

# MAINE WOMEN

OCTOBER 2022



## *the body issue*

**WHOLE BODY  
HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### **THIS MONTH**

OCTOBER HAPPENINGS  
HORTICULTURE THERAPY  
GENETICS-BASED MEDICINE  
YOGA FOR EVERY BODY  
SURVIVING BREAST CANCER  
AND MORE

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worth it

EXTROVERTED

The Fright at the Fort, the Halloween Scarefest held at Fort Knox in Prospect is back this year from **Saturday October, 15th** through **Saturday, October 29th**. Get your ghost on at this spooky historic location! FMI [fortknoxmaine.com](http://fortknoxmaine.com)



**Saturday, October 1st** and **Sunday, October 2nd** visit Windswept Gardens at 1709 Broadway in Bangor for their 2nd Annual Fall Festival. Support local small businesses and start your holiday shopping with some great Maine made items from area crafters and artisans set up throughout the nursery. It's a fun packed weekend filled with family fun, food, music and a kids craft area! Check Windswept Gardens on FaceBook FMI.

Kids Con New England will be taking place at the Doubletree Hotel in Portland on **October 15th** from 10am-5pm. Take the kids to meet comic and children's book creators, Yoshi and Pokemon, princesses and superheroes, and Star Wars characters. There will be face painting, D & D and other games, costume and art contests, a scavenger hunt, and musical performances. Check [kidsconne.com](http://kidsconne.com) for tickets and more information.



SEDENTARY

ACTIVE

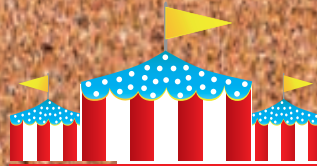


Meet authors Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan On **Sunday, October 16th** from 7-11pm at the State theatre in Portland. Each ticket includes a copy of their latest collaboration, Mad Honey. For tickets visit [musichallofwilliamsburg.com](http://musichallofwilliamsburg.com)

The Gorham Savings Bank Maine Marathon will be held on **Sunday, October 2** in Portland. Run the full marathon, half marathon or relay. To sign up please visit [mainemarathon.com](http://mainemarathon.com).



Greta Van Fleet and their Dreams In Gold Tour will be playing at Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on **Saturday, October 8th** from 7-11pm. For tickets please visit [waterfronconcerts.com](http://waterfronconcerts.com).



The last day of the 150th year of the Cumberland County Fair is on **Saturday October 1st**. Join to watch horse and 4-H shows, songs and entertainment, draft horse and pony demonstrations, pig races, fireworks, and so much more! FMI visit [bestthingsme.com](http://bestthingsme.com)

INTROVERTED

# welcome to maine women magazine

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**H**i and welcome to *Maine Women* magazine. Each month we strive to bring you content that will enrich your daily lives, brought to you by your fellow Mainers. We deliver information on poetry, art, music, movement, reflection, as well as legal, financial, career, and mental health advice. This is just a start, and we would love for you to be a part of it. Please contact us at [agoslin@mainewomenmagazine.com](mailto:agoslin@mainewomenmagazine.com) with your thoughts and ideas. We also welcome submissions of poetry, fiction, artwork, and photography at the same address. ●

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## *our mission*

**MAINE WOMEN** SUPPORTS THE WOMEN OF MAINE IN TANGIBLE WAYS THAT GO BEYOND JUST INFORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT. WITH A SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM FOCUS ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST, THIS PUBLICATION IS SIMPLY A REFLECTION OF WHAT IS TRULY A COMMUNITY THAT CONNECTS AND EMPOWERS WOMEN - AND PUSHES THE SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT THEM TO BE BETTER.



# Daring Women Who Change the World



*Daring Women Who Change the World* book is a daily spark of inspiration quote-of-the-day compilation of wit or wisdom from great women leaders born on that day. The book is divided by the four seasons in honor of the Indigenous medicine wheel or circles representing the cycles of life.



"We have always believed that daring leaders are the most important thing for a stronger community and a healthier planet," said **Harriet Lewis, Chair, Alnoba Lewis Family Foundation**, which helps over 200 organizations led by women leaders worldwide.

This book is dedicated to the daring women leaders we work with to help change peoples' lives all over the world.

*Daring Women Who Change the World* is available for \$12.95 per copy, plus \$2.00 shipping. To order, visit [Alnoba.org](http://Alnoba.org).

All book profits will be donated to the Grand Circle Foundation to support Ukrainian refugees. Funds will be used to provide food, shelter and provisions for the women and children living in the Apart Hostel in Wroclaw, Poland. Currently 70 children (age 5-15), 15 infants and 65 women live in the hostel. Grand Circle Foundation has donated more than \$2 million this year to support women and children impacted by the war in Ukraine.

To learn more about Alnoba and women's leadership training, contact Wendy Manning, Director of Sales, at [wmanning@alnoba.org](mailto:wmanning@alnoba.org) or call 603-418-7407.

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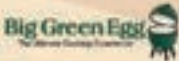
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# your thoughts

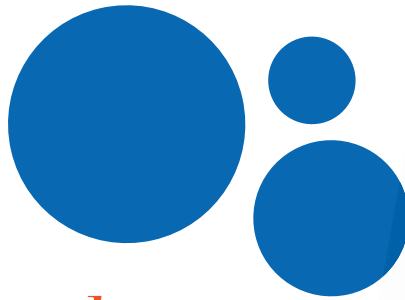
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● I read your August magazine cover to cover yesterday and really enjoyed it. I have subscribed to it and am looking forward to seeing it in my mailbox each month. Keep up the interesting articles!

● - **Sharon Underhill**

● I love the cover art. At first, I thought that I didn't like it because it was so different from the old magazine covers. But they just keep getting better and better.

● - **Beth Hornsby**



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# In Response to a Body

BY SAMAA ABDURRAQIB

.....

I have never been the handy type –  
I feel like I should apologize for that.

I build things that are drafty, ramshackle,  
riddled with holes and gaps that threaten  
and undulate with strong winds.

I build spaces that are unfit.  
Rickety places I would not ask you to stretch your skin over.

But. For you, I swear, I will learn.  
I will cultivate skills.  
I'll spend all winter watching HGTV and having tea  
with the old men who notched the beams back in their day.  
I'll take a 6-week virtual class on interior design.  
I'll let Luther sing to me about houses that aren't homes.  
All winter long.

Come spring, I'll lay out my blueprint and I'll begin.  
I'd ask so little of you.  
I'd gently push out your ribcage to make space for us.  
Convert your lungs into a doorway.  
Your heart would be the hearth. It  
would hold the fire,  
would be the box from which the music emanates,  
would resonate with the rhythm that patterns our days.

Come summer, we'll have grown the ivies to be trellised by your intestines.  
We'll have swept clean your pelvic floor – made the musculature smooth  
for whatever pallets we place there.  
In late August, I will pull up the garlic and hang it to dry on the curve of your stomach.

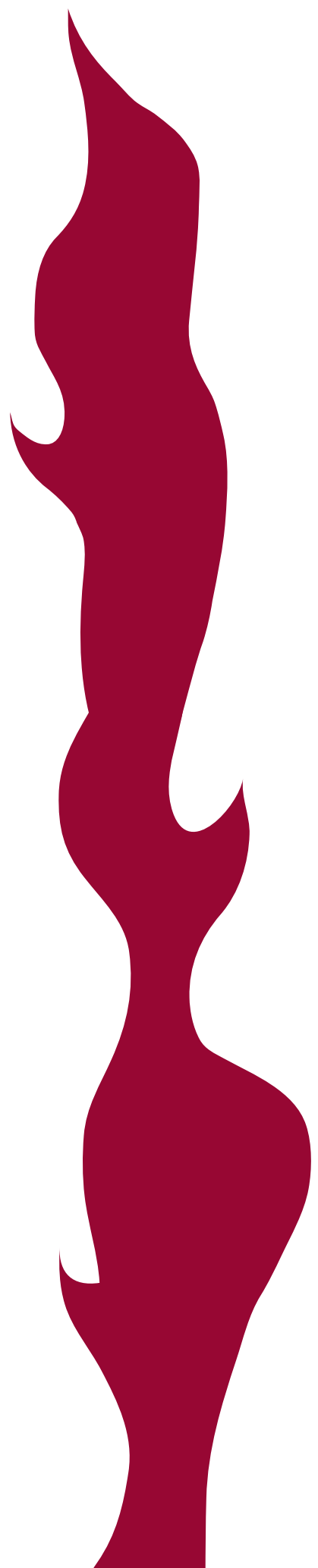
Come fall,  
if your liver remains pliable, I will bend it into a curve,  
to create a cavity and we'll stack the logs there, behind it,  
close to the hearth.

By winter, we will settle.

If your body were a house  
If this house were your body  
We would make it a home  
In some kind of way.

.....

