



# The Carnelian Center News letter

The mission of the Carnelian Center is to provide the community with affordable holistic health care while nurturing the individual through art, education and cultural integration. Our vision creates healing in a beautiful, peaceful setting with respect for the ecosystem and the preciousness of water.

## Community health and Education

Over the years I have been involved in the Carnelian Center. (About 13 years?! ) we have had many different discussions regarding the concept of health and how we see our role in promoting that concept in the community. There is of course the health of the individual as it relates to the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects. There is also the larger spectrum of community health. The ways we support each other, affect one another, inspire each other. What makes Dixon, Dixon. This is the aspect of health where I would like to open up some discussion.

Of course when speaking of the Carnelian Center, it is here to serve a larger service area, including all of the Rio Embudo watershed. For the purpose of this discussion I am only talking about Dixon.

We are blessed with a beautiful, vibrant community. There is so much here in the way of cultural richness and community support. So many people here really put themselves into the community to make it what it is.

...And the land, what a spectacular place with a vibrant acequia system running through it. The water brings the land to life and the people here give it its flavor.

We have so many positives as a healthy community but I am thinking now of what is lacking. As far as community health what are the places that may have been set by the way side, slipped through the cracks. There are remaining cultural barriers, small town disputes, drug abuse and of course the huge issue of elder care or home care.

Being a mother and having spent my teen years in this community my thoughts turn most often to this aspect of community health. Are we as a community doing what we need to do for our children and youth?

In my generation a large portion of my peers moved away from the area permanently. Those of us who stayed or returned after college are the exceptions. How



do we create a community that our children want to be a part of? I acknowledge here that this is a cultural phenomenon. Children grow up and move on in this modern world and there are many positives to this. We are, after all, a global community. I also acknowledge that we as a community are big time commuters. Our jobs for the most part are in places like Los Alamos, Taos and Santa Fe where the earning potential is. In many ways this is a blessing that enables us to live in this beautiful community.

Many of our children go to school outside the community or are bussed to Peñasco or Española. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It depends on the individual and how we deal with the commute. What it takes from our lives. Many families have moved away for this reason.

Our own public school, though often threatened with closure by the district, offers kindergarten through 6th grade right here. The preschoolers and their parents are left without local options complicating family life. Junior high and high schoolers can get on a bus to commute or find other options that involve long hours on the road every week. There are many more options than there were for my generation including various quality public charter school options if you make the commute.

When people as parents are in the middle of having toddlers or children the issue of schools and child care is right there in their faces. If you as a community member are past this stage it just goes out of your mind; It is not a currently relevant topic. If you are that high schooler now being bussed to Española every day it is a different story. If you are the young mother trying to make a go of life in Dixon with two preschool age kids, needing to work to pay rent it is a stressor to say the least.

So many families with children have moved away not because this wouldn't be a good community to raise kids in but because we lack quality educational options outside the grade school level. I feel we owe it to the community and the vitality that families add to it to have a discussion on this topic. For me my girls are nearing the end of school and I could just let the subject of junior high and high school be someone else's issue but I feel we owe it to future children as well as present ones to have this discussion. It would be good if our youngsters felt so

valued and included here that they pictured themselves returning to this community as adults.

I am of course a busy person and don't have time to take on a project so large as creating viable school options for head start and upper grades in Dixon. As the Carnelian Center we do have the space to provide for such discussions and I would like to host a first discussion on this subject on 10<sup>th</sup> of December from 1:00 to 3:30.

I have so many ideas, from partial online curriculum for High Schoolers, apprenticeships, interaction between upper grades and preschool, ways to start a charter school. Please join me to brainstorm on these important issues. Lluvia Lawyer-Aby

## Honey & Postpartum Care



When you are planning a home or birth center birth you get a list of supplies from your midwife with essential items that should be acquired to be on-hand for the labor and immediate time after birth. In most of New Mexico this list includes honey as an essential tool to have on hand. As a midwife I am accustomed to the strange look I get from many clients as they read through the otherwise self-explanatory list and arrive at this item. 'what's the honey for?' they invariably ask.

Honey is a vital medicine during the birth process. At Breath of My Heart Birthplace we use it in several ways. The simplest is as a quick source of energy for difficult or long labors where eating is unpleasant or impossible. Honey melts in the mouth and absorbs immediately even before it is swallowed, providing quick energy. Many times I have given a honey stick between fierce pushes just before a baby is born.

