Cathedral
CENTRE FOR WELLNESS

WELLNESS NEWS ~ FALL 2018

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I wish words were enough....

by Marika Geis N.D.

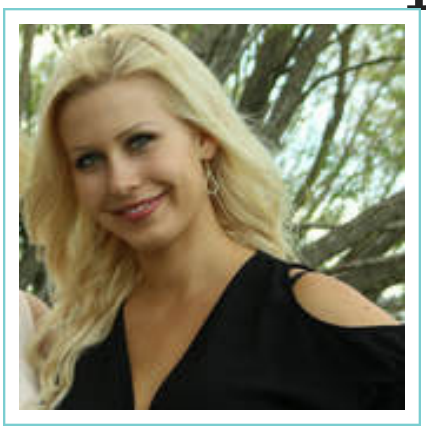
Normally, our newsletters are in some way prescriptive or perhaps lend some insight into common health concerns, but this season we are choosing instead to thank you, our intrepid community, for all you do to teach and inspire us. That you then go on to teach and inspire your families and communities by sharing your experience and knowledge is a testament to your commitment as it is you, not us, who are the healers; the true ambassadors of Naturopathic Medicine.

When I first graduated from naturopathic medical school, I left with a small bag of tools, a healthy respect for the body's capacity for healing, and some critical knowledge as to not put someone's life in danger. You must know, that any meaningful knowledge that I've acquired in my practice, is a direct result of my interactions with you, our clients. Without your trust, how can we innovate new treatment plans? Without your dedication and feedback, how are we to know they work? Sure, we can, and do, spend countless hours on continuing education or pouring over new research, but at the end of the day your body is the final authority; it isn't a petri dish. As much as we learn from our successes, we learn from our failures in equal measure, if not more so. In fact, our missteps compel us to formulate better questions so that we might arrive at the right answer. All this, because of your faith in wholistic healing and respect for your bodies and the environment in which we find ourselves.

Starting out I had no idea that I would train to become a naturopathic doctor, much less knew what naturopathic medicine was. Now, I can't imagine a career more suited to the values I hold dear: stewardship, connection, service, community, personal growth and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. I never in a million years thought I would experience this level of fulfillment. I didn't realize that a career could shape a person in the way that Naturopathic Medicine has shaped me. I am grateful every single day that I get to come to my office, spend time with you and learn from you. I celebrate your triumphs and start digging for answers when things don't work. I am humbled by your trust and inspired by your stories. I really can't do this job without you.

So. With all my being, from the crown of my head to the tip of my baby toe, thank you. ❤

Dr. Michelle Sthamann N.D.



My journey towards Naturopathic Medicine began at a young age when my mother, who is a holistic veterinarian in the city, began incorporating homeopathy into her practice and our family.

A poorly understood and overlooked intervention, my family and I could not believe the benefits after receiving consistent care. I also was that kid who was “forced” to eat very healthy, abstract, organic foods, well before it was accepted by the general public… and guided to learn more about the power of the mind and meditation in high school. As resistant as I had been at times, the positive results I experienced after utilizing a combination of alternative therapies throughout competitive sport and the stresses of day to day life had me hooked! My passion progressively grew, and I knew I wanted to learn more and share my knowledge with anyone interested! The flexibility and control over individualizing treatment plans, and spending quality time with patients intrigued me, and I wanted to offer help to anyone with an open mind determined to make an impact in their health.

As a relatively new practitioner, I am excited to see patients from all walks of life, as I am very interested in anti-aging, geriatric, women’s/men’s health and family medicine. These topics cover a wide variety of ailments for all ages that address acute and chronic diseases, autoimmune disease, gynaecological concerns, weight management, detoxification, and stress management. My plan in the next few months to help the community interact, meet me, and understand more of what I do, is to host talks in the upcoming months that address common health concerns which will be held at Cathedral Wellness and local businesses across the city! Stay tuned for more info on the upcoming newsletters.

