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**We're gonna
fight Dad, right?**

Dr. Nanavati on
Spiritual Wellness

***This is NOT
a Beauty Pageant***

JUNE 2013



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Lisa Cavallaro, left, and Sue Wallace

Our Energy is Flowing, Central New York!

Have you noticed we've got 80-somethings running the 10-mile Mountain Goat, 70-somethings reading the newspaper on their iPads,[®] 60-somethings working out at the gym, and 50-somethings becoming first-time entrepreneurs? These aren't activities that generations before us

were doing, and it's so inspiring watching and feeling the energy of the people in this community!

Allison Zales describes it perfectly in her *Stay in Transition* article. Her volleyball team dubbed Coach Allison's drill "pointless," but they later learned that staying on their toes was the best way to keep the energy flowing and not get caught off guard.

Lots of CNY-ers seem to be keeping their energy flowing. In fact it seems they've combined Allison's advice with Adele Cole-Brown's *Just Do It* piece by staying alert and allowing that energy and excitement flow right through them without letting any limiting age beliefs hold them back! It's all so exciting!

And there's more excitement inside — including Dr. Nanavati's 4th Pillar of Wellness, Hallie Sawyers article on essential oils and Darren Grahame's piece on financial planning basics.

Another amazing story — if you're wondering about that vibrant father/daughter team on this month's cover, be sure to flip to page 6 and read about the resiliency of Tony & Brittany Brigandi.

Our mission is simple:

**Every CNY-er... every month...
Happier, healthier and wiser
Than the month before.**

Until next month... feel the thrive!

Lisa & Sue

Lisa Cavallaro and Sue Wallace



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On the Cover:

Tony Brigandi and daughter Brittany jog along the Onondaga Creek Walk in Syracuse (page 6).



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A photograph of a man and a woman smiling together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark top and a yellow wristband. They are standing in front of a tree with pink cherry blossoms. The background is slightly blurred.

We're gonna fight Dad... **right?**

by Lisa Cavallaro



Good friends are important to fifty-three-year-old Tony Brigandi. Ask him who his buddies are and he'll begin a very long list of names... many that he has known since childhood... and a group that are even younger than his own children.

Ask him to tell you about these people and you'll hear about the gratitude that he feels for each one of them... especially the appreciation for helping him get through the most challenging years of his life.

Then, ask Tony who is at the very top of his Support Team, whose determination never wavered... and you'll hear the ongoing story of a beautiful father-daughter relationship.

Terminally ill

"Terminally ill" are the words Tony Brigandi heard regarding his stage 4 colon cancer, but it wasn't until his brother-in-law handed him some legal documents in his hospital room that the meaning of his doctor's words actually registered in his mind.

"Who wrote this?" Tony joked, as he reviewed the paperwork. Tony said all he wanted at the time was to go home.

What's Next?

He didn't have time to think. After hearing his prognosis, Tony recalls that the family members surrounding him were emotional to the point that his doctor needed to aid them. But when the room finally cleared out, there alone stood one young lady. Against the doorway leaned 17-year old Brittany, Tony's daughter.

Tony remembers saying to her, "Hey Brittany, what are we gonna do?" Her response, spoken back on January 18, 2008, is one Tony still vividly recalls today:

We're gonna fight, Dad... right?

Brittany's response didn't surprise her father at all. Tony says, "It just confirmed to me what kind of kid I have."

In the next moment, Brittany alone pulled Tony out of his hospital bed, removed his oxygen, and took her father for a walk around the hospital halls. No words were spoken along that stroll. But Tony says that Brittany was determined to help her father and her determination was palpable.

"She never cried through this," Tony said, "and once home from the hospital, I would find her sleeping on the floor next to my bed."

Teamwork

Before his illness, Tony was the official stats keeper for his daughter's CBA lacrosse team... and throughout his chemotherapy treatments that never changed. Without missing even one game, Dad showed up at his daughter's games wearing a chemo pump. The chemo and the pump did their thing while Tony did his... keeping statistics for his daughter's team.

"Brittany played every game with such heart and determination for me. I fed off her energy," Tony says. "It brought the fighter's heart out in me again. We were a TEAM!"

Tony is quick to name another essential member of his team — his son Anthony, who at the time of his father's diagnosis was finishing his final semester of college in London. Anthony flew home within just a week to be a support to both of his parents and also to help strengthen his dad for what they anticipated would be a lengthy and physically draining chemotherapy journey.

Anthony researched foods he felt his dad should eat in order to keep strong. The 21-year old began with a body-builder protein shake and added ice cream and fruits known to be high in anti-oxidants.

"During chemo, I gained 25 pounds!!! We called it a potion and believe me, that potion kept me strong enough to take every round of chemo. Love you, Son!"

