CARE TIPS

- Clean clothes dryer vent duct (a top fire hazard!).
- Make sure all exterior vents are clear.
- Pour a gallon of water down unused drains.
- Check attic for birds, squirrels, etc.
- Know the location of all gas shut off valves.

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Shiloh Dupper

THIRD TIME LUCKY

by Jody Kerzman | Photography: Photos by Jacy



Shiloh Dupper is a radiologic technologist, or rad-tech, at West River Regional Health Services in Hettinger, North Dakota. Hettinger is a small town of around 1,200 people; Shiloh grew up in nearby Bison, South Dakota, population 336. To say Shiloh knows most of her patients outside of the hospital is an understatement.

"When we first moved here it was weird to treat people I grew up with and their parents," admits Shiloh. "But you get used to it"

Shiloh always felt lucky to have a job close to where she grew up and close to her family. But in March 2016, luck was suddenly not in her family's favor. It was the beginning of what Shiloh calls two very unlucky years.

"My husband, Travis, was running on the treadmill when he passed out," she recalls. "We figured he probably just had low blood sugar and it wasn't anything to worry about

but he went to the doctor a couple of days later. The doctor thought he'd had a seizure and wanted to do an MRI just to make sure.

"I do MRIs all the time; I probably scan 200 people a year, people who have headaches or who have passed out. Very rarely do we see anything on those scans so when the doctor wanted an MRI, I didn't think twice about it."

At the time, Shiloh was training another rad-tech to do MRIs, so she used her husband's scan as a teaching moment. It's a moment Shiloh will never forget.

"I was next to her, looking at the computer screen. I knew right away there was something wrong."

The MRI showed Travis had a brain tumor. The diagnosis came on a Tuesday and by the following Monday, the family was headed to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota to meet with a neuro oncologist and a neurosurgeon. Doctors there confirmed Travis had a brain tumor. They presented the couple with two options: watch it or take it out.

"Travis said, 'get that sucker out,'" recalls Shiloh with a laugh.

Although the doctors believed the tumor was a low grade, non-aggressive tumor, they removed it 10 days later.

"Thankfully they removed it right away. It turned out to be a much more aggressive tumor than they first thought. Tumors are graded one through four, with a four being really bad. Travis' tumor was a mix between a three and a four. It would have been a totally different situation if we had waited even six months to get it removed."

Travis had surgery on a Tuesday and was out of the hospital by Friday. He underwent six weeks of daily radiation treatments and then six months of chemotherapy. He finished chemo on Christmas Eve 2016.

SECOND TIME UNLUCKY

Shiloh thought the worst was behind her family, and prepared for the healing phase of the cancer diagnosis. But suddenly, the nightmare was starting all over again. This time, it was her son Ethan,

who was then 17.

"Ethan was playing soccer in gym class and got knocked out. Doctors said he had a concussion. He struggled with headaches for almost eight weeks. He missed most of the basketball season because of his horrible headaches," says Shiloh.

In mid-April, more than three months after his concussion, Shiloh noticed Ethan covering his left eye when he stood up from the couch. He confessed his eye often got a little blurry, but would then go back to normal.

"I remember thinking that was weird, but then I just blew it off. A few weeks later, he did it again and also complained that his ear felt weird, like there was water in it. My motherly instinct kicked in then

“

“Travis said, ‘get that sucker out,’”
recalls Shiloh with a laugh.

and told me to take him to the doctor, just for peace of mind.”

Shiloh knew the doctor would order an MRI and she didn't want to be involved in her son's care. So she scheduled an appointment in Spearfish, South Dakota.

"We left the hospital and by the time we got 10 miles from Spearfish, the doctor's office called and said Ethan had pretty much the same tumor Travis had.

BREAKING THE NEWS

"We had stopped to eat at Hardee's and I went outside for the call. I was in the parking lot crying and trying to talk to the doctor. Travis came outside to check on me and we knew we had to tell Ethan and our other son, Alex," says Shiloh. "We had to tell him in Hardee's parking lot 'you have a brain tumor.' He took it hard. We all cried. We couldn't believe we had to do this all over again."

The news came two days before Ethan's 18th birthday.

"We went back to Mayo again and saw the same team of doctors that Travis had seen. That was comforting," says Shiloh. "Ethan's tumor was in a different part of the brain, but so much about that visit was *dejavu*. We saw a pediatric neurosurgeon who said the tumor had to come out. So we waited a week and then he had surgery.

"It was surreal. We were in the same waiting room during Ethan's surgery as I had been during Travis' surgery. The doctors wanted to get Ethan's tumor removed immediately, partly because of where we live. Hettinger is pretty much in the middle of nowhere and had something happened, he would have had to be lifeflighted out. It was a better option to have surgery right away."

THAT ETHAN KID

Surgery went well and Shiloh says they were prepared for Ethan to experience some difficulty speaking and weakness

on his right side. They were the same side effects doctors had warned of when they operated on Travis. While Travis didn't experience any side effects, Ethan did. He couldn't speak for several days and it was weeks before he could move his right side. Ethan would spend the next two months in rehab at Mayo.

"Once he started to recover, he recovered quickly. His right side was paralyzed for about five days but once he got to the rehab unit he started making small progressions, from moving his fingertip to opening and closing his hand. Every day he got better and better. The smaller muscle groups starting to move again and then the bigger muscles followed suit."

Ethan had a physical therapist and an occupational therapist. He quickly became the talk of the rehab center, because of his rapid progression and 'never give up' attitude.

"Everyone wanted to know who this 'Ethan kid' was on the rehab floor. We would be going down the hallways and

“

"Everyone wanted to know who this 'Ethan kid' was on the rehab floor. We would be going down the hallways and doctors would be like, 'that's the kid!'" —Shiloh Dupper



doctors would be like, 'that's the kid!' That always put a little smirk on Ethan's face.