*SAMAA ABDURRAQIB IS THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT THE MAINE HUMANITIES COUNCIL. THIS YEAR SHE WILL BE ONE OF THE FEATURED HOSTS FOR POEMS FROM HERE, A WEEKLY POETRY PROGRAM ON MAINE PUBLIC. RECENTLY, HER POETRY HAS BEEN FEATURED IN CIDER PRESS REVIEW, WAIT: PANDEMIC POEMS, AND WRITING THE LAND: MAINE. YOU CAN FIND HER CHAPBOOK, EACH DAY IS LIKE AN ANCHOR (2020), AT ACLEARING.ORG/SHOP.*





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# Stephanie McLeod-Estevéz

**Stephanie McLeod-Estevéz, LCPC**, is an art therapist and breast cancer survivor living in southern Maine. The piece below, titled *Mastectomy*, was painted to express the raw intensity of losing her breasts because of breast cancer and her BRCA2 mutation. Stephanie works

with women diagnosed with breast cancer locally and around the U.S. through her private practice and free virtual workshops with [SurvivingBreastCancer.org](http://SurvivingBreastCancer.org). To learn how to use art therapy for emotional healing, sign up for her newsletter at [beautifulboobsthebook.com](http://beautifulboobsthebook.com) ●



Above: *Mastectomy* by Stephanie McLeod-Estevéz



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# this keeps me sane

INTERVIEW BY **ALISHA GOSLIN**

**PORTLAND WOMEN'S RUGBY CLUB** PLAYERS  
TALK INCLUSIVITY, EXERCISE, AND TEAMWORK.

## How did you find this activity?

From middle school, college, or through social media—there are so many ways members of Portland Women's Rugby Football Club have found the sport. Mayra D., a 28-year-old player, was introduced to rugby in 2015 during the Rugby World Cup. "My university was doing events for all the England games. Because I went to university in England, I got to sit in a room filled with England supporters that started singing 'Swing Low, Swing Chariot' and I remember feeling chills just sitting there not knowing what was going on and wanting to feel that same passion for the sport. So, I soon after signed up to play for my university's women's team!" - **Mayra D.**

## When did you start playing?

"We have people who started playing rugby last month, over 20 years ago, and everywhere in between! As a captain, I try to make sure to keep practices fun and engaging for all experience levels. Each season brings new players with different backgrounds that truly help mold the team into one cohesive unit." - **Autumn L.**

## What are some of the things you enjoy about rugby?

"What I first love about this activity is that growing up, playing soccer, I was used to thinking that athletes should have a certain body type. In rugby, that's not true. Every body shape has a position on the pitch. I also love the atmosphere of being on a team, knowing you're all working towards the same goal (and it's also a great way to instantly add twenty plus friends in your life). I especially love the physicality of the sport. I love that regardless of how in shape I am, I always wake up the morning after a game with some part of my body sore from the exertion." - **Stevie D.**

## What does it fulfill for you?

"I've played sports all my life, but of them all, rugby is what I keep returning to. It's been a part of my life for

25 years. Looking back, I wish I hadn't taken years off from playing to do other things because I realize now that this sport fills a place in my life that no other sport has, does, or will. Unfortunately, I'm getting to the point where my body is telling me I shouldn't play anymore (shut up, body!), and that's so very, very hard to accept. But, I plan to stay involved on the administrative end, supporting the team and my friends in this way rather than just on the field. I can't imagine my life without rugby." - **Joy N.**

## What is your advice to another woman who may want to get involved with rugby?

"Don't let intimidation stop you from joining. Anything new to you will require a learning curve and I believe ruggers are the most understanding and supportive people to that notion. We want more people to join the sport, we want to share the love of the sport with others, and get everyone involved. You can literally have any body type and there is a place for you on the pitch. That's one of the best parts about rugby." - **Katie T.**

## How is your life different because of the sport?

"My life is completely different because of rugby. I feel a strong sense of community and support all around me, I believe in myself and capabilities more, and rugby has also helped me realize that my body doesn't determine my worth. For almost my entire life my fitness goals have always been about shrinking myself and taking up less space, but now I'm excited to get bigger and stronger and hit even harder! Every body is a rugby body!" - **Pinky**

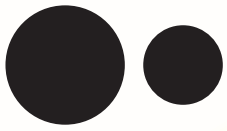
## How does rugby keep you sane?

"The focus and structure required for rugby keeps me sane. When I'm at rugby practice or a match, nothing else exists for that small period of time. Rugby provides both a physical and social outlet that is unmatched by any sport or organization that I've previously been a part of." - **Kim**

**For almost my entire life my fitness goals have always been about shrinking myself and taking up less space, but now I'm excited to get bigger and stronger and hit even harder!**  
**Every body is a rugby body! -Pinky**

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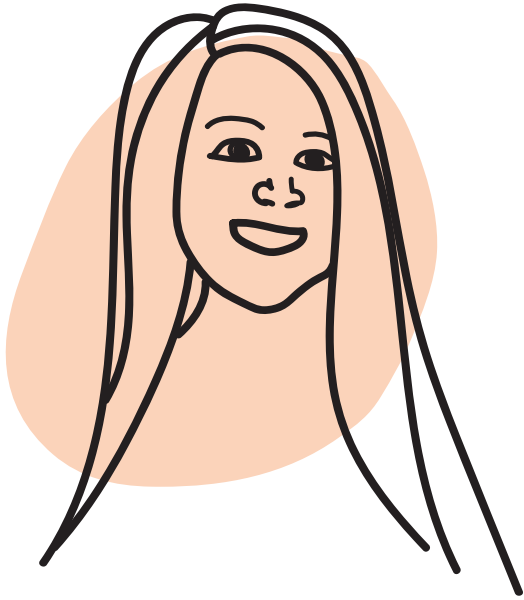


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# Sara Bowden

## AN ER NURSE AND TRAINER'S FAVORITE THINGS

Sara Bowden is a mother, ER nurse, half-marathon runner and personal trainer. She is also studying Human Nutrition and Dietetics at University of Maine. Her driving force behind this is the fact that many of the people she treats in the ER most likely wouldn't have found themselves there with a proper diet and exercise plan. Currently, Sara is training for the Smuttynose Rockfest on October 2nd in Hampton Beach, NH. She plans the family trips around "the next race," and is especially happy when they are in a sunny and warm climate. In her downtime, when not working out, you can find her relaxing with her son and their rescue cats. Here are a few of Sara's favorite things.

BY ALISHA GOSLIN

**1 MY SON COOPER**  
 He's 14. He's so happy and positive. He is never in a bad mood, and I just don't know where he gets that from. It makes me so happy that he is such a happy kid, because being happy can be hard for people. He does his own thing, he doesn't really care what other people think or say. He is so inspiring.

**MY CATS**  
 Petting them, it's like therapy, it releases all those feel good chemicals. We have 4 rescue cats named Paws, Floyd, Ludo, and Newton.

**MY JOURNAL**  
 I write in it every day. It's mostly a work out/food journal. I do put down other stuff as well, like how I'm feeling. I'm a list person so it works well for me.

**4 PLANNING THE NEXT RACE**  
 I love planning a trip around a race. We call it a "runcation." Like in January, I'm going to run in the Key West Half marathon. We are going to stay there for 5 - 6 days and drive through the keys. Just hang out and have a nice vacation around it.

**COFFEE**  
 I use it as a pre-work out. I don't feel that people really need a powder with a bunch of weird stuff in it to help their performance, so I use coffee. I love coffee. Morning coffee and a podcast, or morning coffee and quiet are my favorite.

**6 RUNNING SNEAKERS**  
 This is so important because the right ones can save you from injury. I love running sneakers. A new pair, especially. I have 3 pairs that I rotate through for different sorts of runs. Like if I do a long run I have special sneakers for that, short runs and speed work. Race day shoes are a different pair.

**MAPLE LATTES AT WICKED BREW IN BANGOR**  
 If I'm having a bad day I go get a maple latte at Wicked Brew. The people there are so happy. The energy is good. There is fun artwork on the walls. They have great treats and make their own bagels, too. It makes the day so much better.

**8 STRENGTH TRAINING**  
 It feels good to know I'm taking care of myself. Strength TX helps prevent osteoporosis, maintains balance, builds lean body mass and helps our bodies to look and feel good.

**MY HOME GYM IN MY GARAGE**  
 I love having my own home gym in my garage. I don't have to get in the car and drive anywhere, and it saves so much time and money. Added bonus, I get to be anti-social. I like to lift the garage door up - it's like I'm outside - and put my music on while I'm working out.