— Tony Brigandi

Once A Fighter, Always A Fighter

Since his illness, Tony says he has changed tremendously. The first two years of receiving chemotherapy and recovering from it slowed him down, but there was a desire still burning inside of Tony. He wanted to do something that proved he had beaten the disease.

“I did not want to lose the special feelings and awakenings I had in that time. I felt God’s presence all around me — I began to see goodness again in all situations. One day in early March, while going through chemo, I was overwhelmed by how much my trees had grown... so thick and strong... and I took it as a sign that I was getting stronger and better.”

— Tony Brigandi

During the third year of his illness, Tony was faced with a difficult and what he calls, “very sad time,” the break-up of his marriage. It has been two years since that time and Tony feels that he has taken over his life again.

It was two years ago February that Tony went to visit an old friend. He walked into Ray Rinaldi’s Boxing Gym. Ray was Tony’s former boxing coach beginning when Tony was just 15 years old. He quickly noticed that things were different in there than they were back in the seventies. The focus of Ray’s gym now is to help build young people lives... not only keeping them off the streets, but also creating a positive, respectful, goal-channeling environment.

Back in 2008, Brittany told her father they were “gonna fight.” Ironically, three years later, Tony found himself reconnecting with the sport he loved as a young man. He says the boxing routine they put him through was intense — alongside young, tough athletes.

Tony pushed himself for two hours every night and began eating a healthier diet. Working forty-five minutes of cardio — switching back and forth between the punching bag, jump rope and running — Tony believes **he pushed himself beyond where he ever thought he could go.**

As a result, Tony was losing his excess weight, improving his conditioning, and also developing very special connections with the young people at the gym.

“They would tell me that I inspired them to work harder, by watching me work just as hard as they did alongside them. But if they only knew how they inspired me!”

Different, But So Much Alike

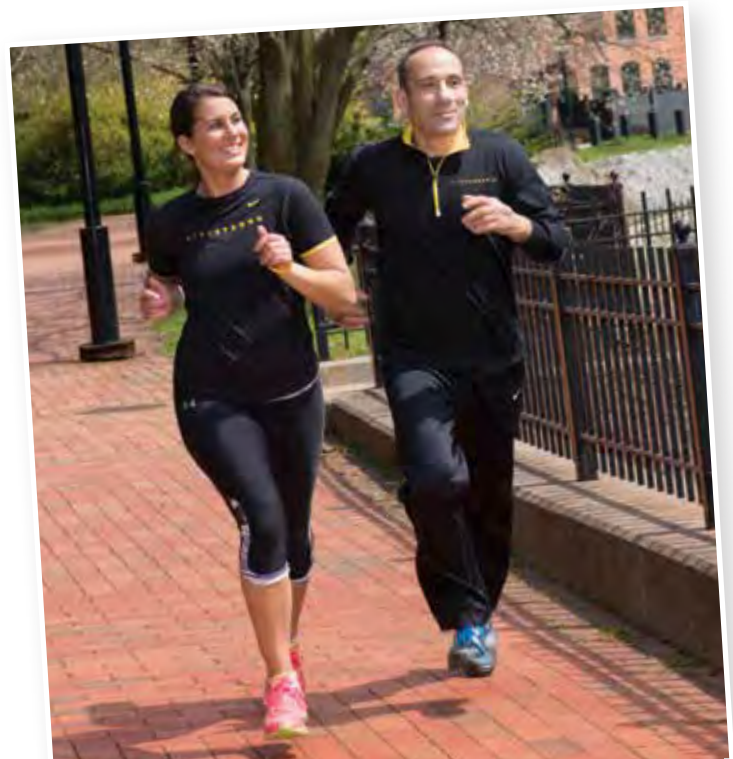
Tony was touched by the good hearts in these young men. They come from good families — some from tough areas, some with language barriers, some having only been in the United States for a couple of years, some already having college degrees and working professional jobs — but all of them were striving to do more with their lives.

“Here I was right in the middle of it all,” Tony says, “basically fighting to get my life back.”

Running — Together

Tony says that the first two miles he ran almost killed him — every step pounding on his knees. But by the end of 2011, he could run ten miles once a week and five miles every other day. Last summer he began taking a handful of guys from the gym out to Onondaga Lake Parkway to run that ten-mile loop with him. Soon, Brittany joined in.

It’s been more than five years since Tony Brigandi heard (or didn’t hear?) those dreaded words from his hospital bed. Doesn’t it make you wonder if then seventeen-year-old Brittany had any idea what her words would ignite in her father, how they would impact her father’s recovery, and that five years later they would be sharing runs outdoors?





Onondaga Creek Walk

And what about their silent walk that day?

Could it be that actions really do speak
louder than words?

That our emotions really are contagious?

And that love conquers all?
It sure seems that way.