"The physical therapist thought he would leave in a wheelchair or maybe with a crutch. Ethan left rehab on his own two feet after being inpatient for four weeks."

Rehab continued throughout the summer. While his friends trained for the upcoming football season, Ethan trained as well. He wasn't able to play football, but he's back on the basketball court this winter.

"He's young and he's athletic. That's helped his healing," says Shiloh. "Plus, as an athlete you're used to training hard and working hard. He never said, 'I can't do it.'"

THE FAMILY HEALS

Ethan still struggles with speech; he sometimes stutters and has trouble finding the correct words and has occasional headaches, but physically, he's back to his old self.

"He's got a clean bill of health."

And for now, there are no signs of tumor regrowth for Travis either. But doctors have told Travis it's not a matter of *if* the tumor will return, but rather *when*. He suffers from daily headaches, but has returned to work and the Dupper family is determined to begin healing from the emotional roller coaster they've been riding for nearly two years.

"People ask me how I do it. They ask how I get out of bed in the morning with all that's happened. I tell them you just do," says Shiloh. "We have another son who needs our attention and care. We need to make things as normal as we can. I don't think about it. I have to take care of my family. I'm the mom. Just like every other mom who has other things going on in her life."

"When Travis was diagnosed, I wondered why we were chosen for this journey. But we figured out how to do it in the most positive way we could. It was a little different with Ethan. It was another punch in the gut."



Submitted Photo

Learn more about Pray for Gray
at prayforgray.com.

NO ONE FIGHTS ALONE

The people of Hettinger and surrounding towns rallied and Shiloh says the support was overwhelming.

"We had support from not only people in Hettinger, but in our hometowns of Bison and Faith, South Dakota, and from Lemmon, Buffalo, and Dupree, South Dakota. The Bowman, North Dakota student council did a bake sale and donated all the profits to Ethan. We had support from Dickinson as well," recalls Shiloh. "The people in these small communities have been amazing."

The Dupper family has done their part to raise awareness about brain cancer. Travis started a Facebook page early in his journey—Travis's Journey.

"We've always been really open about what's happening with Travis and Ethan," she explains. "Social media is great for connecting with people in the same situation and it's nice to find people who have gone through the same thing. When Travis was first diagnosed I felt I was the only wife in the world going through this.

I was lonely. I quickly learned I am not the only one and I got over my little pity party and connected with a ton of people around the country that are fighting the same battle."

The Dupper family was recently recognized for their battles. Julie Fletcher, founder of Pray for Gray and a 10 year brain cancer survivor, asked the Dupper family to be honorees at the annual gala last fall.

"She is an inspiration," says Shiloh. "She started the Pray for Gray foundation that supports families in North Dakota and part of Minnesota who are dealing with a brain cancer diagnosis."

Pray for Gray is the only North Dakota 501(c)(3) nonprofit brain tumor organization. The organization shares stories of people who have been affected by brain tumors, which helps raise awareness, hope, and money for research. The organization holds a yearly fundraising gala, which includes two or three honorees. Travis and Ethan were honorees at the 2017 gala. The gala includes a silent and live auction.

Follow the Dupper family's story on their Facebook page; search Travis's Journey.



Up for auction last fall was a Carson Wentz package—airfare, hotel, tickets to a Philadelphia Eagles game, and a meet and greet with Carson Wentz. Two businessmen purchased the package and donated it to the Dupper family.

"We felt like we were royalty. We were down on the field for pregame and watched the players warm up. Ethan was in heaven. Football has always been his favorite sport, and after missing his senior season, this was extra great."

THIRD TIME LUCKY

Now, it's back to reality for the family as they have settled into what they hope will be a "normal" senior year for Ethan. They are enjoying basketball season and Ethan is looking at colleges.

"He wants to go into radiology," his mom says with pride in her voice. "He became interested first after Travis was diagnosed, and after his own diagnosis, he became even more interested in the field. So I guess if something good can come of all this, it's that he's found his

passion and his calling."

Meantime, Shiloh is trying to soak it all in.

"Our younger son Alex is 14. I don't worry about him getting a brain tumor; though I do worry what kind of toll this has taken on him. He is quiet and doesn't like to talk much about it, but he is such a great kid and has taken everything that has been thrown at him and has handled it the best a 14 year old can. The doctors say Travis' and Ethan's tumors were not related at all genetically. They say we are just a really unlucky family. I have to believe that our luck is changing and that we will start healing and leave all of this in our past. We are just a normal family, trying everyday to be a great family, no matter what challenges are thrown our way."

There's an old saying, "third time lucky." After two unlucky years, Shiloh and her family are holding out for healing and good health in 2018. Afterall, third time lucky. *m*



Submitted Photo

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"We are just a normal family, trying everyday to be a great family, no matter what challenges are thrown our way." —Shiloh Dupper

No Pressure

TRY DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

by Jodi Kilde Hales

Deep tissue massage is often the last resort for a person hoping to escape physical pain that seems immune to all other treatments. The person is looking for relief from the kind of chronic pain that has affected the quality of their daily lives.

The first thing to bear in mind is that the goal of deep tissue massage is therapy and rehabilitation, not relaxation, even though you may feel deep states of relaxation during a deep tissue massage.

They may have been told, "nothing can be done," and then prescribed a cocktail of pain pills that may interfere with the pain, yet do nothing to address the source of the problem.

But deep tissue massage can scare people off, too. The biggest misconception people have is really a misunderstanding about what it is and what it is not. Deep tissue massage and deep/firm pressure massage are not the same. Understanding the benefits of deep tissue massage can mean the difference between positive results or no results.

The first thing to bear in mind is that the goal of deep tissue massage is therapy and rehabilitation, not relaxation, even though you may feel deep states of relaxation during a deep tissue massage.