**EXERCISE**  
 It just makes me feel better.

# Sailing at the Edge of Disaster

## Author's Note

In 1971, I was seventeen, depressed and reading Sylvia Plath in Ohio while my fifteen-year-old brother blew up his model cars. Our dominating father sent us, "his problem kids," to join fifty other teens on what he thought was a rigorous sail training school so we would "shape up at sea." Once onboard, we discovered it was a disorganized hippie school, the once magnificent square-rigged ship was in disastrous shape, the ship owners were unscrupulous, and the charismatic school director was a pill popping twenty-five year old with little experience with schools or ships. But we students worked steadily with the crew so the ship could finally set sail. However, once at sea, we survived a near sinking, a gale, a drug search, and were held hostage for two weeks by armed gun boats in Panama. The heart of the story is how I emerged from my emotionally battered teens and grew self-reliant and courageous with my ultimately wise little brother and my brave foul-mouthed best friend. I hope this book will inspire women of all ages to leave home on a great adventure, perhaps even sail on a square rigger!

**an  
excerpt**

BY **ELIZABETH GARBER**

## Climbing the Rigging

We were to begin our sail training. Everyone had to climb up and over the second platforms on the fore and main masts, one hundred feet above the deck. We were divided into groups of students, teachers, and crew, assigned to one of the two forward masts. I was in the group assigned to the main mast. Our rigger, a young guy with blond hair that fell in his face, reviewed how to climb, where to grasp, how to look up. He said, "If you get scared, don't look down."

I drifted to the end of the line, so I could watch. One by one, students mounted the starboard rail, grabbed the shrouds, and climbed in a long angle until they reached the first platform. Then they kept going, this time straight up, climbing the ratlines parallel to the mast up to the second platform. They clambered onto the second platform, moved carefully around to the other side, and descended back to the first platform, and then down to the railing where they'd jump down onto the deck. It didn't look impossible.

It was one thing to watch them climb but another thing to realize I was going to the second platform.

My hands shook. I was light-headed. I can't do this. But the line was moving forward, fewer and fewer students were still on deck, while the early climbers had returned to the deck already. I stood at the end of the line, inched toward the railing, only a few students ahead of me. My hands were numb and cold as I stepped forward; two students were left ahead of me. One climbed up and over the rail. The rigger gave him a hand, made sure his feet were secure before he commenced to climb.

It was like a dream I couldn't escape. I wasn't a sailor, I was the school librarian. But we all had to go aloft, and I was next. I stepped up and pulled myself around the rail and grasped the cables. The rigger said, "Enjoy the climb. I'm following you up." The metal rung dug across the width of my sneakered feet. Glancing up to the web of lines, I panted, my hands shook, but I grabbed on and climbed, trembling as I mounted the long triangle. I made it to the first platform. I sat on the metal platform bolted to the mast, and took a big breath. I'd made it this far, but I was too afraid to look around. The rigger said, "Good job. Time to keep going. I'll be right behind you."

I put my foot in the first rung, and then the next, climbing the straight ladder of ropes parallel with the massive main mast. These rungs were short and sagged a little with each step. I chanted aloud to myself, "I can do this. I can do this." I climbed steadily until the second platform. A crewman above leaned over the edge and gave directions. "Reach your hands up one at a time, hold onto these shrouds and pull yourself up onto the platform." That's when I realized I had to lean my whole body out over wide-open empty space, holding on only with my hands. I froze and whimpered, "I can't do this."

The rigger on the rungs below me called up. "You okay? Climb up and over. You can do it."

I cried. "I can't." No one could save me.

The crew member above looked down over the platform and asked pleasantly, "Want a hand up?"

I looked up at his weathered face, and my voice shook. "I can't do this."

He reached out his hand and said, "Put your hand right here" with such certainty that my hand rose and grasped on. His strong, warm voice compelled my other hand to reach for the next handhold. His voice willed me upward. The rigger below guided my feet to each new foothold until I pulled myself up onto the second platform. I clamped my arms around the mast, sickened by its slow sway. I couldn't stop shaking.

I glanced up at the kind crewman. He talked to me gently, but I could hardly hear what he said. The older man promised me the two of them would stay with me until I was ready to descend. I glanced down. Students on the deck

moved toward the foredeck for dinner. Late afternoon light over the harbor turned pink, then lavender out over the sea, a winter sunset. "We will get you down safely," they promised. They sounded so calm, but fear choked me. The kind man reassured me. "One of us will climb down ahead of you and one of us after you. We will guide your hands and feet."

Trembling, I peeled my hands off the mast to stand. I grasped on to the metal shrouds. My mind said, I can't, I can't, but I was supported by these two crewmen who contained my fear with their certainty. One said, "I am going down ahead of you." The other said, "I will follow you."

I extended my foot over the void. Nothing except one hundred feet of air under my foot. Then a hand guided my foot to a rung, and held my foot there. I sent my other foot down over the void, but my hands were screaming, I can't hold on, I can't do this, but the kind man's voice said, "I am holding your hands, I will guide them to the next handhold."

My body shook but he guided me. I went down rung by rung, holding on to the metal shrouds. I descended until I reached the first platform. My legs shook a little, but I breathed, and then I kept going, down from the first platform to the ladder of metal bars. I was closer and closer to the deck with every step. ●

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***ELIZABETH GARBER IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF IMPLOSION: A MEMOIR OF AN ARCHITECT'S DAUGHTER, THREE COLLECTIONS OF POETRY, AND HAS PUBLISHED ESSAYS AND POEMS IN NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS. SHE HAS MAINTAINED A PRIVATE PRACTICE AS AN ACUPUNCTURIST FOR OVER 35 YEARS IN MID-COAST MAINE, WHERE SHE RAISED HER FAMILY. VISIT HER AT WWW.ELIZABETHGARBER.COM.***



### About the Publisher

Toad Hall Editions is a new small press located in Midcoast Maine, co-founded by Amy Tingle, Liz Kalloch, and Maya Stein (pictured below.) Launched around a kitchen table in Northport in March 2021, Toad Hall Editions aims to make meaningful contributions to the field of literature by publishing works that live in the liminal spaces, that defy categorization, or that struggle for visibility. Toad Hall Editions publishes and supports the work of women and gender-diverse writers. "We launched Toad Hall Editions," says Creative Director Amy Tingle, "because we want to publish potent and thought-provoking work, and because we are committed to creating and deepening community. For us, this means dedicating more space to voices and stories that for too long have lived in the margins." For more information about Toad Hall Editions, visit [www.toadhalleditions.ink](http://www.toadhalleditions.ink).





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# JUDY RIPLEY

BY DR. MONIKA BISSELL, MCHP PRESIDENT,  
JULIE BRANAGAN, DEAN OF MEDICAL IMAGING,  
DANIELLE BROWN, MEDICAL IMAGING CLINICAL COORDINATOR,  
& DR. SARAH HARRADON, ASSISTANT DEAN OF MEDICAL IMAGING

We all have that one teacher in our lives who we know has moved mountains and changed numerous lives for the better; for us, that teacher is Judy Ripley, Dean of Medical Imaging at Maine College of Health Professions in Lewiston. A homegrown Mainer, Judy was brought up in the beautiful Androscoggin county town of Livermore Falls. Staying close to home, Judy made her way to Lewiston to complete her post-secondary education at the Central Maine Medical Center School of Radiologic Technology (now Maine College of Health Professions), the oldest medical imaging program in the state. Upon graduation, she accepted a job at the school as an instructor, quickly advancing to Program Director and, ultimately, Dean of Medical Imaging. In Judy's 40+ year career as an educator, she has graduated over 500 radiologic technologists. She has also shepherded the development of Maine's only Sonography, Computed Tomography, Mammography, and Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging programs.

Judy's impact on the general health and welfare of the state of Maine cannot be overstated. Because of her expertise, wisdom, and dedication, Judy's students have gained the skills to become proficient radiologic technologists. These medical imaging technologists, in turn, have supported patients and their families during times of challenge and joy. Presume that each of Judy's students enjoys a 35-year career in medical imaging, works a 36-hour weekly schedule for 45 weeks each year, and supports ten patients per shift. Conservatively, Judy has been indirectly responsible for 7.875 million imaging procedures in Maine! That's profound, admirable, and something to be celebrated. Judy is an unsung health-care legend, and we are eternally grateful for her quiet yet massive impact.