Maryann Roefaro is the CEO of Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY and author of *Building the Team From the Inside-Out*. Follow her on Twitter @ MaryannRoefaro or visit her website: www.DoltFromTheInsideOut.com

"Mare's 8 1/2 x 11" is a word or phrase shared each month that encourages us to look within — recognizing and embracing our innate gifts — as we create a life filled with vibrancy, joy and fulfillment.

Obligation

The excitement of summer is right around the corner with the end of another school year, anticipation of summer vacations, plenty of fun and outdoor activities, and the season of graduation parties and weddings! It's also the season of mowing the grass, weeding, and a plethora of outdoor maintenance activities.

It sure does awaken the senses, but within all the excitement of summer, feelings of obligation can overwhelm even the best of us.

What do you do when you don't want to do something, but you feel *obligated*?

Before you answer, let's take a deeper look at obligation in general. Obligation can be one of the many faces of fear. What are your deeper feelings and emotions that resonate with your feelings of obligation? If you were to look deeply within the self and have an honest conversation, it may sound something like:

"I don't want to, but if I don't he/she will be upset with me!"

"I will feel so guilty if I don't. What will they think?"

"He/she may not like me anymore."

"I may be kicked out of the crowd if I don't do it."

"I just have to — I don't have a choice!"

Love and fear are the fundamental emotions of which all others are born.

Feelings of obligation may arise when our priorities need a new direction.

It always helps to remember our choices. Specifically:

1. We can either change the circumstance, or
2. Change the way we think about it.

When we replace fear with love, we can find the courage to communicate with those we love, seek assistance from outside resources, and be truthful with ourselves and others.

So... What do you do when you don't want to do something, but you feel obligated?

To keep your summer filled with LOVE, remember to ask yourself: "If this does not bring me joy, then do I really need to do it?"

Doing it with love will make all the difference!

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Dr. Nanavati's 4th Pillar of Wellness: **Spiritual Wellness:**

Peace and Contentment



*Kaushal B. Nanavati MD,
FAAFP, ABIHM, Assistant
Professor, Family Medicine;
Director, Integrative Medi-
cine, Upstate Cancer Center*

As I like to say, “You have one life with two choices. You can choose to be at peace or you can make the other choice, but it is always your choice. Don’t point the finger at any one else!”

Spiritual Wellness is a phrase that means different things to different people. Some people may have flipped the page as soon as they saw the heading but for those who are still reading, I hope you find the following enlightening.

I define spiritual wellness as **“the achievement of peace and contentment.”** The word **peace** is another word with different meanings and you have to figure out what it means for you. Once defined, make a plan to get to that place in your life where you have a sense of peace. Then, and this is the important but tricky part — don’t let anyone take you out of this place. There will be times when you will need to figure out what is important and what is not as important to you so that you can hold on to your peace.

If every decision in your life, every fork in the road, is guided by this principle of peace, then you will build a life grounded in your peace. As the Circles of Peace illustrate, peace begins within and only then can you have peace in the outer circles of couplehood, children, parents, extended family and friends, and then everyone else.



If the outer circles are affecting your inner peace then you have to reassess your priorities. Notice that children are on a more inner circle, followed by parents, since children are more dependent when they are younger and parents are more independent when they are younger. As both get older — children become more independent and parents become more dependent — the two may be switched.

Your breath is very important!

It is well known that deep slow abdominal breathing can do everything from reducing anxiety, averting anxiety attacks, and reducing blood pressure, to increasing focus and concentration. All that's needed is a minimum of 10-12 minutes per day of deep breathing.

This simple breathing “Golden Light Meditation” is all you need to begin:

- 1.** Breathe in through the nose for a count of 5-10 and then breathe out through the mouth for a count of 5-10.
- 2.** During your inhale, your shoulders shouldn't rise but your abdomen should push out. Think of your belly as a balloon and when you breathe in, the balloon fills up.
- 3.** As you exhale through your mouth, the abdomen (the balloon) empties.
- 4.** Slowly continue inhaling and exhaling, then
- 5.** Close your eyes and envision a golden light in your forehead.
- 6.** With each breath, envision this golden light slowly soaking your body like a sponge. First the light fills your head and continues moving down into your neck, chest, lungs, heart, and abdomen. You feel it going into your arms all the way down to your fingertips and into your legs down to your toes.
- 7.** Then bring the light slowly back up through each of those areas and back to your forehead.
- 8.** While doing this, don't try to block thoughts out of your mind. Instead, allow them to come in a free-flowing manner. If a thought appears, let it! Wonder why it is there, and then as it goes, another thought will come. This is your mind's way of de-cluttering and it's perfect!

Make a commitment to yourself for 30 days. Let this meditation help you increase your sense of peace and your spiritual wellness.