The term "deep tissue massage" refers to methodically and strategically working through each layer of muscle tissue and

focusing on any trigger points or muscular dysfunction. It has nothing to do with the amount of pressure applied. It involves manipulation of the fascia and other supportive tissue that disrupt circulation, cause pain, limit range of motion, and cause inflammation.

As a chronic pain massage therapist I understand that healing is more likely to occur when you work with the muscular system as opposed to against it by applying more pressure.

In my experience, firm/deep pressure massage is more forceful and aggressive. Even practiced at its best, it forces the muscular system to go against its natural function, which is to protect the spinal cord and internal organs. Because of the body's natural wisdom, the muscular system will guard against what the therapist is trying to do and can ultimately lead to soreness and bruising, and is unlikely to provide pain relief.

Don't get me wrong, there will some discomfort during a deep tissue massage as it works to lengthen, release, and realign deep layers of muscle and tissue from the holding patterns that are causing your pain. However, it will be temporary.

I am always amazed by the body's natural capacity to heal itself when you work with its natural intelligence and not against it. I believe deep tissue massage is a way to simply assist the body in healing itself. *M*



Jodi Kilde Hales is a chronic pain massage therapist specializing in deep tissue massage. She has spent the past 20 years working in this field.



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If you have coverage through your employer, it may only cover half of your paycheck and is most likely short term. Know how much coverage you have and the monthly limit. Would it be enough if you were unable to work?

2. What's your current financial situation?

Your paycheck is likely your greatest financial asset. Evaluate your current financial situation and determine if your reserves are sufficient enough to bring you through a disability.

3. Do you need short- or long-term coverage?

Employer insurance is most likely short term, continuing for three to 12 months or until long-term benefits begin. Long-term coverage can range from six months to 10 years, or to ages 65 or 70.

4. How much coverage do you need and how much will it cost?

A financial representative can help you assess your individual situation and help you understand your options. Costs will vary based on your age, income, health history and plan options.

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¹U.S. Social Security Administration Fact Sheet, Feb. 7, 2013.

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Amanda Ihmels



CANCER FIGHT: EAT RIGHT.

by Linn Zander

Every day, Bismarck Cancer Center's Amanda Ihmels teaches patients and survivors how to make healthier food choices. She's one of only two board certified oncology dietitians in the whole state of North Dakota. Amanda has provided nutritional counseling for almost seven years at the Bismarck Cancer Center and has helped thousands of people with their nutritional needs while they are going through cancer treatment. She has also spoken on nutrition at multiple conferences, corporations, and health fairs across North Dakota.

Amanda's job is to help reduce the possibility of cancer returning and also provide essential supportive care for successful cancer treatment.

"If a person going through treatment is having difficulties eating, they might start to lose weight unintentionally," she says. "They could become weak, lose muscle, and make their side effects more severe and their healing delayed."

Amanda helps patients manage

their side effects during and after treatments. Common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, dehydration, constipation, and weight management.

"Once survivors have completed treatment, we encourage them to reach a healthy weight and follow a plant based diet with vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and lean meats," Amanda explains. "They are also encouraged to complete 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week."

Amanda's favorite part of her job is building relationships with the patients and families she works with every day. Her position brings her face to face with many of the patients at the Bismarck Cancer Center. One patient Amanda hasn't been able to forget was a gentleman she helped with neck cancer.

"He came to realize it was important to follow my nutrition recommendations. At his follow-up appointment, he said he was sorry for

giving me a hard time and he wished he would have listened right away. He said, "You saved my life."

Bismarck Cancer Center's oncology nutrition program is free; funds from the Bismarck Cancer Center Foundation cover the expenses. The Bismarck Cancer Center is unique in that the foundation covers housing, gas cards, spiritual therapy, survivorship nurses, massages, financial aid, and nutritional counseling. This is the 10th anniversary of the Bismarck Cancer Center Foundation and executive director, Amy Gross, says the Bismarck Cancer Center has become a medical facility that helps the cancer patients restore their physical and mental well-being.

"We pride ourselves in having state-of-the-art cancer procedures, but our goal is to treat the patient's mind, body, and spirit," says Amy.

For survivors in the Bismarck/Mandan areas who want to make a healthy lifestyle changes, the Bismarck Cancer Center offers a survivorship lifestyle program called Live Well. It is a 12-week series that equips patients with the tools they need to make a positive change in their life as they ease into the "new normal" of survivorship.

For more information on BCC's nutritional counseling, Live Well classes, or to schedule Amanda for a speaking engagement, call the Bismarck Cancer Center at 701-222-6154.

QUESTIONS FOR PATIENTS TO ASK THEIR PROVIDERS:

- Can I continue to take my herbal and vitamin supplements during treatment?
- Does your facility have a board certified oncology registered dietitian available to help with treatment side effects?
- How will treatment affect my weight?
- What nutrition programing is available to survivors? *M*



Linn Zander is the outreach services coordinator at the Bismarck Cancer Center. She spends her time raising awareness and educating people in rural communities about cancer and cancer prevention and helping with events for the Foundation.

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When Audrey Herman was in eighth grade, she told her mother, "If I could be a nurse, I would be so happy."

Fast forward to today, and Audrey, a Registered Nurse at Sanford Same Day Surgery in Bismarck, is very happy. Her filled to the brim love for nursing, her employer, her co-workers, and her patients is visible, genuine, and most certainly contagious.

Having surgery can be a stressful time for the patient and the patient's family. Whether it's a simple outpatient procedure or open heart surgery, all Sanford patients are touched by the Sanford Same Day Surgery nursing staff. Nurses are involved

in taking vital signs, starting IVs, reviewing procedures and medications, and going over what to expect both before and after surgery.

"I'm one of the luckiest people in the world," says Audrey. "I love working for Sanford. You can just feel it when you walk through the halls. People here are warm and caring. We're

people helping people."

Mere mortals have to commit to being helpful and happy, but not Audrey. Helping people seems to be a part of her fabric.

