

The DAILY NEWS

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Brain clinic opens in Bloomer



Penny Grinnell, shown at her rural Sheridan clinic, uses craniosacral therapy to treat pain, fatigue, stress and other disorders. — Daily News/Joe Veselenak

By Elisabeth Waldon - Daily News staff writer

BLOOMER TOWNSHIP — Penny Grinnell's got rhythm.

Spinal tissue rhythm, that is.

Confused?

"People don't really understand it," Grinnell readily admits of the new clinic she recently opened at 7451 E. Carson City Road (M-57) just west of Carson City.

The 45-year-old registered nurse has worked at the Carson City Hospital for the past 18 years. After two years of dreaming and planning, she started CranioSacral Therapy, a clinic to treat head, neck and back pain.

Craniosacral therapy is a method of alternative medicine used to assess and enhance the patient's functioning by accessing the primary respiratory mechanism — the central nervous system's membranes and spinal fluid.

Grinnell said the practice helps treat chronic headaches, neck and back pain, stress-related discomfort, chronic fatigue, motor coordinator difficulties, eye problems and central nervous system and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

She works with Dr. Wesley Lockhart in the emergency room at Carson City Hospital. He inspired her to open the clinic.

"He kind of took me under his wing and he said, 'I think you'd be good at this,'" Grinnell said. "I've always been a hands-on, feel-type person. I listen to the body. I listen to what the rhythm's telling me and where to start."

Lockhart works in Carson City on Tuesdays, has a private practice in Lansing and formerly taught at Michigan State University. He uses craniosacral therapy in his practice.

"I think it'll be a real advantage to this area to have somebody doing the craniosacral therapy," Lockhart said. "A lot of the people who benefit from it tell me they feel it's a very deep tissue but indirect treatment. There's rarely any pain associated with it. It usually just helps relieve things that are deep inside."

Grinnell's therapy is all about the right kind of pressure.

"If you put a nickel in your hand, that's about the amount of pressure I use," she said.

Grinnell checks for rhythm in a client's tissue to tell her where the problem lies. Using her hands, she starts with a client's legs and works her way up to the tailbone and then the head. She holds a client's head in her hands and listens to the rhythm of spinal fluid to determine whether it's off-balance.

"I work with the rhythm," she said. "I overexaggerate the rhythm I'm picking up in your body.

"I just feel like this was something I was meant to do," Grinnell said. "I really think people need to try it with an open mind and be open to new experiences. It's very open and if people don't understand it they can come out and experience it."

Grinnell is studying with the Upledger Institute in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., which was founded by John Upledger, an osteopathic physician whose research showed support for the concept of cranial bone movement and cranial rhythm.

Call Grinnell at (810) 537-1671 for more information.

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