Be at Peace for it is a choice
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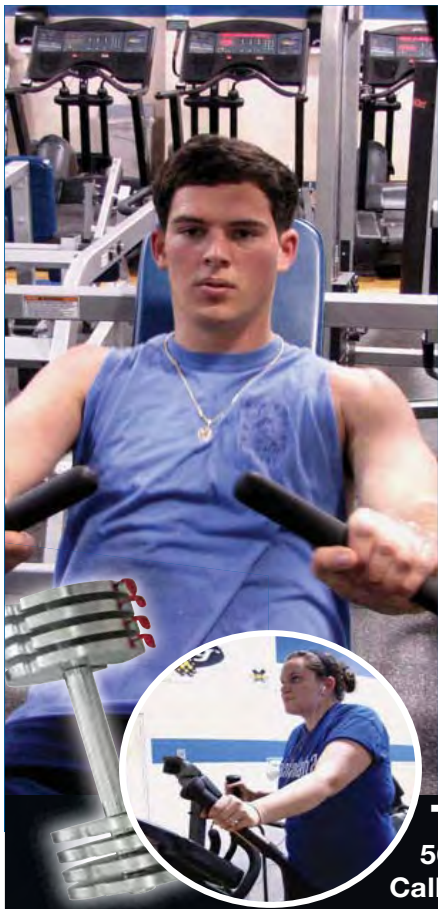
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Stay in Transition

BY Allison Zales

Several years ago I worked as head coach of the Lady Lions varsity volleyball team at a boarding school in Northeast Georgia. At every practice I coached my players to **stay in transition**.

To enforce this skill, I ran “movement only” drills for the team. On one side of the net my assistant and I threw the ball back and forth to each other. On the other side of the net, the team was instructed to move their feet and bodies in the direction of each pass. My team lovingly coined this exercise — **The Pointless Drill** — until our season opener.

Game one we beat ourselves. Every player, too proud to play aggressively, got caught flat-footed. Despite what they had been taught in practice, my team continuously positioned themselves as if they were expecting the ball to arrive *exactly* where they were standing. Instead of being prepared, they hurled their bodies in late reactions — leading to several botched plays, ugly passes, and even a couple minor injuries.

During practices I never responded to the name *Pointless Drill* and I never addressed the complaints. I knew a game situation would take care of any questions. So finally, after the sting of a loss, I instructed my team that it was time to **reframe their own gripes**.

Previously they whined: “I will tire quicker if I always have to stay on my toes.”

Now they realized: **“It does require energy to move in the direction of the ball, but not nearly as much energy as the effort and frustration exerted to play catch up when we’re losing.”**

Previously they griped: “Why do I need to move in the direction of the ball if it’s not even on my side?”

Now they realized: **“I need to keep my feet moving so that I don’t get caught off guard. I can’t predict how the other team will play the ball, but I can prepare myself to react.”**

Unfortunately, it took a loss for the team to come to these realizations, but the point is **they got it!**

Now back from Georgia and no longer coaching volleyball, when faced with the “game situations” of real life, I can’t help but think of my Lady Lions. When I find myself feeling comfortable and confident in how things are going, I must remember to **stay in transition**.

Just as my old team spelled out for me, I know — it takes much less energy to make slight adjustments, than to be hurled in the direction that life pushes me. And while I can’t expect to know exactly what plays life has in store; **I can be ready to move.**

Once a Lion,
always a Lion.



Allison Zales is the owner and professional organizer of Choose Change. She offers hands-on organizing services to create positive change for residential and corporate clients. To learn more about Allison and her business visit: www.choosechange.biz.



Perfect Health:

21-Day Meditation Challenge

BY Lisa Cavallaro

You've probably read prior articles in *THRIVEcny* where Dr. Kaushal Nanavati, Dr. Scott Treatman and Cynthia Powers-Broccoli have written about the benefits of daily meditation. Maybe you're already there... meditating daily, feeling calmer, enjoying mostly happy thoughts, and experiencing relaxed breathing.

If this sounds familiar, then you know how great it feels, but even those of us who have been meditating for years know too well how difficult it sometimes is to quiet our minds to get into that peaceful state. And with all the recent hype about meditation, you've undoubtedly noticed there are several products available to help.

I've tried many and some have their merit, but **Oprah and Deepak Chopra's** recently created ***Perfect Health: 21-Day Meditation Challenge*** stands out as my favorite for getting myself centered in the morning.

Even though it's a 21-day meditation challenge, the bonus meditation makes it actually 22 separate 16-minute meditations.

Oprah offers an introduction at the beginning of each where she talks about health-related topics including: the nature of health, the body's intuition, balance, breathing, optimism, and passion.

Using his slow, relaxed and calming voice, Deepak then follows with more education on each topic, including a different centering thought and mantra for each day.

As its title suggests, this audio recording is designed to help listeners **use breath and focus to create a healthier body.**

So, if you are someone who is looking for that healthier body, and want to learn more about healthy habits and ways of thinking, this meditation challenge is well worth waking up just sixteen minutes early for!