"It makes me happy to walk into a patient's room. I just treat each one like they are my best friend or my neighbor. I want them to know what's happening, and really, I want them to be better. I want them to do well with their procedure, but I really want them to be better at home. I try to give them simple tips about placing their pillows to get comfortable, or putting a warm washcloth on a sore hand. Patients are worried, and their families are worried. Surgery can be a scary thing, so



if I can make them smile and feel comfortable, then I'm happy. And if I can make them laugh, that's even better, because laughing is good for your lungs!"

That kind of patient comfort and care does not go unnoticed. Audrey's name is brought up specifically—and often—in Sanford's patient surveys. It seems her good heart and good cheer just can't help but leave a good impression.

Audrey seems to be notorious and nearly adored by her co-workers, one of whom walked by during Audrey's interview with Inspired Woman to stop and profess her admiration.

"Audrey is the most beautiful and helpful nurse. Her patients love her. We love her."

Another co-worker simply walked by and shouted out, "Thanks for the horseradish, Audrey!"

"I'm so lucky to work with just the best people. We're a very cohesive group. Dr. Lambrecht (executive vice president, Sanford Bismarck) listens to staff and says, 'If you can think of a way to improve patient care, let's do it.'"

You'd think that dealing with people who are ill, hurting, and frazzled would, over time, take its toll on one's spirit and attitude, but Audrey seems to maintain a joyous frame of mind.

"Hey, we all have four things. We're all broke, we're all tired, we're all short on time, and we all have problems. But, we all have four things. We have God, family, health, and friends. How great is that?"

Audrey used to come up with a motto, a mantra, at the start of each new year. But she found one in 1984 and loved it so much that she has declared it to be her forever motto, and here it is: *In life, we have to be strong and bold, and have guts and grace.*

"I think that's a good one, don't you?" *W*



Audrey's Top Three Health Tips:

- Drink water
- Take deep breaths
- Think good thoughts

Audrey's Vital Stats:

- Registered Nurse for 43 years
- Friend, wife, mother of two, and grandmother of three



Paula Redmann is the Community Relations Manager for Bismarck Parks and Recreation District. She married her high school sweetheart, Tom. They have two grown sons, Alex and Max.



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THE POWER OF Choice

by Raychel Chumley

It's the time of year when everyone starts thinking about goals and priorities. I've been mapping out my goals for 2018 since the middle of December! I'm sure you've thought about your priorities in the areas of health, friendships, family, faith, and maybe even your profession. But have you considered your emotional health? If you haven't, it's time.

2017 might have been a difficult year. Your life might have changed in some drastic ways. Maybe you walked through a divorce, like I did, in 2017. Or, maybe you had a different major life change. It's possible you experienced grief last year when you lost a loved one or a treasured friend. You might have even experienced more than one of these major life changes...I like to call them storms.

After storms rage through our lives, we are left with a lot of broken pieces. And even after we begin to heal—the scars remain. Every woman carries a few scars that tell the stories of what she has survived in her life. Sometimes the scars are on the outside; more often than not, the scars are not visible to the naked eye. They are the wounds you carry in your mind, heart, and emotions.

I have had so many people tell me, "I had no idea," "I thought things were

getting better," and "I didn't realize your marriage was like that." You see, my scars were very well hidden. From the outside looking in, we looked like a happy family. But under the surface there were deep wounds no one knew about. Maybe you can relate.

Did you know there is a grieving process for everything that changes in your life? There is. And you can't bury grief. It demands to be felt. Don't go into 2018 still dragging around the broken pieces of 2017. Be brave! Open up the dark closets of your mind, drag out those skeletons, and let the light in so you can finally start healing. You survived the storm. You can survive the healing process.

The grieving process should be embraced with open arms. You can't heal what you won't acknowledge. It's time to rip off the old bandages and let those wounds heal. The choice to be emotionally healthy will become the foundation for everything you want to accomplish in 2018. So never fear, sweet friend, the freedom you find on the other side will be worth it. *W*



Raychel Chumley is the co-founder and president of Big Blue Couch® Coaching, LLC. She is the author of the Bible study, "Unbroken." She lives in North Dakota with her children.



REJUVENATE WITH OXYGEN & OZONE TREATMENTS

by Michelle Farnsworth | Submitted Photos



I admit it. I'm late to a consistent and effective skincare routine. As a child I had great skin and would constantly be outside, playing in the North Dakota sunshine. No sunscreen applied. I just didn't do it. I'm sure many of you growing up in the 1970s and 80s are guilty of the same ambivalence toward skin protection.

Now in my late 40s, I decided I had better make up for lost time. In addition to my regular skincare routine with Younique Royalty Skincare Products, (Shameless plug; I sell Younique and it's

awesome!) I have started to seek out additional treatments from professionals.

One of those professionals is Michelle Maier, nurse practitioner, and owner of Embrace Wellness Skin and Anti-Aging in Bismarck.

If you've ever watched any of the "Real Housewives" franchises, (My faves are OC, Beverly Hills, and NYC), you've seen the ultimate in skincare pampering and anti-aging treatments.

But let's get real—REAL REAL. Who can afford all of those high-priced treatments?

Michelle is the woman for the job; she

has invested in machinery that is exclusive to the area and she is trained in many new procedures that won't break the bank.

I recently had an oxygen facial from Michelle, and let me tell you, this is something you're going to want for yourself.

Your face is treated to several steps from steaming, exfoliating, and—my favorite part—pumping oxygen into the skin! The little magic wand pumps oxygen and vitamin supplements or oils directly into your skin.

There is no pain or bright red skin afterward, just the feeling and look that you now have lost 10 years off your face. The finishing touch: relaxing time while you breathe in some pure oxygen.

But Michelle reminds her patients that it's not something that works overnight and to stick to a good regimen in addition to treatments.

