



Health & Medicine

#2004:061

Therapeutic Massages - a Step beyond "Feeling good" into The Benefits of Holistic Health

By Cindy Bertram

When Chicago based businesswoman and entrepreneur Martha Schevers launched her company in 1998 - Martha's Vineyard, Inc. - specializing in massage therapy, it was a direct result of her first-hand experiences with and strong belief in the benefits of holistic health.

After graduating from Michigan State University and working in the field of sales, a personal health crisis led Martha to study holistic health, the benefits of nutrition, and the "mind-body connection." Holistic health alternatives resolved her health problems and she became interested in the area of "Cranial Sacral Therapy." Dr. Upledger, a leading expert in "Cranial Sacral Therapy," had actually done research at Michigan State University, Martha's alma mater. Eventually Martha worked for the Upledger Institute in Florida as a workshop facilitator, and later began studying massage therapy to learn "Cranial Sacral Therapy" techniques.

Martha's passion for the alternative health field and benefits of therapeutic massages led to a career change; she relocated to Chicago and began working at the Lake Shore Athletic Club and the Urban Oasis as a massage therapist. In 1998, with the encouragement of clients as well as friends, she formed Martha's Vineyard, Inc. and established business relationships with The Tremont Hotel in Chicago as well as their sister hotel, The Raphael Chicago which enabled her to provide an exceptional, high quality massage therapy presence in the city of Chicago.



Currently, Martha's Vineyard, Inc. now has business relationships with 6 hotels in the Chicago area (several within the Starwood Hotel Corporation), and her staff includes over 18 professionally trained massage therapists, all licensed by the city of Chicago and all are insured. They do continuing education classes, and many have certifications.

Regardless of whether her massage therapists only see a client once or numerous times, Martha emphasizes that her staff uses a clinical approach - the therapist assesses the client's needs, sets up treatment plans, and achieves client's goals. The clients' needs are priority - Martha comments, "We are professionals. Not only do we help the clients understand the benefits of the therapeutic massage, but we get client feedback in order to achieve the best goals for them."

The massage therapists at Martha's Vineyard, Inc. specialize in a variety of treatment modalities that include Deep Tissue, Swedish, Sports Massage, Reflexology, and Cranial Sacral Therapy. Biographies of each therapist are available for clients to review, and a teamwork philosophy is embraced - during each consultation, the massage therapist will adjust treatments based on the client's recommendations and listen to their needs.

Overall benefits of massage therapy are widespread. In addition to providing stress relief, Martha comments, "Massage therapy gives a person an overall sense of well-being. There is a definite therapeutic value to having a regular massage - as this area becomes more mainstream, using massage therapy is another health alternative that can be easily combined with the benefits of regular exercise and healthful diets and eating."

Building relationships with hotels in Chicago as well as Rosemont has been extremely successful. Martha mentions that her company provides business people and travelers access to high quality massage therapy within the hotel industry, and it has an extremely loyal client base - her business continues to expand. Also, local residents of the Chicago area are welcome to take advantage of the therapeutic massage treatments offered by Martha's Vineyard, Inc. at these hotel locations.

Although the field of massage therapy is physically demanding, Martha has no regrets - she



embraces and values the alternative health field, which helped her personally, but also thoroughly enjoys the added rewards of being able to educate people on how to take better care of themselves.

Martha's Vineyard, Inc. 312 - 943 - 4070

*Hotels that currently offer
Martha's Vineyard, Inc. include*

- The Tremont Hotel - guests outside the hotel can enjoy use of the sauna/cardiovascular equipment; to schedule an appointment, Call 312-545-4280
- The Raphael Chicago
- Double Tree Guest Suites Chicago
- Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers -use of health club facility is available to Guests outside the hotel
- W Chicago City Center
- Westin O'Hare (Rosemont)