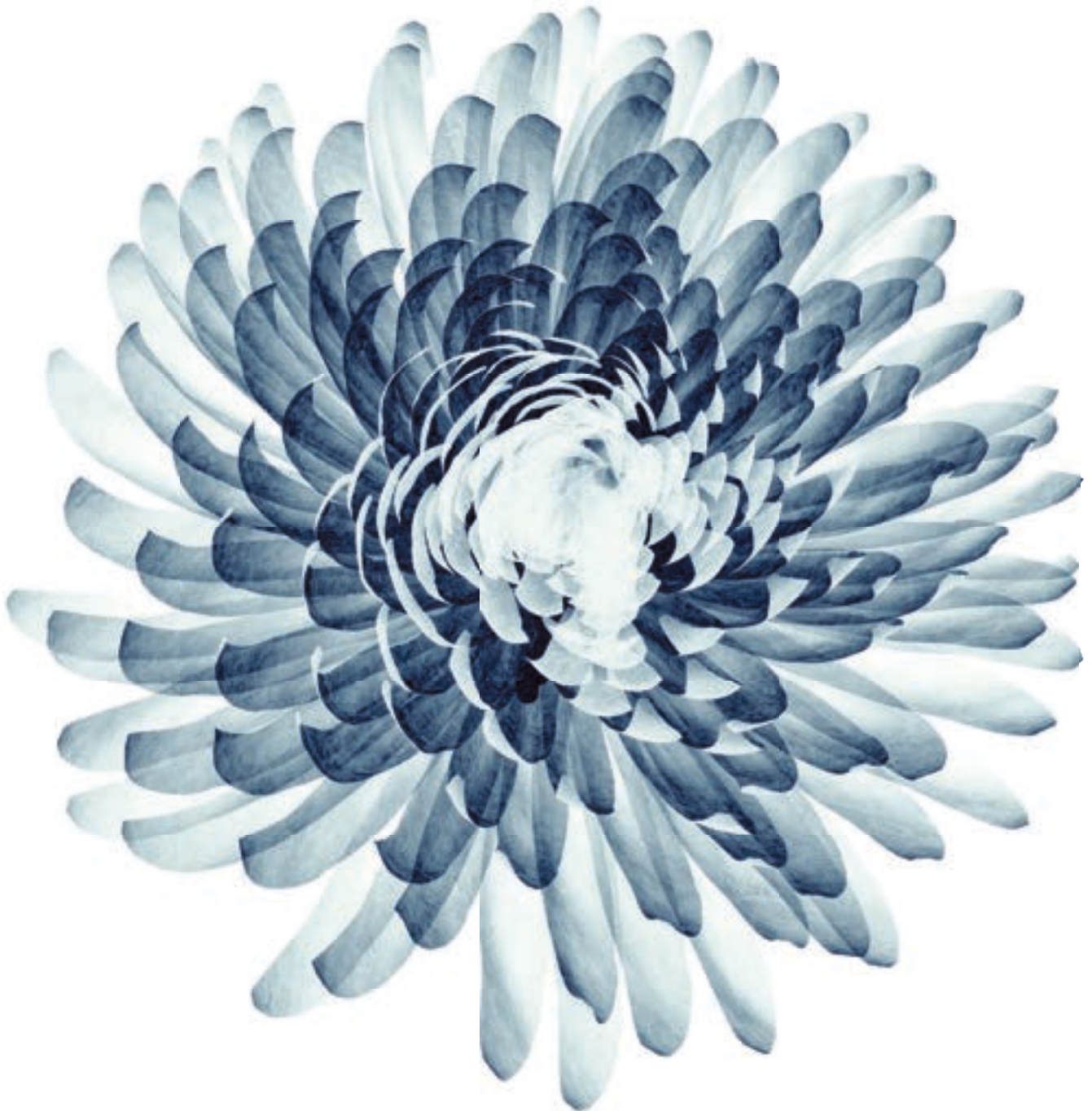
Judy's advocacy has always extended far beyond the classroom. On top of her constant promotion of student

leadership and development, she has also unwaveringly supported the established radiologic technologists of Maine. In addition to Judy's contribution to medical imaging education, she has been an incredible asset to the Maine Society of Radiologic Technologists (MSRT). A professional society for radiologic technologists in Maine, the MSRT promotes high standards for care and quality of medical imaging in Maine. Judy has belonged to the MSRT her entire radiology career, holding positions such as president, committee member, and chair.

Judy has decided to retire from her full-time Dean role effective this fall and spend time with her new granddaughter, Charlotte. We wish her all the great things that life has to offer. Thank you, Judy, for sharing your knowledge, wisdom, and expertise and for being such a bright light in the medical and educational communities. ●



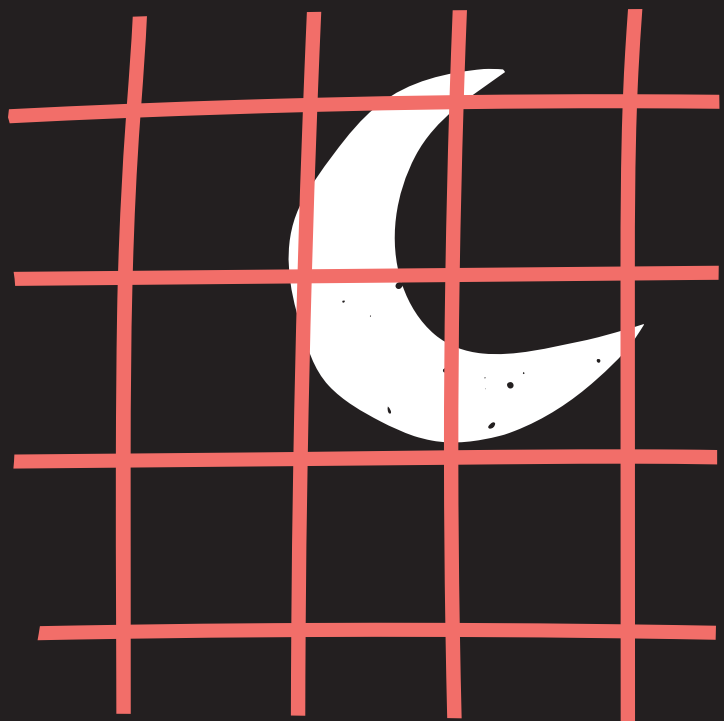
**Have you ever had an X-ray taken in Maine?  
If so, chances are your technologist was  
taught by Judy Ripley.**



# THE BODY ISSUE







WHOLE  
BODY  
HEALTH  
AND

WELLNESS



# YOGA FOR EVERY BODY

BY SARAH HOLMAN



In Western culture, the term 'yoga' generally refers to a type of posture-based Hatha yoga. This is just one of many forms of yoga practiced around the world, but it tends to be what we picture when yoga is mentioned. "Westernized yoga has sold this image of a white, thin, able-bodied woman wearing expensive yoga clothing doing a really advanced pose on the top of a mountain," says Jess Fairclough, yoga instructor, Reiki practitioner, and doula. "Yoga is for anyone with a body and breath."

When Jess went to her very first yoga class over fifteen years ago, she was excited. She envisioned finding a zen experience and connecting with her body. As a woman who lives in a bigger body, she expected to be larger than some of the other people there, and that didn't bother her. Once she got there, though, she found it difficult to safely do the postures. The class was meant to be for all levels of experience, but the instructor was clearly teaching to the most advanced. For those who couldn't get into the pose, the instructor offered a lower expression of the posture. "As a person in a bigger body I have always felt like I needed to prove my worth," Jess says. "There was no way I was doing the lower option!"

The instructor didn't offer much explanation of the options either, or give encouragement and reinforcement that all variations of a pose are beneficial. As a result, Jess spent a lot of time checking her reflection in the mirror and observing how other students looked in a shape (another term for a yoga posture). "I felt shame, frustration, and anger towards my body," she says.

Despite her less-than-ideal introduction to yoga, Jess went to the class again. She had a different teacher but a similar experience. After the class, Jess chatted with another student who was also an instructor. The student explained the anatomy of yoga and that all the poses don't need to look the same on all bodies. The information helped, but Jess didn't go back to yoga for several years.

When she did go back, Jess joined a class called "Yoga for All Bodies" taught by Katie Beane-Lewis at Bridge Studio in South Portland. It was a very different experience. First of all, Katie looked like Jess. "She is also a woman in a bigger body, and so I felt safe and comfortable being taught by her," Jess explains. Katie offered options for all the postures, which helped accommodate Jess's body and where she was early in her practice. Katie also explained the reason for each posture, so Jess understood the goal of each shape, not just what the pose was supposed to look like. "I loved it so much I began recruiting everyone I knew to take the class," Jess says.

Eventually, Katie approached Jess and suggested she join the Yoga Teacher Training Katie was co-teaching. At first Jess laughed at the idea, and then she decided to do it. At the time, she wasn't planning to teach, but she thought the class would be a good way to learn more about yoga. "It was one of the hardest and most life-changing experiences I've had," Jess says.

During the training, Jess learned about the subtle body and chakras, which are energy points in the body. She grew up with a mother who was very into energy work, crystals, and herbs, and as she moved through her yoga training, Jess felt drawn to learning more about Reiki, a form of energy healing. She began sessions with a practitioner in Portland and went on to take Level 1 training with Katie, who is also a Reiki Master. Since then, Jess has become a Level 2 Reiki practitioner and plans to pursue her Master Level next year. She uses her Reiki and yoga experience in her doula practice as well. "I don't even see them as separate jobs," Jess says. "I hold an energetic space for folks. Being a calm, grounded, and supportive energy is part of all I do."