"The importance of a good skincare routine and sunscreen of SPF greater than 30, avoiding prime sun hours, healthy diet, and hydration are key to healthy skin," says Michelle.

And then she looked at me and asked, "Do you wear sunscreen all of the time?"

Gulp. Guilty. I'm doing much better, but those old habits of wanting to be tan are hard to break. I keep reminding myself I don't want to look like an old suitcase when I'm 60 years old.

Next up was an ozone sauna treatment. I could spy the space-age looking pod sitting in the corner, ready for me to hop in and sweat it out and take in some ozone.

Michelle Maier offers a variety of treatments and procedures.
michelle@embracewellnessnd.com

One of the endearing bonuses of a treatment by Michelle is her obvious love of all the science behind these treatments and her personal knowledge.

As I sat inside the pod, towel wrapped firmly around my neck so as not to breathe in the ozone, Michelle gave me a steady stream of information. I concentrated on the steady stream of sweat pouring out of my body. It felt good. But I wanted to know the specific benefits.

"There are so many benefits to ozone therapy. It detoxifies every cell in the body, oxidizes poisons in the body, and breaks down cellulite."

"Wait, cellulite?" I yelled out over the gentle hum of the ozone machine.

Those were good enough benefits for me, but there are at least a hundred different benefits of ozone therapy and Michelle can also provide you that list.

Hopefully with a little due diligence and care from professionals, I can turn back the hands of time. Before you try any of these treatments, consult your physician for any limitations.

My next treatment: the vampire facial. Stay tuned. *M*



Michelle Farnsworth is a local writer and owner of her own *Younique Makeup and Skincare* business. Two humans, one fur baby, and her husband, Richard, occupy her free time.

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OH MAN

OH MAN: GUY MCCOMMON

by Marci Narum | Submitted Photos

Sharing an office with someone can often present tension and anxiety. Not for Guy McCommon and his office partner, Cooper. In fact, it's just the opposite—by design. Cooper makes people feel much more at ease when they visit Guy's office at DeCoteau Trauma-Informed Care and Practice in Bismarck. The four-year-old golden retriever is a certified therapy dog with Love on a Leash. Guy is a licensed independent clinical social worker and therapist. He's also Cooper's owner and handler.

"My wife Linda and I got Cooper when he was nine weeks old. He's our third golden retriever," Guy shares. "We noticed right away that he's such an engaging dog. He just likes to be with people."

Dr. Tami DeCoteau is a licensed clinical psychologist and the owner of the clinic where Guy works. Her dog, Mo, is her regular companion in the office. Tami's clinic is also home to a couple of bunnies. She says there has been extensive research on the use of animals in mental health therapy. She notes the significance of this therapy when working with the elderly and people who have experienced trauma.

"The research shows that animals have the ability to calm people down and take them out of that state of anxiety or agitation. Since we work with largely a population who has suffered trauma, it makes sense to have these types of animals here. And we also work with a large number of children in the foster care system," Tami explains. "So it's disarming to come in and see an animal, and it takes their level of

anxiety down about being in therapy or being in a new environment."

Guy's experience in mental health therapy spans nearly three decades. He has helped children and adolescents, combat veterans, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Cooper has been his therapy partner for one year and Guy sees the difference it makes during sessions with his clients.

"Sometimes when we're doing a session he'll pick up on people's moods very quickly," Guy shares. "Some people don't like him to bother them or get hair on them. So they'll come in and sit down. He knows when someone doesn't want to engage with him."

Guy recalls a time when a woman didn't want Cooper next to her during therapy.

"She became very distraught during the session. All of a sudden, Cooper got up and laid his head right in her lap. She broke down and cried, and she hugged him and let it out into the fur on the back of Cooper's neck. It was a very big breakthrough for her therapeutically. The action of him coming over and putting his head on her lap was just enough of a catalyst to allow her to let her emotions go. It really helped with us working more effectively together."

The silky smooth fur into which many of Guy's clients shed tears is professionally groomed every month and is brushed at least four times a week.

"Everyone always comments about how soft and silky his fur is. When your job is to be petted, you'd better have soft fur," Guy laughs. "The fur

sometimes becomes a problem so I always carry a lint brush with me."

Typically, therapy dogs visit hospitals, long term care facilities, and schools. Cooper gets to do that, but Guy says he's not aware of other handlers who use therapy dogs with clients in mental health therapy in the Bismarck area.

"When they're petting him, they are more open. It's like their shield comes down. Cooper sits next to them and they are in tune to him, so when I ask them something, it comes automatically. They don't think about it, they just respond because they are so engaged with him. It helps them feel more comfortable. Some of the younger kids, I think it helps them feel safer.

"It's given me an opportunity to be more attentive to the unspoken things that people say and how they respond during our sessions. I can pick up their body mannerisms, their tone. It helps me read their moods more effectively. If I can see him cuing on something it helps me be a better therapist."

Guy says a therapy dog's job is to bring comfort. He's grateful to share an office with one whose nature is to ease the anxiety and tension that is natural in his work environment.

"I consider Cooper my partner. I feel very blessed that he has that innate ability to be good at that and knows that his job is to engage people in a comforting manner and help them feel better, and bring a smile to someone's face." *M*



(LEFT)
Guy and Cooper

(RIGHT)
Tami and Mo



OFFERING *Healing and Hope* AFTER HURRICANE HARVEY

by Dr. Preston VanLoon | Submitted Photos



At 6:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning I was notified by the American Red Cross (ARC) that they wanted me to leave Bismarck within 24 hours for a two week deployment to Houston, Texas. I was to serve as a disaster spiritual care volunteer with those devastated by Hurricane Harvey.

After booking my flight and quickly packing, I arrived in Houston on Monday afternoon and reported to the ARC headquarters of Greater Houston. I was told that I would be working in a large shelter which provided refuge for about 700 people who had lost their homes.