When not in the medical world I enjoy trying various workouts at local businesses across the city from HIIT training to yoga practice, running, reading, playing recreational sports, cooking, and spending time with my friends, family members, and their eight dogs. ❤

Welcome Michelle!

~ now accepting new patients!

Dr. Rachel Lam N.D.

You know when a choir of angels sings and light shines down upon a character in a television show? Of course, that didn't literally happen to me, but it felt like it did when I realized that naturopathic medicine was what I wanted to do.

- When I was visiting the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine as a prospective student, a patient heading up to the student clinic sung its praises, saying that the clinicians had been able to improve his health in two months. He had been suffering for five years. His happiness was infectious, and it struck me then that I wanted to help others towards this happiness.
- Originally, my personal health concerns, as well as those of a loved one, had led me to naturopathic medicine. During university, I struggled with ulnar neuropathy, wherein an entrapped nerve caused my arm to become numb. While surgery had been suggested to me, I sought out less invasive therapies and came across acupuncture and electrotherapy. These therapies were the only modalities that provided any improvement and opened the door to naturopathic medicine.
- Still undecided about my future career, it was the suffering of my relative, who could not find long-term relief for her eczema, and the happy patient at the Boucher clinic that motivated me to choose naturopathic medicine as my profession. I wished to find the root causes of illnesses and treat my family, friends, and strangers with the least invasive and least toxic methods possible. The naturopathic principles, particularly treating the underlying cause of disease and treating the whole person, truly resonated with me.
- One of the most interesting things about naturopathic medicine is how it's so dynamic. Every patient is individual and different. There are many modalities in the naturopathic toolbox with which to support them—clinical nutrition, traditional Asian medicine, botanical medicine, physical medicine, counselling, homeopathy—and medical research constantly evolves. There is never a moment of stagnation. There is always growth in one way or another.
- Above the dynamicity of the medicine, my greatest passion is helping individuals progress in their health. While I have interests in stress management, digestion, and hormonal health, I'm always open and willing to see any individual who is motivated on improving or maintaining their health, no matter the condition. I hope to facilitate the journey toward the oft-intertwined concepts of health and happiness, so that these individuals may also be able to feel like a star with light illuminating them and angels singing overhead.❤

Dr. Allison Ziegler N.D.

In this season of thanksgiving, I reflect on my vocation as a naturopathic doctor with gratitude! This time of reflection has highlighted the aspects of naturopathic medicine that drew me to its practice.

The call to study naturopathic medicine was rooted in my desire to work closely with people. A core naturopathic principle is 'Treat the Whole Person', which allows time for understanding the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical factors that are unique to each person. When it comes to health concerns it can often feel like we are automatically labeled with a textbook illness and are not fully heard. My favorite part of what I do is being able to take the time to listen in order to understand each person's story with empathy, grace and respect.

A second core principle that drew me to naturopathic medicine is 'Identify and Treat the Cause'. This principle outlines the need to identify the root cause of illness in order for the illness to be eliminated and health to be restored. To me this was so different from the mainstream medical viewpoint and I was and still am inspired by the potential it has to really help others. The knowledge I have gained from studying naturopathic medicine allows me to educate others about their health. With education comes understanding and with understanding comes the motivation to change for the better.

The two core principles that originally attracted me to naturopathic medicine continue to be the cornerstones of my practice today. Throughout my work as a naturopathic doctor so far, I have developed a special interest in fertility as well as pre and post-natal care. Currently, I am developing a course aimed at health optimization for a healthy and happy pregnancy and birth. In addition, I enjoy working with those experiencing hormone imbalances including menstrual cycle concerns, menopause, thyroid concerns and hormonal disruptions caused by stress. Finally, I enjoy working with those who experience digestive issues. Understanding how diet and lifestyle affects the digestive tract and overall health is the foundation to optimal health. Through education I aim to empower those I work with to make lasting changes. The treatment modalities I most commonly use include a combination of nutrition, herbal medicine, nutritional supplementation, lifestyle counseling, IV therapy and acupuncture.