Jess began her Yoga Teacher Training the same month she was laid off from her corporate job. She had spent 20 years working in Human Resources with a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for most of her career. It ended up being





**"WE DON'T  
ALWAYS  
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POSITIVE  
ABOUT OUR  
BODIES...  
BODIES DO  
NOT NEED TO  
BE LABELED  
GOOD OR  
BAD."**

a blessing from the universe, Jess says, because it allowed her to continue her social justice work in a different way. During her training, Katie had mentioned Sea Change Yoga, a non-profit that provides trauma-informed yoga to underserved and marginalized populations. "I knew my goal would be to become a teacher with them," Jess says. As a practicing doula and newly-certified yoga instructor, Sea Change Yoga was the perfect fit for her personal and professional goals. Jess hoped to teach yoga at Southern Maine Re-entry Center and the Maine Correctional Center and to provide doula services to pregnant residents at MCC. She has been with Sea Change Yoga for almost four years now.

One of the founding principles of Sea Change Yoga is the belief that everyone deserves yoga. Trauma-informed yoga creates a safe, empowering environment and promotes choice so students can emotionally, physically, and spiritually engage in a way that meets their individual needs. It also considers the variety of lived experiences and cultures of its students. According to the Sea Change Yoga

website ([seachangeyoga.org](http://seachangeyoga.org)), "We modify the elements of traditional yoga to facilitate mindfulness, maximize tolerance, build empowerment, and cultivate a more positive relationship to one's body." The goals of the program are to reduce stress and anxiety and support the addiction recovery process, and to help break the cycle of substance abuse and incarceration.

"I teach with a trauma informed approach whether I am teaching through Sea Change Yoga or a community class," Jess says. "All people have trauma and all people deserve to feel safe, connected, seen, and have choice." When Jess teaches, she doesn't walk around the class or offer physical assists. These common practices can feel intimidating to some students. She also uses language that is invitational, gives clear explanations, and reminds students they are always in control of their practices and their bodies.

Currently, Jess teaches at Spurwink's Adult Residential Treatment Program, which provides integrated residential treatment to adults with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, and at South-

ern Maine Re-entry Center (SMRC). She always starts her classes by checking in with her students before transitioning into postures. Jess asks how everyone is feeling physically and emotionally and finds out if anything new or big is going on for them since she saw them last. "I take this information and use it to guide the class and any readings I share," she says. Jess also makes sure every part of the class is an invitation to participate. Students control the degree of sensation and whether or not they want to do a pose or opt out. "If they want to lay on the mat and rest, that is yoga!" she says.

Often people who have experienced trauma have also lost their sense of agency or connection to their bodies and may have traditionally silenced feelings with substances. Jess invites them to notice what they're feeling and listen to their bodies without judgment, and then respond to that information with love and kindness. "One of the residents I work with shared that they are just now learning their body and who they are," Jess says. Yoga is an opportunity for students to reconnect with their bodies and emotions, and Jess's goal is to make the class accessible and understandable rather than complex and choreographed. She likes to offer explanations for each pose, why it might be helpful, and how to do it 'off the mat', like when residents are in their rooms. "I love hearing residents share when they used yoga off the mat [to work through] a difficult time," Jess says.

In all her work, Jess is passionate about providing body affirming yoga to all people and spreading the word that yoga is for every body. Although the term 'body positive' is used often to describe this philosophy, Jess has moved away from that phrase. "We don't always need to feel positive about our bodies," she says. "Maybe we can just be in our body, as it shows up that day, and work with what our bodies need in that moment."



One way Jess is helping spread the message of inclusive yoga is by teaching a course at the University of Southern Maine. This fall will be her fourth year presenting Body Affirming Yoga as part of the school's Feminism in Yoga class. When she teaches, she offers many options for each posture to make sure everyone can find something that works. She starts at the entry point of the pose and offers options for more sensation, as opposed to starting at the most challenging expression of the pose and then making it easier for those who can't achieve it. "I explain that it's less about how the shape looks and more about how it feels," Jess says. She also reminds students that how their bodies feel today may be very different from yesterday or tomorrow, and that's okay. "Yoga is a personal experience," Jess says. "A union with mind, body, and spirit."

Working with people of every size, shape, color, and gender has helped Jess become clear about her mission. Awareness and education are critical, she believes, in allowing people to make informed choices about their bodies. "I want to help people remember their power and intuition," she says. "I want to remind them that they are good and worthy and deserving, and that health and wellness is their birthright." ●

*JESS FAIRCLOUGH IS AN OWNER AND DOULA AT PORTLAND DOULA CO, A REIKI PRACTITIONER, AND TEACHES YOGA AT ROSEMONT WELLNESS CENTER. YOU CAN FIND HER ONLINE AT [JESSFAIRCLOUGHRADICALHEALING.COM](http://JESSFAIRCLOUGHRADICALHEALING.COM)*

# Cultivating Well-Being Through Therapeutic Horticulture

BY COLLEEN E. GRIFFIN AND LAURA SIMONDS-RUMPF

Cultivating Well-Being is a mental health and wellness initiative for students, staff, and faculty members of Southern Maine Community College. This program is facilitated by two registered horticultural therapists, Laura Simonds-Rumpf and Colleen E. Griffin.

Horticultural therapy (HT) is an ancient practice, yet an emerging profession in the state of Maine. HT employs gardening and other plant-rich activities to produce a non-judgmental environment of emotional comfort and social ease. It is often utilized to help reach goals and objectives of a wellness program or a case management plan.

Cultivating Well-Being provides individuals with stress reducing tools needed in the daily grind of life. An added benefit to the program, participants learn how to successfully grow plants and as a result, consume more fresh fruit and vegetables, improving their diet as well as their emotional and physical well-being. We also put emphasis on the vocational aspects of gardening, such as propagation, germination, weeding, watering, and harvesting techniques. Growing hydroponic greens in the greenhouse is popular among the program participants. This activity also offers the student altruistic opportunity as the harvested greens are donated to the Captain's Cupboard, the on-campus food pantry.

Laura recently moved back to Maine, her home state, after conducting horticultural therapy for those living with dementia, developmental challenges, and brain injury in Seattle, Washington. Colleen, also a Mainer, has experience working

with special needs children and adults in educational/vocational programs and conducted HT programming for Dempsey Center in Lewiston. We were both at a point where we were ready to start a new HT endeavor and decided to collaborate. We have similar approaches to HT and agree on what this program should provide participants. After a bit of research, we concluded that a mental health and wellness program for college students was where we wanted to start.

We chose Southern Maine Community College because it has a thriving horticulture program, and the campus serves not only traditional students but a wide range of individuals. Colleen had gone through the horticulture program in 2015 - 17 and knew the Chair of the Horticulture Department, Cheryl Rich has an interest in horticultural therapy as a career option for students. We have received amazing support at SMCC. Everyone from student services to the horticulture faculty and maintenance department have been more than willing to work with us as we grow Cultivating Well-Being on campus.

Our program offers two 90-minute sessions weekly, typically in the greenhouse. We will offer three on campus "community events" this semester, Fall 2022. These events take place in a larger classroom or public space to accommodate more people. The community events will include, creating succulent mini gardens, a botanical dye activity, and Kokedama-a form of Japanese bonsai.

At the end of the spring 2022 semester we surveyed all program participants. 62% stated their overall stress level was reduced by attending our sessions. 50% found they had developed a new



self-care habit and over 87% said they found benefit from social connection during sessions.

We also noticed some significant changes in the participants over the course of the sessions. One student contacted us saying they suffered from extreme social anxiety and was hoping our sessions would help. At the first session this student was very withdrawn, not really speaking to anyone else. The student continued to attend sessions regularly and toward the end of the semester, they not only interacted easily with other participants but would also take the lead in helping someone who might be struggling with an activity. It was very rewarding to see this behavioral change.

In another instance, we were meeting with one of the on-campus counselors, who mentioned a comment from one of their students, who had attended at least one Cultivating Well-Being session. This student expressed how happy they had been to see the diversity within the participant group and noticed that people were generally happy to be there. These are examples of the effectiveness

of bringing people together with plants for the specific purpose of improving quality of life.

Conducting Cultivating Well-Being on the campus of SMCC serves not only the students, staff, and faculty members. It does have a broader reach. Today's students are tomorrow's health care providers, first responders, engineers, and electricians. These students will be entering into the fields of environmental science, education, sustainability, among other fields. We all need these individuals to be successful. Not only here at SMCC but within the communities where the students live and for the future of the state of Maine. ●

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HORTICULTURAL THERAPY VISIT: THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION AT [WWW.AHTA.ORG](http://WWW.AHTA.ORG) OR NORTHEAST HORTICULTURAL THERAPY NETWORK AT [WWW.NEHORTICULTURALTHERAPY.NET](http://WWW.NEHORTICULTURALTHERAPY.NET) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AT SMCC PLEASE EMAIL [COLLEEN\\_GRIFFIN@MSN.COM](mailto:COLLEEN_GRIFFIN@MSN.COM) OR VISIT [WWW.ISRHORTICULTURALTHERAPY.COM](http://WWW.ISRHORTICULTURALTHERAPY.COM)*



### WELLNESS WALK ON CAMPUS

Cultivating Well-Being also offers a Wellness Walk for Rest and Restoration, using the meandering pathway along the shoreline at the edge of campus. This is open to the public and accessible to all abilities. Six QR codes are attached to the fence line, each offering a different prompt for reflection. Using a smartphone, walkers are invited to pause, sense the surrounding beauty of Casco Bay and to look within themselves. Special attention is given to stimulating all five senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing. In the coming weeks, we will be adding poetry created by SMCC students.