The ARC shelter was an old Macy's store that was now closed and located at one end of a shopping mall. Cots were spread throughout the store with only two or three feet between them. They were separated into "dorm" areas for men, women, and families with children. There was also a designated section for eating meals and another for obtaining different types of assistance. Bathrooms and showers were provided outside in mobile trailers.

In addition to the diverse population of people living in the shelter, there were many volunteers and workers from other places in the U.S. who came to help in various ways. The agencies on site were FEMA, Housing and Urban

Development, Medical, Mental Health, American Red Cross, Texas Baptist Men, and many volunteers who helped by managing the dorm areas, assisting with meals, cleaning, providing activities for children, and security.

As a trained ARC disaster spiritual care volunteer my role was one of being present, offering hope and encouragement, and listening to the heartache and stories of devastation that clients experienced in the hurricane. Our days were long, usually beginning at 7:30 a.m. with a briefing before we each left to our respective service locations, and not ending until 10 to 12 hours later.

My heart went out to each person as they talked and cried about their difficult situations. In 2005 my wife and I were in the same position as we lived in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit, so I had somewhat of an idea of what to expect. As I listened to story after story, I was moved by what I heard.

I remember talking with one man who came from Ethiopia about 20 years ago with no money and wanting to pursue the American dream. With the help of Habitat for Humanity he built a house for his family and found a job driving a taxi.

When the storm came, his home was flooded and mold began to grow when



“

“As I listened to story after story, I was moved by what I heard.”

—Preston VanLoon

the water subsided. He lost everything including furniture and clothing. The water in his home destroyed the walls, floors, and other property. He also lost his only source of income as the flooding made his taxi inoperable. I asked him what gave him hope and he said, “There is still air, I can breathe.”

A 59-year-old grandmother was also living in the shelter along with her two adult children, three grandchildren, and two small dogs. Her trailer home had flooded. When asked how she was coping she stated that she was trying to receive help from FEMA and the Red Cross to find another place to live. She said that she thinks God allows these storms to happen to bring everyone together because there is so much hatred and division in the world.

I also met a 64-year-old disabled veteran who evacuated the hurricane

and lived in his car for four weeks with his small dog before he came to the shelter. We spent a lot of time talking about his struggle and how he coped. His dog was everything to him. She was his source of support and he didn’t know what he would do without her.

Recovering and healing from Hurricane Harvey was going to take time, longer for some than others. Though many of the clients were down and out, they still looked up. They also knew that they were not alone; they had one another and God. They never lost what mattered most to them—their faith. *W*



Dr. Preston VanLoon is a chaplain, counselor, author, and much sought inspirational speaker who has presented domestically and internationally on a variety of topics, including interpersonal forgiveness.

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HEALING BY HELPING

by Amber (Schatz) Danks | Submitted Photo

While many people consider giving donations to charities during the holidays, Julie Silha is busy giving to her communities year-round. Instead of donating money, she gives her time. Julie volunteers for three different organizations in the Amidon, Bowman, and Dickinson areas, including Prairie Senior Citizens Group, Lions Club, and Hope and Healing Therapeutic Riding.

"I don't have any problems staying busy," laughs Julie.

Her Prairie Senior Citizens Group is helping raise money for the Hope and Healing horse-riding group, because of Julie's passion for horse therapy.

"I'm one of the volunteers and I brought it to the group. This is a very young girl that started this, and they needed to get a ramp to get people on the horses, helmets, all kinds of equipment. They just needed a boost financially and the senior citizens thought, 'Aha! This is a great thing to get behind,'" says Julie.

The 15-member Senior Citizens group has a history of getting behind worthy causes. In the past four-and-a-half years, members have helped with multiple fundraisers for people in need, lead environmental cleanup projects, and worked with a very active food pantry in Amidon.

Julie says she and her husband volunteered with 4-H and the fair board in Bowman for years but staying busy

has been healing and renewing for her recently.

"I lost my husband over a year and a half ago. This is just a fantastic way to be around people and to help people out. It gets you out of your doldrums. The friendship, the bonding you get with all kinds of people. Helping others gets you away from feeling like everything's me, myself, and I. Helping others is a good feeling."

She says the good feelings roll in from everything, including the horse therapy students she helps.

"When you've got somebody high-fiving you and hugging you on the street, friendly smiles, it just makes you feel good."

Julie says spending time with other volunteers is an added bonus to her volunteer work.

"The friendships you develop with people who, before, you probably didn't have a whole lot to do with. You're part of a group, you're doing something useful, you've got a bonding friendship there, and when you have an active group like this, you don't sit around!"

The Prairie Senior Citizens group is partnered with Lebanon Lutheran church in Amidon. They have big hearts in the small town. Volunteers unload between 3,000 and 4,000 pounds of food every month. Julie says the food pantry serves a large area because it has no boundaries and the need is high for many families. She says the Prairie Senior Citizens are always accepting more volunteers and Julie speaks highly about what you can get out of giving back.

"I think you want to go in with the attitude you want to give more than you receive. When you put yourself out there in that capacity, you get a lot back, and I don't mean material-wise or financial type thing. You just get a lot of good from people." *W*



Amber (Schatz) Danks spent nearly 12 years as a news reporter, producer, and anchor. She is currently tackling her toughest and most rewarding assignment yet: being a stay-home mom to her baby girl.

To learn more about Hope and Healing Therapeutic Riding, visit our website. We have an exclusive article about the program there.



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Shannon Binstock of South Heart, North Dakota, has received so many requests for her contact information over the past few years that she decided to order business cards. Her title: Traumatic Brain Injury Survivor. The tagline on the back of the card: Keep Moving Forward.

Shannon has been pushing herself forward ever since suffering a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in 2010, when she was bucked off her horse and hit her head on the concrete floor. And while her path forward has sometimes taken an indirect

her own—Kaylee, Aerica, Hank, and Aiden. Instead, she mentally had gone back to her life around age 16.

