

A healthy business model

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BRATTLEBORO - A new downtown health center is offering an alternative to traditional medicine, and an alternative to the traditional way of doing business.

The Brattleboro Holistic Health Center is holding a grand opening tonight at its office in the former Watercourse Way location, 62 Elliot St. in Brattleboro.

The health center, which is featuring acupuncture, massage, herbal medicine, mindbody counseling, tarot and astrology, is also a workerowned cooperative, after the practitioners there agreed to work together to start the new business when the former Watercourse Way owners decided to sell.

"We've been looking for a way to collaborate for a long time," said Emily Amanna, an herbalist and one of the six owners of the new business. "Once we heard that Watercourse Way was closing, the worker-owned collaborative grew out of that." Amanna, and her partner, Alyssa Holmes, along with Keller Allen, Libby Garofalo, Emma Lee and Leah Mutz, have come together to run the business and offer the Brattleboro region an alternative to traditional medicine.

The six practitioners have worked together over the years and referred clients to each other.

Most of them had also done business at Watercourse Way, and when the former owners announced they would be moving out of Brattleboro, the group began talking about ways to bring another holistic health business into the space.

They knew they had the health care background to pull it off, but

knew little about being members of a cooperatively

owned business.

They worked with the New England Cooperative Fund and with the Valley Alliance of Workers Cooperative to learn about the responsibilities of running a collective.

So far the six, who have agreed to make all business decisions by a consensus vote, have been holding meetings and steering the endeavor forward.

"We have taken a crash course in what it means to be a worker cooperative," said Amanna. "People think it is a headache but so far we have had no problems. It is really working beautifully so far."

The business has been running since the beginning of this year.

The have a new sign up, have worked out the bugs, are ready to open to the community with the open house they are hosting Friday.

In the future, the owners hope to open an expanded community room to classes and workshops as well as possibly hosting yoga and birthing classes, tai chi and qigong.

"We really see this new space as a healing and educational resource for the whole Brattleboro community," said Amanna.

The Brattleboro Holistic Health Center will have live music, chair massage, food, Thai massage demonstrations and Tarot readings from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday during Gallery Walk.

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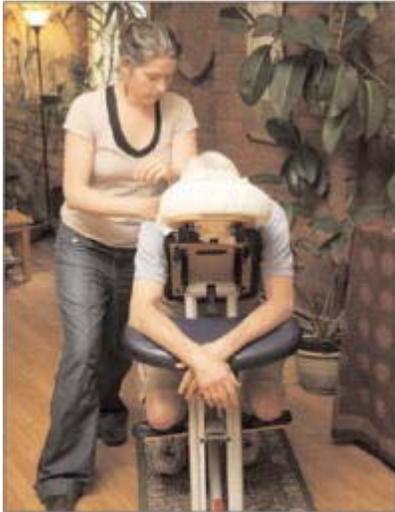


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Co-owner Libby Garofalo gives a massage to a client at the Brattleboro Holistic Health Center. (Zachary P.

An advertisement for Omaha Steaks. On the right is a photograph of a thick, seared steak on a white plate. On the left, the Omaha Steaks logo is displayed, featuring the text 'HEARTLAND QUALITY OMAHA STEAKS SINCE 1917'. Below the logo, the text reads 'SAVE up to 64% Plus, get 3 FREE Gifts'. A 'Special Code: 45069ZWN' is listed. At the bottom, a dark red banner contains the text 'To order: www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71 or call 1-877-605-0496'.

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