

SHINING HER LIGHT ON WELLNESS

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Rivier M.B.A. graduate Barb Tremlett has a big vision for the future



PHOTO BY JODIE ANDRUSKEVICH

Step through the doors of the Holistic Self Care Center in Nashua and before too long, your blood pressure seems to drop a few points. The front lobby—with its soft, soothing music, faint scent of lavender in the air, and small water garden—was specially designed with the help of a feng shui expert to create positive energy,

says Barb Tremlett, 47, who opened the Center in a commercial district off Northeastern Boulevard two years ago.

Venture further inside the 4,000-square foot facility and you'll find eight treatment rooms, each with a hand-painted mural designed to transport you to another place and time—the seaside, the Italian countryside, or a Renaissance castle, for example.

“My role is to create a beautiful environment where talented healers and others can come together and empower people to achieve wellness,” says Tremlett, who earned an M.B.A. from Rivier in 2002. “We’re in the business of teaching people to take care of themselves for life.”

One of the ways Tremlett accomplishes her goal is through her work as a Reiki Master. The Japanese healing art of Reiki (pronounced Ray-Key) is derived from “rei,” which means spiritual wisdom and “ki” which means energy. The practice involves the gentle laying on of hands, designed to bring relaxation and peace. It is based in part on the belief that energy forces within the body can be redirected. “For some, it’s a physical experience, for others it’s more spiritual,” says Tremlett.

Reiki is but one small piece of the wellness services offered at The Holistic Self Care Center. There’s a full-time nutritionist on staff and as many as 30 practitioners who provide a full menu of services—massage therapy, acupuncture, kinesiology, polarity therapy, and aromatherapy are among the offerings. Classes are also taught in yoga, meditation, and tai chi, as well as other many areas.

Tremlett admits that the wellness philosophy she subscribes to has been “a difficult sell in this part of the country.” New Englanders live fast-paced lives and when they don’t feel well, she says, they’re more apt to want to pop a pill to get a quick fix. “We’re not advising people to stay away from doctors,” stresses Tremlett, “We see our work as an important complement to the medical community.”

“I try to tell people that when you’re in bad health, you didn’t get that way overnight. Restoring your health doesn’t happen overnight either.” She knows what she’s talking about.

Tremlett herself suffers from fibromyalgia—a chronic condition marked by muscle pain and fatigue. Twelve years ago, her pain became so severe she was out of work for four months. “I was one of those people looking for a quick fix, so I ended up taking a lot of prescribed drugs,” she says. Eventually, she made a decision to wean herself off medication and with the help of a Reiki Master, learned to listen to her body. In the process, *she* became a Reiki Master.

Today, she is also an astute business woman who dares to dream big. She talks with passion about her plans to franchise nationally; to add a training center for business people and medical professionals to her current facility; and to include 12 of her employees as partners. “We want to be the McDonald’s for health and wellness,” she says, referring to the company’s successful business model.

Meeting Challenges

Her own dream to do “something big and something special” started when she was just eight years old. Tremlett recalls being deeply moved in Sunday school while singing, “This Little Light of Mine, I’m Gonna Let it Shine.” Her unwavering belief since then that she is destined for something big has carried her through many challenges.

One of those challenges was significant learning disabilities that went undiagnosed until she was pursuing an associate degree in business at Southern New Hampshire University. “I had been told that I was lazy and I was dumb...but I knew it wasn’t true,” she says, adding, “I think that’s why I’m so driven now.” A professor worked with her to correctly diagnose her disabilities and to help her develop strategies for success.

As her self-confidence grew, Tremlett went on to pursue a bachelor’s degree in business at Southern New Hampshire University and eventually to enroll in the M.B.A. program at Rivier College.



PHOTO BY JODIE ANDRUSKEVICH

“We want to be the McDonald’s for health and wellness,” says Barb Tremlett, founder and executive director of the Holistic Self Care Center.

At the time, she knew she wanted to start her own business, but had not yet decided what shape it would take. Adjunct business professor Tom Pucciarello taught the subject of leadership from a holistic perspective—successfully drawing the connection between mind, body, and spirit. “That was a click for me,” says Tremlett. “His words spoke to me loud and clear.”

While pursuing her degrees and raising a family, Tremlett worked in the corporate world—six years as a facility manager for Oracle Corporation and seven years in various positions for Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare. She gained valuable budgeting and negotiation skills, but eventually hit a glass ceiling. “I always wanted ownership and the opportunity to grow,” she recalls. She ignored the advice of one manager who suggested she channel her ambition and energy into a hobby and instead, beginning in 2004, she sat down one-on-one with a number of successful business people in the area to discuss her vision for the wellness center.

“I know a lot of people through the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce,” she explains, “so I decided to tap into their experience and wisdom.” Tremlett serves as an ambassador for the Chamber—she was named their 2007 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year—and she is a graduate of the organization’s Leadership Greater Nashua program.

Two years after opening the doors of the Holistic Self Care Center, she’s working hard to impart some wisdom of her own. “I feel a calling to teach others about self confidence and self love,” she says, explaining her belief that the two are tied to wellness and personal success. “I want people to know that if they are strong mentally and physically, then they can do, be, or have anything they want.” For Tremlett, it’s all part of letting her light shine. ■

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