### THE SCIENCE BEHIND HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Caring for plants, either houseplants or an outdoor garden, provides interaction with the healing powers of nature. As humans we have an inherent need to be in the presence of nature. When we place ourselves in a natural environment, several physiological changes take place. Our breathing slows and regulates—we breathe easier. Our blood pressure lowers, and clarity of mind occurs. These subtle changes move us out of a fight or flight state and into a rest and restore state. Due to the pandemic many have been stuck in a chronic fight or flight state, which can produce stress-related illness, like anxiety attacks, insomnia, and depression.

The focus of Cultivating Well-Being is rooted in stress reduction and self-care awareness. Being a student is stressful at the best of times. Being a student during a global pandemic can quickly become overwhelming. This trend is evident as we see, across the nation a higher-than-normal percentage of dropouts in college and university programs. The necessity to avoid social contact imposed by the pandemic has also heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness. Cultivating Well-Being strives to build community by engaging participants in communal activity, meeting participants' ability and comfort level as they are. The intention of our program is to make the student aware of stress triggers and provide tools to manage stress with healthy behaviors, like breathing exercises and using the wellness walk.

# Pharmacogenomics



**A NEW WAY TO PERSONALIZE THE JOURNEY OF  
FINDING THE RIGHT MEDICATION BASED ON GENETICS**

**BY EILEEN LEVESQUE**



Whether you are new to or are experienced in dealing with mental health challenges, the process of finding an effective treatment can be puzzling, dynamic, and often a very time-consuming enterprise. You may talk about your challenges with friends and family who have experienced similar afflictions. They may share with you the names of medications that helped them feel healthy again, but no two people are the same and medications are not a “one-size-fits-all” solution. From a genetic standpoint, we are more alike than one may think. We humans share over 99% identical genetic information. However, that remaining small percentage of variation is what makes us unique in ways such as personality, appearance, disease risk as well as how we respond to drugs in our body.

As a pharmacist, I’ve always known that a medication can work well for one person, but may be toxic to the next person (even at the same dose), and just completely ineffective to yet a third person. Certainly, there are tools that prescribers have used for years to predict drug response, such as age, height, weight, kidney or liver function, etc. But innovation has provided major advances in drug response predictability. The Human Genome Project was completed in 2003. From this project, medical professionals have garnered a wealth of new information and we are now able to optimize patient outcomes as we expand our understanding of how best to work with a patient’s own genetic make-up. Examining an individual’s genetic variations can help clinicians tell, in advance, if a patient is likely to experience drug build-up in their body (due to slow metabolism of drug), low levels of drug in the body (due to faster metabolism of the drug), as well as the likelihood of allergic reaction. This science, called Pharmacogenomics or PGx for short, has added precision to the process of drug selection and there is established guidance for over 300 drugs, thus far.

Contrary to popular belief, most people who are newly experiencing mental health challenges do not immediately seek relief through medication therapy. Women are particularly prone to waiting it out. While time and alternative therapies can be helpful in many cases, still too many of us wait an extended time to seek medical attention. A recent nationwide survey from Myriad Genetics, Inc released in April 2022 showed 51% of women diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression waited at least a year to seek medical attention, and many never even pursued treatment.

This impacts wellness over the long term. When we have reached the end of our own attempts to make things better and have come to the realization that we may need prescription medication, there is often still a long road ahead to find the right medication which is effective without burdensome side effects. Most medications prescribed for depression and anxiety today require a four to six-week trial before the drug is deemed a success or failure. (Of course, if side effects limit the tolerability, your doctor may stop the medication sooner.) Then, on to the next drug trial for another four to six weeks! Time progresses, and it often may take months (sometimes years) of clinical trial and error before the right medication is found. A patient’s relationships, livelihood, and quality of life in general may deteriorate during that time. This prescription odyssey can often be shortened when PGx tests are used to help rule out medications unlikely to work for a patient, or likely to build up in the body and cause unpleasant side effects.

This is not to say that PGx testing guarantees the first medication you try will be “the one.” As mentioned, there are many other factors that may affect drug breakdown or accumulation in the body such as height, weight, kidney/liver function, smoking, alcohol consumption, age, etc. However, PGx is quickly emerging as a vital tool to help pharmacists and physicians predict medication outcomes more accurately by predicting drug metabolism, decreasing the risk of serious side effects, and reducing trial and error prescribing. There are currently guidelines established for predicting drug-gene interactions in the clinical areas of psychiatry, oncology, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disease, diabetes, ADHD, and pain management. The guidelines are written and updated by the Clinical Pharmacogenomics Implementation Consortium (CPIC), managed by Stanford University and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

As pharmacogenomic studies continue to increase clinical evidence and the cost of testing continues to decrease, expect this innovative approach to become ever more mainstream, and ideally proactive (before a medication is prescribed). Until then consider exploring PGx testing if you or a loved one are struggling to find the right medication because time spent feeling healthy is priceless. ●

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FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
VISIT [BESPOKEHEALTHPARTNERS.COM](http://BESPOKEHEALTHPARTNERS.COM)



# SURVIVING BREAST CANCER

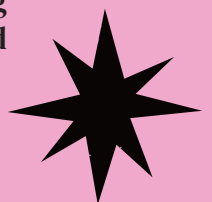
BY STEPHANIE MCLEOD-ESTEVEZ

The summer I turned 40, I had a dream that I had breast cancer. When I woke up, I discovered a lump. It was large and solid. I knew I needed to take it seriously because my mom and my aunt had been diagnosed at 43.

The day that my youngest child started kindergarten, I saw my PCP. Fortunately, because of my family's cancer history, the lump was taken seriously and the following day I had a mammogram. It was a mammogram, that turned into an ultrasound, that

turned into a biopsy. Five hours later, I returned home with an icepack tucked underneath my arm, praying that I was going to be ok.

There's this moment of deafening silence when you're told. . . you have cancer. The shock and disbelief threaten to throw you into a panic, yet you don't have the luxury of falling apart. The time to act is now. Your life's on the line and you're jumping off of the cliff, hoping that you land on solid ground.



My cancer was very aggressive, and there were concerns that it had metastasized. Having lost my mom to metastatic breast cancer when I was 26, this was my worst fear. Thankfully it hadn't, which provided some relief as I moved forward. Perhaps I could be cured.

This kicked off a nine month process of intense treatment, starting with 5 months of chemo, followed by a bilateral mastectomy, and 5 weeks of radiation. The genetic testing revealed that my BRCA2 gene was mutated, so having my ovaries removed was added to the plan. At 41, I went immediately into permanent menopause.

I went from rarely seeing the doctor to feeling like I had a new full time job of being a cancer patient. All of the sudden, my world was filled with bottles of medicine and supplements to treat the side effects. My body felt like it was public property with the amount of poking, prodding, and attention it received. Being bald meant that personal privacy was pretty much out of the question. I accepted it because I didn't want to die young.

As hard as it was, I knew I was lucky that my mom's example helped me figure out how to handle treatment. Having been one of her caregivers, I had insight into what my loved ones needed. This made me feel closer to her again, which was something I cherished. The loving kindness of family and friends helped us through the darkest times. We did what we could to still find things to make us laugh.

The post-mastectomy analysis of my tumor showed a complete pathological response to the chemo. In other words, the tumor had been killed. I moved into a category every cancer patient dreams of, NED, No Evidence of Disease. While I live with the uncertainty that the cancer could return, I knew I'd gotten the best results that I could have asked for.

When you're going through treatment, you're in full blown survival mode. You're navigating constant health challenges, health monitoring, and unexpected situations while simultaneously trying to cling to some sense of normalcy. I went from being a Zumba and yoga fanatic, to holding tight to the grocery cart so that I could make it through my weekly shopping. It was a dramatic change that made it difficult to recognize myself.

Cancer is so much more than a medical problem. It affects every aspect of your life - your body, mind, spirit, and identity. At some point in the process, it becomes clear that you've been through something traumatic. The uncertainty you thought would go away becomes indefinite, which makes it easy to feel like you're falling apart. While your treatment team is sensitive to these challenges, their expertise is in treating the cancer, not the psychological impact of it. This leaves you feeling quite vulnerable and alone.

Once again, I felt grateful that I had an advantage that most women don't. I'm a psychotherapist who specializes in grief and trauma. When my mom died, I decided to become an art therapist. During my master's program, I discovered how to use art therapy to heal emotionally from the loss of my mom and the trauma of watching her die. This saved me from the crippling sorrow that I'd been experiencing.