Stress & emotional struggles may lead to poor heart health.

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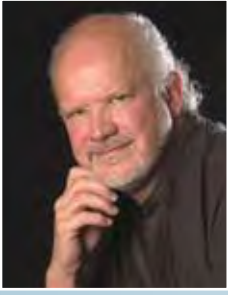
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Energy Pathways &

BY Wil Alaura

Wil Alaura, a.a.d.p. is a medical intuitive and bioenergetic healer with offices in Syracuse & Clifton Springs, NY. He works with individuals and also lectures on various health, personal growth and energy topics. For more information, contact Wil at walaura@twcny.rr.com or 315-373-0683.

Homeopathy, or Energy Medicine, has been around for centuries, used by early man to treat disease, provide comfort, antidote poisons, and even to enhance a desired effect.

China, France, England, Germany, the United States and Canada are all countries that have used and continue using what some consider a vital method of healing. Homeopathy is based on the belief that “like cures like” meaning that a substance taken in large doses that produces symptoms in a healthy person will cure those same symptoms in a sick person, when taken in small doses. However, when used in homeopathic solutions, **substances are highly diluted... making them non-toxic.**

Back in the early 1800's, one pioneering physician set forth to prove that the ancient technique of homeopathy was effective and also that it had endless possibilities. Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, M.D. experimented with natural substances and proved that homeopathy had its place in healing. Dr. Hahnemann observed test groups of people that were treated with homeopathic means and he recorded his data. Soon he became famous for his work and is known as the founder of Homeopathy.

Einstein told us we are and live in a sea of energy. We have all heard of $E=MC^2$, and as we move out of a totally Newtonian Theory of nuts and bolts and into a wondrous quantum world of energy movement, our world, our mind, and our ways of healing are changing along with it.

We are seeing more and more change as quantum theories become increasingly accepted. From brilliant minds and human acceptance comes change. As the world around us — electrons, foods and emotions — are stimulated by new understandings and moments of brilliance, we will always see change in our lives.

Humanity recalculates, embracing new and old theories and ideas, making changes that benefit our lives, our world and future generations. How we treat our bodies will be seen in upcoming generations. Our children, and our children's children, will bear witness to what is in their bodies, environment, planet, and more — by how we live our lives.

Homeopathy — a system of medicine that triggers the body's own natural healing process — **is a simple remedy with far-reaching ripple effects.**



Homeopathy



Editor's Note: Dr. Oz reports on his website: "Five hundred million people use homeopathy around the world — which according to the World Health Organization makes it the 2nd most commonly used form of alternative medicine."

When answering the question, "*What are Some Common Homeopathic Treatments?*" Dr. Oz says, "Most homeopathic treatments are designed to treat common, household ailments like headaches, coughs, stress or insomnia. Homeopathic treatments should NOT be used to treat complicated medical illnesses, like diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid conditions or cancer. Plus, it should never be used in place of a prescribed treatment plan from your physician or other health-care provider."

Echinacea is one popular example of a homeopathic remedy*

Echinacea is an herbal remedy that many people believe can boost the immune system and reduce the severity or length of colds. It is one of the best-selling herbal products in the U.S. and despite its popularity, some recent studies of echinacea for the common cold have not found that it helps.

Echinacea is a flowering plant that grows throughout the U.S. and Canada. There are nine species. Some of the plant's common names are the purple coneflower or black-eyed Susan. The leaves, stems, flower, and roots may be used to produce supplements, liquid extracts, and teas. People have used echinacea as a remedy in the Americas for centuries, but studies of echinacea for the common cold have had mixed results. Extracts of echinacea do seem to have an effect on the immune system. Studies have shown that it increases the number of white blood cells and boosts the activity of other immune cells.

* Adapted from WebMd.com.



Raw Brownies

BY Halie Simmons

Eating organic is one of the best things we can do for our health. With the increasing number of people eating gluten free, soy free, dairy free and vegan, it can be challenging finding tasty foods that meet all of these requirements. Now, there's a new category labeled raw that's making many food combinations more interesting. (*Raw* means that nothing is heated above 115 degrees in the oven.)

As a chef, I like to use a variety of combinations to create delicious desserts that are low in sugar and safe for nearly everyone. Raw Brownies are not only a customer favorite, they're also quick, easy and tasty.



Raw Brownies

2 cups walnuts

1 cup pecans

¾ cup pitted, soaked dates

dash sea salt

1/2 cup raw cacao powder

1/4 teaspoon ground vanilla bean (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a food processor until almost smooth. Pat into brownie pan. Place in freezer until icing is ready.