She found herself with no filter—saying anything that came to mind and swearing like a sailor. She struggled with tasks such as remembering how to brush her teeth. Tasks which had once been, well, “no-brainers.”

She went home to live with a family she did not remember, her husband having to care for her more like a father than a husband.

“For Tom, what was the hardest part,” Shannon remembers, “is that it took me four or five years to actually remember our wedding day.”

Her prognosis for full healing was grim. Yet, within a year Shannon was able to drive and work again. Her memories came back in pieces—through dreams where she would relive parts of her life she had forgotten, through music from the 80s and 90s when she was growing up, and movies when her brain had healed enough to watch an entire film. In therapy sessions, she pushed herself to reconnect her verbal, math, and social skills.

At her one year CT scan, her doctor could not recognize the woman he saw for the trauma patient he had treated a year before.

DIVINE HEALING & A MESSAGE

Shannon believes her recovery was nothing short of God answering prayers.

“There were prayer chains for my healing

KEEP *Moving* FORWARD

by Stephanie Fong

route, she will tell anyone who asks that she is a blessed, walking miracle.

Her accident led to hospitalization, coma, brain surgery leaving a shaved and scarred head, and two months in a cognitive fog before “waking up”—but not as the woman she had been.

“I lost 17 years of memories,” Shannon explains.

When Shannon cognitively woke up in the hospital, she couldn’t believe that she was actually 33 years old, married to husband Tom, and had four children of



Shannon a few days after she did the craniotomy.



Shannon a few days before the surgery to replace her skull.



November 2010



April 2011



August 2012

in our church, my hometown, and all over. I would talk to God and pray for an amazing blessing. I would tell God, 'I need brains and hair!' I'm so glad God gave me the strength to continue trying to mentally heal."

She shares a memory from after her accident that has impacted her faith ever since.

"After the accident happened when I was in the hospital, my brain was scrambled. There was darkness all around me, and I was scared."

Then she had what she can only describe as a beautiful vision of heaven, where she was surrounded by thousands of people and greeted by her deceased grandpa and Jesus.

"Jesus said, 'I brought you to show you heaven is real and that I am listening. God is listening. God has a purpose for you—go back and help people.'"

"After that vision, was when I cognitively awakened," she explains. "I lost the memory of that experience for about a year before it came back to me."

AN ADVOCATE FOR OTHERS

With her history of severe injury and remarkable recovery, Shannon was becoming a referral point for others in the community wondering what to do after a TBI occurred in their life. They would call her to get advice and she would pray for them.

So Shannon founded and runs a monthly TBI support group in Dickinson. The group is a way to exchange resources,

share stories, and give encouragement to each other.

"A woman told me she comes to meetings to see me and watch me. She said, 'It gives me hope.'"

Shannon takes a notebook to church where she is often hit with inspiration, jotting down her thoughts to type up and hand out as colorful cards at the next support group meeting.

When asked where she hopes to be in five to 10 years, a smile grows across her face, "I want the support group to

TBI Support Group

2nd Tuesday of the month, 7p.m. MT

at Hawks Point in Dickinson

On Facebook: TBI Survivor Support

701-260-0098

get bigger and better. I want to get more involved. I'm currently on the governor's Brain Injury Advisory Council, I've been asked to be a guest speaker at different meetings and conferences—impossible things can be made possible! I want to spread my message." *TM*



Stephanie Fong lives in Dickinson with her husband and two young children. She works in marketing and communications for CHI St. Alexius Health Dickinson and enjoys contributing freelance work to Inspired Woman magazine.



May 2013



Fall 2014



August 2015



June 2016



Shannon leading her TBI support group.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR

TR 4 HEART & SOUL
Submitted Photos



When Katie Oakland began volunteering her time with an organization which offers therapeutic riding, it sparked a dream. She witnessed the impact horses make in the lives of participants, and she knew then that someday she wanted to offer the same opportunity in her own community. That was 15 years ago in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Today she is the executive director of her dream, TR 4 Heart & Soul in Bismarck.

GIVE US A LITTLE HISTORY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

In 2016, with the help of a supportive family and a newly established board of directors, we launched a pilot program after getting our 501(c)(3) nonprofit. This program started with four riders and two horses. After the first night of tears of joy from parents, and smiles and giggles from the riders, we decided this dream had to become a reality. We currently serve 25-40 riders each week. We have nine full time horses and two backup program horses. Our volunteer power ranges from 40-100 hours every week!



WHAT SERVICES OR BENEFITS DO YOU OFFER?

We offer therapeutic riding to individuals with disabilities, at-risk youth, and people who are terminally ill. It is a great program that teaches riding skills, builds confidence, and offers riders who are unable to walk the opportunity to feel and be engaged in a three-dimensional movement. For people working to regain their core strength, balance,

and coordination lost after chemotherapy treatment or other drug therapies, riding is a great exercise. It is not only physically beneficial, it is so good for the soul.

WHO DO YOU HELP?

Our insurance allows us to start riders at four years old and our oldest rider is 75.

HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS?

Our program is the only program in North Dakota operating year-round that is certified with PATH International. PATH is the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, a federally-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies. We aren't looking to take the place of any therapy, rather, we use the horses to teach riding skills and build on other physical, occupational, social-emotional, and cognitive goals of our riders.

HOW CAN PEOPLE SUPPORT YOU?

- Please find us on Facebook: TR 4 Heart and Soul
- We have a "donate" tab at www.therapeuticriding4has.org
- Come out for a tour:
8023 93rd ST SE
Bismarck, ND 58504
- Join us at our second annual "Blue Jean and Black Tie Affair" October 19, 2018. Contact Katie for tickets: (701) 367-6136
- Spring 2018 we will host our second annual Valentine's party with the horses and our Easter egg hunt with the horses.
- We are always looking for people who can sponsor horses, riders, or both. *W*



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ROOSTER FIGHTS & SNAKE PUSHY PUSHIES

by Patrick Atkinson

I watched a rooster fight last night.