We also mix honey with the Chinese herbal formula Yunnan Baiyao to speed absorption of this anti-hemorrhagic medicine that reduces bleeding and encourages the delivery of the placenta immediately after the birth of the baby. But perhaps the most important use of honey in the birth kit is after birth when vaginal tears both large and small can be treated with direct topical application.

'its acidity increases the release of oxygen from hemoglobin thereby making the wound environment less favorable for the activity of destructive proteases, and the high osmolarity of honey draws fluid out of the wound bed to create an outflow of lymph as occurs with negative pressure wound therapy.' (Molan, 2015) Much research is being conducted on the healing properties of honey in wound care and topical infections. Although widely used within the midwifery community for lacerations resulting from birth, there is little research

on this practical application in the mainstream. As midwives, we like to avoid suturing unless tissue approximation is poor (the wound doesn't go together well) or if there is uncontrolled bleeding from the laceration. Suturing causes additional trauma to the wound area, increases risk of infection and carries a risk of allergic reaction in some cases to the suture material itself. However in most laceration cases, tissue fits together well and bleeding is not of concern. In these cases, honey is the perfect accompaniment to the physiologic healing process. It provides a clean wound coating and promotes tissue granulation quickly, reducing healing time. It warms to body temperature, reducing a sense of 'stickiness' that might be expected, and washes off easily with water. Honey also mixes well with herbs that promote healing or prevent infection, serving as a good carrier of such agents. We see that the application of honey reduces discomfort and often speeds initial healing time from five days to three.

Although we recommend this medicine to all clients who work with our practice, we are aware that in many cases it is difficult for people to obtain good quality, raw honey and that there is much misleading marketing of poor quality, cooked honey that is not suitable for wound care. For this reason, we have begun to provide small quantities of raw, unfiltered honey sourced from Zia Queen Bee Co of Truchas along with our postpartum herb basket that we provide for clients. Although an essential part of the birth supply list, only a small quantity of good honey is needed for most cases and the leftovers can be enjoyed by the whole family. Through education and distribution to our clients we hope to do our part in promoting honey as an important natural resource around the time of birth and help people to gain awareness of its benefits in postpartum recovery.

Jessica Frechette-Gutfreund LM, CPM is Midwife and director of Breath of My Heart Birthplace in Española NM. Check us out at [www.breathofmyheart.org](http://www.breathofmyheart.org)



**My neighbor state, New Mexico has always had a tender spot in my heart. Having lived and farmed in Colorado most of my adult life, New Mexico represents a refuge of beauty, spiritual renewal, and warmth in the depths of winter, found in her warmer climate south of here. Her red rock canyons, abundant hot springs, clear starry skies, and beautiful mountains are food for the soul and full of indigenous wisdom from her centuries of stewardship by Native elders. So, when the Biodynamic Association chose Santa Fe, New Mexico as the site for their upcoming**

national conference, I was happy to know the conference would be so close to home and excited to meet fellow farmers there.

One fellow farmer, Melinda Bateman, of Morning Star Farm in Arroyo Seco, just outside of Taos, was already well known to me. Melinda has joined Biodynamic workshops here in Western Colorado for a few years, making preparations at Peace and Plenty Farm and attending several Enzo Nastati seminars in Paonia, Co. Melinda has a small market farm and serves the Taos community with biodynamically produced food from her 7000 foot elevation. It is a challenging growing environment with a short but intense season. Melinda has created harmony with the forces of nature there with a large season extending greenhouse, crops appropriate to the season, and well-intentioned and regular biodynamic practices on her land. Her luscious garlic is to die for and her greens have graced the tables of Taos restaurants for over 20 years. On a small but productive piece of land, Melinda farms mostly as a sole proprietor and apprentices interns in the intricacies of high desert farming biodynamically. This is a very unique skill set here in the US and one that will hopefully develop more fully as a result of the influence of the Biodynamic Association National conference in November.

As a sole proprietor, Melinda has been active in seeking the fellowship of other biodynamic practitioners here in Colorado but due to the distances between communities in New Mexico, she has related the difficulty in establishing real community there. Similarly, when the Biodynamic Association began its exploration of biodynamic practitioners in the surrounding community to support the conference with local knowledge, there were but a few to meet. A new opportunity for community building was born.

Community building is an activity within the biodynamic farming community that is essential to biodynamic practitioners and consumers, and reflects the origins of the movement. Unlike the sheer numbers of organic farmers in our communities these days with multitudes of web based blogs, supportive publications, grower cooperatives, and many market farms, the growth of biodynamic agriculture in farming communities has been slower to be realized. There are a number of factors for this slow but steady increase in awareness.