Icing: 1 medium avocado, 1/2 cup cacao powder, 4 soaked and pitted dates, 1/2 teaspoon ground vanilla bean. Combine all ingredients for icing in food processor until creamy. Spread over brownies and set in freezer for 2 hours. Cut, serve, and enjoy!

What is Raw?

Proponents of the raw food diet believe that when foods are cooked beyond 118 degrees Fahrenheit they lose much of their nutrition. Among the benefits of the raw diet listed on Dr. Oz's website are: "increased energy, improved skin appearance, better digestion, weight loss and reduced risk of heart disease."

Although Dr. Oz states that eating raw, even temporarily is "a fantastic reboot for your body," Dr. Andrew Weil states, "I am not a proponent of raw food diets."

Different people have different beliefs. Most importantly, we don't need to follow a raw diet to appreciate these delicious Raw Brownies!



Halie Simmons is the organic food chef at Green Planet Grocery, located at 3415 Genesee St. in Fairmount. The café offers a variety of vegan soups, entrees, smoothies, juices, and raw desserts. More information can be found at gpgrocery.com/Fairmount or by calling 315-488-7777.





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This is **NOT** a Beauty Pageant

BY Kara Loveland

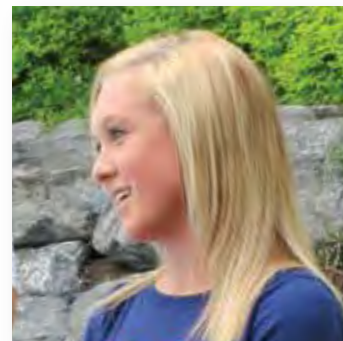
If you've ever watched Sandra Bullock in *Miss Congeniality*, then you'll probably recall the antics of the fifty female contestants, who were so focused on the end result of winning the pageant that forming genuine friendships was simply not a priority.

In contrast, this does not hold true for this month's ***Miss Central New York Scholarship Pageant***.

While the movie emphasizes the backstage drama of the pageant, founder of the *Miss CNY Pageant*, Mia Adams McSherry encourages just the opposite.

But there is a catch: Upon committing themselves to the pageant, **the girls are also committing themselves to bettering the Syracuse community and graduating high school.**

"As they bond with other young women of widely different backgrounds and cultures, sharing their fears, hopes and dreams, **they find a strength that they share as women**, and that they will need to succeed in the world that is coming," Mia says. "By doing this, they become ambassadors to the other young women of their schools and communities."



Candidates practice answering interview questions.

"We are building a sisterhood among young women. We are encouraging supportive female relationships through innovative programs and services that promote personal accountability, self-esteem, goal setting and a healthy lifestyle."

After learning that a student drops out of high school every 26 seconds, Mia felt that she had a social responsibility to lead by example to help make Syracuse a better community.

The contestants of the *Miss CNY Scholarship Pageant* are high school seniors from schools all over Syracuse. From Fowler to Manlius Pebble Hill and Jamesville-DeWitt to Fabius-Pompey, city or suburb, all schools are welcome to participate free of charge.

And while the show may seem to be "flashy," the four-month process of preparing to go on stage before hundreds of people requires the young women to reach into themselves to find courage and self-esteem they never knew they had.

Aside from assisting the eighteen young contestants in their self-development, the pageant's core value is helping others. Each year the pageant chooses a specific area of interest to help out in whatever ways it can. Whether donating money to a church on the South Side to help finance youth programs, raising money for AIDS and Alzheimer's research, or holding a clothing drive for the Salvation Army, the pageant strives for community involvement.



This year, all proceeds will be donated to the Make-a-Wish foundation. According to Mia, **“We believe in the Make-a-Wish foundation because we make wishes happen on and off the runway.”**

During this year’s Spring Fashion Show that took place at Destiny USA on April 13th, a little girl from the Make-a-Wish foundation who had always dreamed of being a supermodel was able to walk the runway with the rest of the contestants.

The *Miss Central New York Scholarship Pageant* also values leadership. During a team building exercise that uses a drum

Miss Congeniality showed how pageants can be more than just **Interviewing, Talent and Swimwear** — but in a very **competitive** way. The leadership, compassion and humanity values of the contestants in *Miss Central New York* show the value of pageants — in a more **inclusive** way.

So while only one young woman will be crowned *Miss Central New York*,* each participant has worked to develop her own confidence, health and strengths — making everyone a winner!

**This year’s Miss Central New York Scholarship Pageant is June 9th!*



rhythm circle, each participant took turns leading the group by designing a pattern and teaching and leading the others to follow together. Through this, “The contestants were able to feel how all the parts they played have to connect for the whole to work,” explains Mia.

Throughout this process, the contestants are bettering not only themselves, but also the community, and the best part is the bond they form with each other. Of course there is a slight underlying competition amongst the contestants throughout the pageant, but when no one walks away empty handed, the need for intense rivalry is eliminated, leaving room for the girls to open their hearts to each other.