No, not the cruelty-to-animals one where two drugged-up animals are thrown into a cage to battle it out. The one I saw was much more senseless.

You see, the dirt road in front of my Central American home has a 200-yard stretch that is single-lane only. When a car comes from one way, any car approaching from the other needs to stop and wait for that first car to pass.

On rare occasion, though, two cars approach at the same time and both speed up so they can be the first through that single-lane stretch. Unless one or both cars can fly or tunnel once they've stopped, one has to back up and let the other car by.

If neither wants to, of course, they will just sit there, nose-to-nose, bumper-to-bumper, until one of them finally moves. We call these 'rooster fights,' and I've seen them go on for hours.

"Just back up and get on with life," I tell one and then the other. But they don't if neither is strong enough to concede the road for the 45-seconds it takes to go in reverse for 200 yards.

From these, I've seen fights, damaged cars, shootings, and even the loss of life.

I've also watched people work together and use Snake Pushy Pushy Sticks.

It was 2004 and I was in deep-rural Malawi, Africa, starting a poultry co-op for AIDS widows. It was also the rainy season, and the dirt roads leading to the village where this co-op was located, were flooded out. Totally impassable. Even to

our four-wheel drive Jeep.

As such, we traveled most of the road on bike and foot until we eventually reached a normally five-foot wide stream that had grown to be 200 yards wide of slow-moving muddy water.

While I didn't mind stripping to my shorts, tying my clothes into a bundle to carry on my head, and wading through waist-deep water to get to the other side, I did mind that the river was filled with snakes.

"Don't worry," our guide told me. "For this we have snake pushy pushy sticks."

Having always lived with river floodings and swimming snakes, the villagers had over the years learned to carve 10-foot long tree branches into something resembling long pitchforks.

When the rainy seasons came and the rivers flooded, they laid some on one side of the slow moving water and more on the other. A villager coming from one side would simply grab a snake pushy pushy stick and carry it with them as they crossed the river. If a snake swam toward them when they were midway and probably waist-deep, they would... you got it... pushy pushy that snake away from them.

When they reached the other side, they laid the stick down for the people who were coming from the other direction to use.

Communities, like individuals, have bodies. We can choose to be healthy by learning to identify and resolve our problems. By choosing to live this way, we can be whole and happy.

Or we can choose to live with 'disease' and be ill, staring across real or metaphorical overheating engine blocks, and simmer while toxins are released into our personal, or community, bodies.

God with infinite wisdom gave us the power to decide how we are going to live our life. The path we choose is ours alone to make. *TM*



Patrick Atkinson is the founder of The GOD'S CHILD Project international charity (GodsChild.org) and is an award-winning author with six books in worldwide distribution. He lives in Bismarck, Minneapolis, and Guatemala, Central America.

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Tinsel

by Betty Mills

Sometimes it seems that the usually frigid weather of a North Dakota January is somehow fitting for the after-holiday season, especially if you've blown a big hole in the family bank account upon finding that "perfect present." So now there's a rug to scrub (who did spill the raspberry punch?), all that cherished Christmas decor to re-box and tug into storage, thank you notes to send as soon as you can remember who gave you what, and at least three items to be returned for a refund. Only three?

But it's not those mundane tasks that are the hardest to deal with after the holiday glow has subsided. It's not the lumps in the gravy or the sudden collapse of the Christmas tree or even the inexplicable late arrival of the family's favorite uncle. Those are the usual holiday mishaps not worth a footnote in the family archival memory although I'm willing to make an exception for the time one of the teenage cousins broke out in "adolescent pimples" that infected the entire younger generation with chicken pox!

In my family a most difficult Christmas celebration occurred in December of 1941. One of the family teeangers had joined the Navy and played trombone in the band of the U.S.S. Oklahoma. When it went down in the attack on Pearl Harbor, his parents were notified by the Navy that he was missing in action, and hope was in short supply as we gathered for the customary Christmas celebration at his parents' home. Not until early January were they notified that he was one of a handful of men who had been rescued after being trapped in the hold of the sunken battleship for 19 hours.

What is more difficult to toss along with

the tinsel are the remembered quarrels—those serious and hurtful disagreements which sadly resurface to break the buoyancy of the holiday gathering. Whether it is an old hurt or a new found animosity, somehow the appearance during what is considered a joyful season magnifies those painful encounters.

Given the snow clogged driveway, the ugly stain on a favorite easy chair, bills demanding immediate attention, and those ansty disagreements, who needs that holiday season? Maybe a better approach is to remember why we are willing to spend so much time, talent, and cash on the celebration just past. If we are willing to toss the whole affair in the complaint box because of an old quarrel or a new misunderstanding, why not skip the whole thing?

You jest! The thought of giving up all those happy moments, those joyful reunions, the special events, the excitement of children, the loving remembrances of other holidays, are much too important to toss away, especially knowing that most unhappy events can be remedied or at least made endurable, given what is at risk.

Obviously, it's no game for sissies. It is not easy to remedy old quarrels or out-manuever new ones. And who wants to be classed as the family busybody? But then the status quo is not much fun either.

Maybe the place to start is oneself. Clearing out the mind—and the heart—of some once endurable misunderstanding is not always easy, but important changes often come at a price. When the reward can be friendship mended, a conflict-free family gathering, and a new meaning to the happy holiday greeting, what's to lose?

If that makes me an unrealistic Pollyanna, it's better than earning the rank of family sourpuss, and it gives new merit to the thought of cleaning up after the holidays. *M*



Betty Mills loves books and loves to write. She belongs to three book clubs and when she isn't reading, Betty loves to cross stitch, garden, and talk politics. Betty was a columnist for the Bismarck Tribune for 25 years. She is also an expert tractor driver.



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