Over the past 6 years of practice, I am grateful to have been blessed with the opportunity to work with many wonderful people along their health journey, and I look forward to those I have yet to meet! ❤

Dr. Laura Stark N.D.

What I love about Naturopathic Medicine...
Naturopathic Medicine utilizes an eclectic blend of both traditional and modern therapies, providing alternative treatment options to best suit your unique needs. What makes Naturopathic Medicine even more special is its holistic perspective on health that recognizes all the elements that impact an individual's wellness on the multiple levels of human experience:

physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental.
At the heart of my approach are the core beliefs that sparked my initial and ever growing passion for Naturopathic Medicine:
- Treat people rather than diseases. A person-centered approach that drives specific individualized care.
- A partnership approach. The doctor works at your side as a partner to facilitate and support your healing process.
- Self-healing. The body is respected as intelligent with healing being an internal process to be supported. The patient, not the doctor, is empowered as the true healer.

I take a back-to-basics approach to ensure a strong foundation of healthy habits. This puts health back into the hands of the patient and creates a platform for self-sustaining wellness.
The goal of naturopathic care is not only to get you better, but then to keep you well with the knowledge and tools you need to maintain your health and I would be honoured to work with you on your path toward optimal wellness!
I am back in practice after several months maternity leav(with baby Augustus sometimes in tow) and is gradually transitioning her practice location from the Cathedral Centre for Wellness to Clear Health Inn (in the Gardiner Park Village Mall)!

IV treatments and office visits are now available at Clear Health Inn.
Supplements are still available at Cathedral Centre for Wellness.

Current patients are able to move with Dr Stark to Clear Health Inn, or can choose to stay at the Cathedral Centre for Wellness with one of the other doctors of your choice.
Please connect with Laura if you have any questions or concerns!❤

Dr. Julie Zepp Rutledge N.D.

My AHA moment came in August 1999 - during a lake swim in Penticton BC. The sun was shining on my face as I took a breath. I felt strong, empowered, vital, healthy and at peace. My personal work with a Naturopathic Doctor in the year leading up to that moment had made a significant contribution to the level of health and vitality I was feeling and I wanted to help others feel this good!

The following Monday morning I was back at work at my desk job in Calgary, downloading the application form for the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine, and one year later I was moving to Toronto to begin this post-graduate education.

That was in September of 2000, my first of four years, and I haven't looked back once. In my nearing 14 years of practice I continue to embrace the beauty of my profession every moment I have the incredible opportunity to work with you.

Naturopathic Medicine is not just a profession, but also a lifestyle and belief system. I believe in order to be successful in our work as NDs we need to practice what we preach and lead by example and so I gently and lovingly hold myself to a high standard of personal practice. This means a dedication to the consumption of healthy, life-giving food, engaging in the practices of mindfulness and meditation, getting regular fresh air and exercise, allowing myself to rest and sleep. It also means doing the inner work such as healing personal traumas, changing behaviors and habits and cultivating love and compassion in all relationships. The need for self-care and good boundaries are instrumental in life as is the importance of balance: letting ourselves off the hook and giving ourselves permission to not always be perfect or get it right. All of these factors are necessary components of optimal health and as my patients become ready we move towards the exploration of these various areas of mind, body & soul well-being.

I believe not only in prescribing treatment protocols for my patients, based on naturopathic principles, but also in looking at your underlying belief systems that may be preventing you from attaining the health you are longing for. We all often know what we "should" be doing, however often there is a gap between this and our personal practice. Investigating our tendencies for self-sabotage and working with the concepts of self-compassion as an integral motivating tool are big areas of interest and passion for me.

I am over the moon to have such an amazing team to practice with, incredible patient base and I welcome the ideal dedicated candidate into my practice upon request!❤