Kara Loveland recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from Ithaca College. She is a THRIVEcny intern and is also employed by Wegmans.



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- 2.** Get yourself an easy-to-use pedometer.

Soon after registering, you'll receive an email invitation where you can access your own personal and private page. On this page, each week you will record your daily steps (as recorded on your pedometer) and the number of cups of fruits and veggies you ate each day.

Your **Eat Well, Live Well** page gives you access to loads of resources... information to help you make wise decisions regarding your own health.

It's free and it's fun and it's simple! The idea is to help all of us create healthier eating and exercise habits.

We're starting on June 2, but you can still join in... just go to thrivecny.com and join the party!

The logo for Wegmans, featuring the word "Wegmans" in a stylized, cursive script font.

Essential Oils

Delightfully Uncomplicated & Effective

BY Hallie Sawyers

The use of essential oils to soothe body, mind and spirit is as old as our relationship with the plant kingdom. The origin of this ancient healing art cannot be attributed to a specific person, yet aromatic plant extracts are mentioned within traditional and folk medicine practices around the world.

Though essential oils have been widely used for their therapeutic effects since ancient times, the term 'aromatherapy' emerged in the early 1900's and is attributed to French chemist Rene-Maurice Gattefosse. He burned his hands while working in his laboratory and used lavender essential oil to quickly and successfully treat the wounds.

The role of essential oils in healing was also being observed a decade earlier within the flower growing districts of southern France in the late 1880's. The workers processing the fragrant flowers and herbs of that region showed a remarkably low incidence of tuberculosis. This noteworthy resistance to respiratory illness caught the attention of French physicians and the anti-bacterial properties of essential oils became the subject of subsequent tests.

The art and science of aromatherapy has grown impressively from these early roots. We now know that not every plant produces essential oil. Only 20% of medicinal herbs contain these highly concentrated aromatic extracts. Within that 20%, leaves, flowers, grasses, needles and twigs, the peel of fruit, wood and roots are among the spectrum of plant parts that can house essential oil.

Steam distillation is the most common method of extraction and **once harvested, the essential oil is approximately 70 times stronger than the original herb.**

The potency and variety of components within essential oils can pack a powerful healing punch on a number of different levels: They can be anti-bacterial, anti-viral, pain-relieving, anti-depressant, anti-spasmodic, sedative, calming, uplifting, stimulating and more.

It takes quite a lot of plant material to generate a small amount of essential oil. In addition, harvesting and distillation are labor-intensive. For instance, jasmine flowers are hand-picked an hour before dawn because the peak of the essential oil concentration occurs within the bloom at that time. So it's easy to see why essential oils are often costly. Yet, it takes **only a small amount** of these powerful substances to produce a definitive effect. So a well-stored bottle of essential oil can be put to sparing, yet **highly effective use for several years.**

Methods of application can be as easy and low-tech as **inhaling straight from the bottle** — a favorite for clearing sinus congestion, especially when the oil has decongestant properties. Another traditional method is **topical application**: essential oils are dissolved into a 'carrier,' such as unscented lotion, and then applied onto the body where the symptom is present.

Sound simple? Once you know the basics of safety and dilution, much of aromatherapy practice **is delightfully uncomplicated and effective.** So, if you find this article has sparked your interest in using essential oils for therapeutic effects, be sure to receive training before embarking on your fragrant healing journey!



Hallie Sawyers is licensed in massage in New York and Connecticut, and nationally certified in therapeutic massage and bodywork since 1996. She also became nationally certified in Holistic Aromatherapy in 2002 and has been studying advanced clinical aromatherapy since 2005. You can reach Hallie by email at hsawyers@comcast.net or visit soulsong.abmp.com for more information.

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Financial Planning Basics

BY Darren Grahame



Protecting our money is important to us and even more preferably — we enjoy watching it grow! If you're someone who's been wanting to set up a financial plan to get that started, but you're not quite sure how or where to begin, the following is a general guide on how to construct one of your own.

Address the Risks First

It won't matter how much you have saved if something bad happens before you get to your goals. Before anything else, make sure you protect your plan first.

Obtain the most long-term **disability insurance** your employer will allow you to have and purchase supplemental coverage to fill in the gaps.

Make sure you have the "right" amount of **life insurance**. Consult a professional planner to ensure you don't have too much or too little coverage. Consider purchasing **long-term care insurance** while you're younger, to lock in potentially lower premiums. If you're renting, obtain **renters insurance**.

If your company doesn't offer **health insurance**, purchase an individual policy. Look into **liability insurance** and consult an attorney to have a proper **will** written.



Darren Grahame, CLU, ChFC, CLTC, CASL, CFP is a financial advisor with Northwestern Mutual. With a focus on comprehensive financial planning for their clients, Darren and his team service clients across Central New York and the Southern Tier. Their website is: www.nm.com/darregrahame.