One factor is the high level of integrity in farming practices required of a farmer in biodynamic agriculture. A friend of mine, Brook LeVan of Sustainable Settings in Carbondale, Co put it this way.



“ Biodynamic agriculture is beyond organic. The standards we are adhering to for Demeter Certification of our farm are tough but fair. The standards require us to make long lasting changes in how we view and support our farm organism. But the change in me as a farmer is the most profound. I know now that we are farming with angels.”

That statement has always had a profound impact upon me as a farmer because it calls into awareness the life force beyond our fertility inputs, NPK measurements, and percent organic matter. This life force knits that of human beings with the life force of the mineral, plant, and animal world(s) in sometimes incomprehensible but nonetheless powerful ways. The recognition and acknowledgement of these forces of life requires a discipline of observation and faith in the farmer developing over time and in communion with other farmers and our communities who share these insights and values. The result of developing these awareness skills is a profound respect and strong nurturing behaviors for our farms and communities. We protect our farms, plant communities, animals, air, and water so that our food can be of highest quality to support further human development of these faculties of awareness.

Another factor responsible for the slow but steady grass roots growth of biodynamic agriculture is the difficult but necessary development of a common language between communities of knowledge. Development of a language between the conventional scientific community and the unconventional qualitative, life force based biodynamic agricultural community that can articulate outcomes of biodynamic practices requires awareness and communication. This kind of awareness and communication happens best on the ground and within human interaction. Outlined within these two factors is the case for active community building by biodynamic practitioners who are willing to take the time to interact and educate others about the unique gifts that biodynamic agriculture offers to the healing of our earth.

To facilitate this community building exercise, an intention was set between Melinda Bateman of Morningstar Farm, Pat Frazier board president of Josephine Porter Institute, and Robert Karp, Co-Director of the Biodynamic Association to lead a field day at Melinda's farm in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico at the beginning of this farming season. The intention of the gathering was building community and support for the creation of a local biodynamic group to further biodynamic agriculture education in the region. That region includes Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico and all surrounding communities within several hundred miles.



The Biodynamic Association and the local Western Colorado BD group promoted the gathering over 2-3 months prior. Attendance was varied and enthusiastic ranging from back yard gardeners to Biodynamic farmers; and from author Steven McFadden to experienced local BD compost maker Maggie Lee. Teachers from the Santa Fe Waldorf School, young farmers, biodynamic apprentices, and enthusiastic participants in agricultural advocacy and intentional communities from Santa Fe and surrounding communities rounded out the attendance.

The day was spent in many hands on activities from compost building and inoculation with biodynamic and homeodynamic preparations, a spray of an Enzo Nastati inspired preparation – Purifier/Harmonizer spray -over the entire farm, and group meditation circle led by Robert Karp following the sprays. In the afternoon, a discussion about next steps for solidifying the relationships and community was held, and all shared a beautiful, local meal. Solid commitments by the local group were made to continue several biodynamic community activities throughout the summer and fall leading up to the national conference. Since the gathering, there has been a meet up and preparation making activity this summer, and another is planned for late September where BD#500 and Barrel Compost will be made and sprayed at various locations in

### Carnelian Center Practitioner list

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and around Santa Fe as an intentional gesture for continued support and recognition of the awareness being cultivated for biodynamic agriculture in the Southwest Region of the US.

I hope you can join us in Santa Fe for the Biodynamic Association's National Conference where the impulse to strengthen biodynamic agriculture will continue to grow. There will be many types of educational offerings from indigenous wisdom of the Americas, to social justice and policy advocacy, to practical hands on education in applying biodynamic agriculture practices for beginners to advanced practitioners. Stop and visit us at the JPI Booth. If community building is of interest to you, a workshop held by Barefoot Farmer Jeff Poppen, Pat Frazier, Nashville area activist Hilary Higginbotham, and Jim Fullmer, executive Director of Demeter USA will outline practical steps and experiences of building community in areas of the country where strong biodynamic communities now exist. In addition, members Lloyd Nelson, Patricia Frazier, and Brook LeVan of the Western Colorado BD group will lead a hands on preparation making workshop as a full day pre conference event. Registration and description of the full conference is now available at [www.biodynamics.com](http://www.biodynamics.com) on the conference page.

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