After my cancer diagnosis, I leaned on my expertise as an art therapist to support myself through the process. During those long months of chemo, my husband and I created several breast casts from plaster of paris. I didn't know exactly what I would do with them, but I knew it was important to follow my creative instinct and wisdom.

When treatment ended, I felt completely overwhelmed by trying to reckon with what had just hap-

pened to me and my family. I knew that if I wanted to reclaim myself and live a happy life, I would need to process my experience.

I turned to my breast casts and painted my cancer story onto them. I started with the more tangible parts, being diagnosed, going through chemo, breast surgery and radiation. As my method and awareness evolved, I explored deeper psychological themes, like facing the 4 universal fears, body image, and survivor guilt. Each cast that I painted, each poem that I wrote, validated my experience and helped me to find meaning and integrate it into my identity. I moved through the trauma and towards myself, with the gift of leaving me more emotionally free than I had been prior to cancer. These powerful sessions became the foundation for the art therapy interventions that I now share with the cancer community.

I've written a book, Beautiful Boobs, which takes women step-by-step through the emotional healing process. This October, I'm launching a bi-monthly newsletter that will give readers access to excerpts from the book, tips on accessing your creativity, and prompts to get you started while I work on finding a publisher. You can sign up today by visiting the books website [www.beautiful-boobsthebook.com](http://www.beautiful-boobsthebook.com). ●



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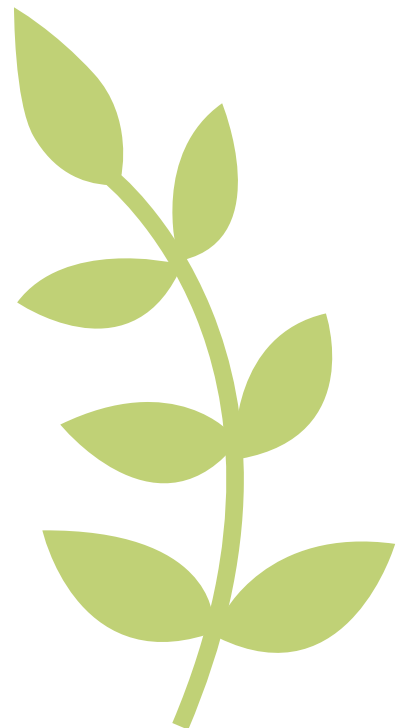
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# MENTAL HEALTH

## maximizing mind-body wellness

BY SARAH MACLAUGHLIN, LSW

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The first thing to understand about the mind-body connection is that it's a two-way street. Your mind influences your body, of course, but your body also affects your mind. This is a key place to begin because it's easy to forget (or not fully appreciate) how much of the mind-body connection is a back-and-forth conversation. There are numerous ways to gain influence in both directions so you can maximize overall well-being.

Top-down communication from mind to body is the mode we typically consider first. Many people identify strongly with their brains—their thoughts, words, and self-concept—a starting point that brings to mind the unattributed quote, “Don’t believe everything you think.” This is a popular sentiment because it’s easy to categorize the self in this manner. It feels logical. But the body, and the emotions and sensations that bridge it with the mind, are vital as well. More on that shortly, because first, there are ways to initiate wellness in your head and achieve top-down communication from mind to body.

For one: mantras. You can pick something catchy and let it roll around in your mind like an ear worm. For example, “I am healthy and strong,” or, “All will be well.” Or use sticky notes to post them on mirrors around your home. They can have a positive effect. Another avenue is written gratitudes and intentions. These practices seem to work best when used regularly, but can also be leaned on during rough circumstances. When life looks dismal, try writing out twice as many things you feel grateful for. A list of one hundred is a great solution for a particularly bad day. Additionally, guided meditations and visualizations are potent ways to send messages to your whole being. Try one of the free-of-charge selections at Insight Timer or Calm.com (there are subscription-based options as well).

What about bottom-up communication from body to mind? Of course, as noted, it’s almost always a collaboration between the two, but several modalities that originate in the body can also increase well-being. Yoga has become mainstream, and is a reliable means to communicate centered, peacefulness from your body to your brain. There are videos on YouTube if getting to an actual class is too daunting. Other easy-to-implement practices are breathwork—even simple four-count breathing can be quite powerful—and tapping, a modality that seems to hack your nervous system into bypassing its own anxiety (again, YouTube is a great resource). Brain Gym is a system of simple exercises that use crossing the midline to magically settle the stress response and increase emotional regulation. Find more information at BrainGym.com. Keep in mind the perhaps obvious choices we make each day with regard to nutrition, media intake, physical exercise, time in nature, affection with other humans, and sleep hygiene—all factors that can impact “feel-good” hormones like dopamine, endorphin, oxytocin, and serotonin.

Lastly, when you’ve tried everything you can think of on your own, there are a variety of practitioners and therapies to assist with mind-body wellness. Some people find acupuncture, massage therapy, osteopathy, or chiropractic care soothing. If none of those are a good fit, there are various other somatic (body-based) practices—Pilates, biofeedback, neuro linguistic feedback (NLP), tai chi, or chi gong—there is even a “stretch lab” and a float therapy center in Greater Portland you can try. ●

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SARAH MACLAUGHLIN IS A SOCIAL WORKER AND AUTHOR; HER MOST RECENT BOOK IS RAISING HUMANS WITH HEART: NOT A HOW-TO MANUAL.

# CAREER ADVICE

## new ventures

Passion plus preparation can make (almost) any career change possible.

BY JOHN WILPERS

---

Being a special education teacher and a park ranger are not exactly the best prerequisites for becoming the owner of a bakery.

But when you've burned out on both careers, and you look around your town and don't see many opportunities, pursuing your passion can look pretty good, with one big caveat: You must be realistic enough to get professional help.

So that's what Waterville's Stephanie LaCroix did.

It had been Stephanie's dream to own a bakery, and so when she was looking for what to do next, her husband Roland encouraged her to follow that dream.

They bought the last fire substation in Waterville in 2013 and began to convert it to a bakery. More importantly, they knew what they lacked (business knowledge), so they reached out to the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) of Maine and to New Ventures Maine.

Maine SBDC Business Advisor Rose Creps walked Stephanie through such things as the pricing and production costs for baked goods, and how to use these costs to develop a breakeven analysis. With that information, they created a business plan and began focusing on making realistic financial projections.

Together they worked on bookkeeping systems, hiring employees, and many other tasks as the opening date approached.

Stephanie also attended a New Ventures Maine (NVM) Business Basics class, and then applied for and was accepted into the Venturing Forth business planning course.

New Ventures Maine is a 40-year-old non-

profit dedicated to helping people all over the state venture in new directions by offering tuition-free programs for career, business, and financial education.

Their mission is to "help Maine people succeed in the changing economy and achieve economic security for themselves and their families."

Their slogan: "You can. We help."

Stephanie says she is a success story for NVM: "I knew I needed help with becoming an entrepreneur," she said in an NVM blog post. "Venturing Forth was a very helpful experience — I learned a lot and received encouragement and support from my classmates, facilitator and guest speakers. Working with New Ventures Maine convinced me that this idea of mine was a real possibility!"

Her dream was not just to own a bakery but also to contribute in some small way to the revitalization of the local economy. "I wanted to create a business that made people feel valued, acknowledged, and respected—a true neighborhood cornerstone," she said.

Engine 5 Bakehouse opened in June of 2018 and, even with a six-week-long hiatus immediately after the arrival of Covid, it's been an unbridled success.

Beyond the business side of things, Stephanie is also honoring the legacy of firefighters, including her husband's family, with displays about firefighting. Roland's father, also Roland, served as captain at Engine 5, and his grandfather, Lucien, was the chief. The station closed in 1980 due to budget cuts.

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Stephanie has made the building's history as a firehouse a central part of her business, and even named her business The Engine 5 Bakehouse.

LaCroix's father-in-law's retirement ax hangs on the wall above his retirement helmet, along with old photographs, fire alarms, and even a chariot-like hose cart firefighters pulled to the fire in the old days.

Stephanie told NVM that her biggest challenge has been balancing her personal life with the business. "The pandemic actually helped me in this regard, because closing for a while forced me to take a break and reassess." She closed the bakery for six weeks at the end of March, 2020. When she reopened, she established a new schedule that continues to work better for the business and for her. ●

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*IF YOU ARE CONTEMPLATING A CAREER CHANGE OR STARTING A BUSINESS, YOU CAN FIND HELP AT SBDC (MAINESBDC.ORG) AND AT NEW VENTURES MAINE (NEWVENTURESMAINE.ORG).*

Care Connection

# LIVE-IN HOME CARE

## FCP Live-In Makes Home Care Affordable For Ellen's Mom In South Portland, Maine!

Ellen's mother, Georgia, enjoyed her independence until she suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. Fortunately, Georgia recovered from the stroke, but her declining health prevented her from taking care of herself.