Have a Systematic Savings Plan

When it comes to saving or investing, most people think of rate of return first, but the **actual return you are getting is much less important than how much you are saving and how long you save it for.**

A 20% return on a small number is still a small number. Set up a systematic, automatic savings plan to take the 'choice' of saving out of the equation. Then have the discipline to leave it there. Make sure you are getting the maximum match on your employer's retirement plan. If there is free money on the table, take advantage of it.

Diversify Your Holdings

- Diversify not only your stock to bond ratio, but the *types* of savings buckets you have as well.
- Make sure you are putting money away into short, intermediate and long term savings.
- Set up separate accounts for each and systematically pay into each one monthly. An emergency fund isn't sufficient until you have at least 3 to 6 months of expenses set aside. Retirement accounts are one example of a long-term bucket.
- Don't forget about the in-between! Make sure you have accounts for the 5-20 year goals and be sure to diversify your tax consequences as well.
- Who knows what will happen with tax rates 30 years from now? So ideally have a 50-50 mix of pre-tax and after-tax vehicles to hedge your bet.

Just hearing the term financial planning can be intimidating when you're not quite sure where to begin. Starting with these guidelines will hopefully get you moving in a direction where your money is protected and growing, and you're able to focus on things you enjoy most!

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Mike Miller (center) visits with his therapy team.

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Avoid Procrastination... Just Do It!

BY Adele Cole-Brown

For many years I was certified in aerobics, aquatics and personal training. I had the privilege of working in clubs that were affiliated with physical therapists, working with Multiple Sclerosis patients, sports injuries, etc. I also worked with a local doctor who provided weight loss regimens to morbidly obese patients, which was especially challenging for me, and many of the other trainers, because we were accustomed to working mostly with people who were active and very fit. Most of this particular weight loss population had never moved through space, never mind exercised. And while I enjoyed working with athletes, my heart was with the average person who needed (sometimes desperately so) to change and enhance their health.

This started in the 1980's and at that time, Nike had a slogan that read, "*Just Do It.*" Aside from the obvious, which was creating and teaching exercise regimens, a lot of what I did involved counseling my clients on how to work this new habit into their lifestyles.

I found myself answering statements like "I have no energy" with "energy begets energy."



They'd say, "I can't spend money on this."

I'd respond, "Yes you can because you spent a lot of money getting here and imagine what you can save by cutting out X?"

I'd often hear, "I don't have the time to exercise," and respond, "you have to schedule it... put it on your calendar." Then I'd finish with...

You need to *Just Do it.*

Fast Forward

Years later, I wanted more than to just train and teach. I wanted my own health club. It was during this time that I discovered that I have many talents. I grew in self-esteem and pride in what I was accomplishing. It was also during this time that I discovered I was quite the little procrastinator. Suddenly my added responsibilities didn't mix well with being a procrastinator. I was letting my staff and clients down and when the pain of that became greater than the personal growth and success I was feeling, I realized I needed to change.

I had to say what I mean, mean what I say and *Just Do It.*

It wasn't easy, but I trained myself the same way I trained my clients — one little step at a time. I donned a rubber band and wore it for many months. Every time I started to dodge a task or delay an event, I snapped that band. Over the course of time — I just did it!

The phrase *It changed my life probably sounds like an overstatement to most.*

But telling myself to *just do it* really did change mine!

Today, a Just Do It reminder hangs on the wall of Adele Cole-Brown's office... as it has for over 15 years.

THANK... an expression of gratitude.

If this page had volume controls, they'd be cranked way up because this is the shout-out page... a public thank you note to people who go above and beyond in the Kindness department.

We welcome readers to submit letters of thanks they'd like to send to people who may not even realize how much they have helped.

Just shoot an email to editor@thrivecny.com and we'll do our best to help you thank them on this page.

thank you Dad

BY Lisa Cavallaro

I'll never forget the Father's Day sermon I heard in church almost ten years ago. The priest was talking about the fact that it was Father's Day. He spoke of the gifts we give our fathers and all the many things that fathers do for their families.

It's funny that I cannot recall even one of the "many things" he listed, but I do remember a single comment he made that angered me at first, but still today my husband and I joke about it.

He said, "fathers are often treated like **the furnace** by their families." He elaborated noting that fathers provide much of the comfort for their families, and that the comfort often goes unappreciated.

"Is he serious?" I thought. I understood his point, but surely his delivery could have been a tad less cynical.

My own father passed away almost nineteen years ago and I hope he knew that he was **more than just the furnace to me.**

Although I wish I had verbalized my appreciation more, the fact was that if I needed anything, Dad gave it his all to make it happen. His heart held more warmth than any furnace could ever generate and he shared it freely.

So, for all the love and comfort you Dads bring into our lives...

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