Knowing that Georgia wanted to stay in her home in South Portland, Maine, Ellen arranged to have around-the-clock care for her mother. Multiple caregivers came to help Georgia each day. But, the costs of hourly home care started to add up quickly and jeopardized Georgia's ability to have daily care and continue to live in her home.

"Twenty-four-hour care was astronomically expensive," Ellen explained. "When I realized how much it was, I said, 'Oh no, we can't afford this!' I thought we would have to move her somewhere."

But then, Ellen talked to a social worker at Northern Light Hospital who told her about FCP Live-In, a leader in the home care industry that specializes in live-in care.

Although Ellen had not heard of FCP Live-In, she contacted the company and discussed her mom's needs with Care Coordinator Constance McFarland. Af-

ter McFarland explained the services FCP Live-In offers, Ellen was relieved to discover the company's solutions for her and her mother.

"We found care that was more affordable," Ellen said. "It was comparable cost to going to a nursing home, but better."

Unlike a nursing home, FCP Live-In has one live-in caregiver focused solely on the client's needs. Moreover, residents in long-term care facilities must follow schedules set by the residence.

*"We found care that was more affordable," Ellen said about FCP Live-In. "It was comparable cost to going to a nursing home, but better."*

-Ellen

With a live-in caregiver, older adults can set their own schedules and not wait for a caregiver to help them get out of bed or with bathing, dressing, or toileting.

"What FCP Live-In clients appreciate is receiving care when they need it—right in their own home," says Constance McFarland.

"I receive great satisfaction from helping our clients remain in their own home," Constance said. "It is also rewarding to provide peace of mind for the adult children of our clients. They know their loved ones are receiving the care they need safely and securely in

their home."

Ellen says her mother has some dementia and does not always understand "who the stranger is staying in her home." Nonetheless, Ellen said her mom's live-in caregiver, who has been with her for four months, has "risen to the occasion of providing good care and keeping her safe and at home." Additionally, having one caregiver provides consistency, which is vital for people with dementia.

"She was seeing three different faces every day, and now it is one steady person," Ellen said. "She may not remember her caregiver's name, but she recognizes the caregiver's face."

Ellen says it took some time to find a caregiver who was the right fit for her mother, who can be "challenging" at times.

"She is able to take my mom in stride and handle her moods," Ellen said. "She is also into cooking and giving my mom nutritious food. She just has good energy and laughs a lot. Our current caregiver has been great."

Of all the services FCP Live-In provides its clients, there is one benefit Georgia enjoys the most.

"I think she has appreciated being able to stay in place and not have to leave her home," Ellen said.

Since 1997, FCP Live-In has provided affordable live-in caregiving services for seniors and their families throughout New England.

**To learn more about FCP Live-In home care, call 866-830-4443 or visit [www.liveinhomecare.com](http://www.liveinhomecare.com) today!**

# FINANCIAL ADVICE

## failing with perfection

BY **CHELSIE L. CRANE**

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I heard a song on the way to work the other day by an artist named Jax. The lyrics went, “I know Victoria’s secret and girl, you wouldn’t believe she’s an old man who lives in Ohio making money off of girls like me, cashing in on body issues. . . I know Victoria’s secret, she was made up by a dude”. When I heard this song, it was surprising the rollercoaster of emotions it sent through me. First, I laughed out loud, then a little bit of sadness crept in. How much of life as a young woman had I compared myself to, the unrealistic facade of Victoria Secret’s marketing? Finally, anger washed over me. Why are women constantly objectified and critiqued by society? Our bodies, needs, and values are often treated like they belong on the commodities exchange instead of in our control. Our power is given to others, to be capitalized on. Then we are left with the impression that it’s all our fault and it is because we just can’t get our act together. We start to believe we are failing to take control because we are not working hard enough, we are not smart enough, or we are simply not being grateful for what we have. This is especially true when it comes to financial literacy and independence in women. And I’m calling b.s.

Much like Victoria’s secret, the financial lens we are currently seeing life through is one that has been created by men, for men. When this realization hits, it’s not surprising that many women are struggling to gain a firm footing in their wealth accumulation. It’s like showing up to play a basketball game in full football gear. You are ready to kick ass and take names, but it’s the wrong game.

I have found that this is often this disconnect between traditional financial planning and the real-world experiences that women go through that leaves them feeling as though we are missing a piece to the puzzle. The generic and vague advice that can be found online and in popular financial books, look at financial education as if the person lives in a perfect world. Unfortunately, for wom-

en we are not privileged to be existing in this neat and tidy life. It is messy, unpredictable, and busy. What is demanded of us does not fit inside a cookie cutter mold. So, don’t strive for perfection, try for progress.

Financial health, much like regular health, cannot be looked at in all or nothing way, perfection is not what we aim to strive for. Think about it, if you wake up one morning after not going to the gym or doing much exercise your whole life and then decide “I am going to run 15 miles every day for the rest of my life”, you are setting yourself up for burn out and honestly, failure. Real change takes lots of small changes over time, done consistently. What sometimes is the most difficult concept to grasp is that progress is not always a straight line, either. Setbacks are going to happen. You will not always be able to stick to your budget. Some months you may have to save less ....and that is OKAY! The important thing to remember is that these bumps in the road are temporary, and that the recovery from the setbacks are what makes the difference between being successful and surrender. Don’t give up on your financial health because you had a bad couple of days, weeks, months, or even years.

Keep working towards your goals and try your hardest not to compare yourself to others. If you need to seek help and personalized advice, that’s okay. Don’t get trapped in the assumption that only people with a large amount of wealth need help with financial planning, this idea is simply not true. Most importantly, do me a favor and don’t measure yourself against a system that wasn’t designed for you. ●

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*CHELSIE L. CRANE IS AN INVESTMENT ADVISOR REPRESENTATIVE WITH CLEAR PATH FINANCIAL SERVICES, A MEMBER OF ADVISORY SERVICES NETWORK, LLC.*

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**IF I HAD A MILLION DOLLARS.....**

**coping & healing**

**Stephanie McLeod-Estevez  
is a breast cancer survivor.  
She is also an art therapist.  
This is her Big Dream.**

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Stephanie's Big Dream is that the standard of care changes so that right from the beginning of your cancer treatment process, a therapist or mental health expert is a part of your team. This would help you through the initial crisis phase of being diagnosed, by assisting you in answering your questions and understanding your diagnosis, while also enhancing your coping strategies, self advocacy, and access to resources that will support you and your family. Having therapists as a part of your team removes a barrier of care that all cancer patients can benefit from, while normalizing the mental and emotional impact of cancer, ultimately improving your resiliency and decreasing you and your loved one's stress.

As a therapist and cancer survivor herself, Stephanie understands how difficult it is to heal from the emotional impact of cancer. When cancer treatment ended, she realized that it was up to her to figure out how to heal emotionally from cancer, otherwise she would've been held hostage by the unprocessed trauma. Stephanie's mission is to raise awareness, increase self compassion and understanding, and share the unique art therapy tools that she's developed with the cancer community so that they can thrive.

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TO SIGN UP FOR HER NEWSLETTER, LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BOOK, OR GET INVOLVED, PLEASE VISIT [CREATIVE-TRANSFORMATIONS.COM](http://CREATIVE-TRANSFORMATIONS.COM) OR [BEAUTIFULBOOBSTHEBOOK.COM](http://BEAUTIFULBOOBSTHEBOOK.COM) OR EMAIL STEPHANIE AT [CREATIVETRANSFORMATIONSLLC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CREATIVETRANSFORMATIONSLLC@GMAIL.COM).



# Dessert Apple Nachos

Have a sweet craving? Need something crunchy to munch on after dinner? Look no further than these dessert nachos topped with warm peanut butter, crunchy coconut and creamy yogurt.

SERVES 4

## Ingredients:

- 2 Apples
- 1/2 cup Nature's Promise® Creamy Peanut Butter
- 1/4 cup Hannaford Dried Cranberries
- 1/4 cup Unsweetened Coconut Flakes
- 1/4 cup Planters® Lightly Salted Nuts, chopped
- 1 (5.3 oz.) container Two Good® Vanilla Greek Yogurt
- McCormick® Ground Cinnamon, to garnish

## Directions:

1. Cut apples into thin wedges and arrange on a large plate.
2. Place peanut butter in a microwave-safe dish and microwave for 15 to 30 seconds, until runny enough to drizzle with a spoon.
3. Drizzle peanut butter over apple wedges, then top with dried cranberries, coconut and chopped nuts.
4. Add dollops of vanilla Greek yogurt on top and lightly sprinkle cinnamon over nachos. Enjoy!

Source: Recipe adapted from and photo courtesy of [envyapple.com](http://envyapple.com)



## Nutritional Information:

Amount per serving:  
Calories 370;  
Fat 24 g; Saturated Fat 6 g;  
Cholesterol 0 mg;  
Sodium 65 mg;  
Carbohydrate 29 g;  
Fiber 4 g; Sugar 17 g;  
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**Augusta, Maine–November,  
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