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THE FUTURE IS HERE!

(See page 12 for more)



I'll admit, I've been feeling a bit saucy lately; slow on patience and quick to snap. It is usually followed by a pause (and often the recipient's own snappy response) as I ponder the source of my uncharacteristic reactions.

But I don't think I'm alone. Have you noticed that people appear a bit edgy these days? Many friends have experienced the same, and those in the public sector are finding it especially challenging. Lately, people just seem out of sorts.

Those in astrology will tell you we are experiencing many rarely seen planetary shifts that are contributing to our unsettled world right now. So much change is taking place around us that many are simply trying to hold on for the ride.

But no one wants to be the bad apple, so what can we do to turn saucy to sweet? Awareness is a

good place to start. Speaking openly with friends certainly helps. And too often we forget that, just as tasty fruit blossoms from well-nourished soil, our soul will blossom when given the nourishment it needs.

I realize I've become disconnected from activities that nourish my soul. It is one of the primary ingredients missing in my "sauce," and I'm working to change the recipe. Spending more time in nature, taking my shoes off to walk barefoot on the grass, waking to the sun on my face, saying "yes" to the cold plunge, scheduling creative time outside of work, having coffee with old friends, putting everything aside to fully live and breathe in the moment...

Sweet fruit starts with rich soil. Let's remember to nourish our souls—and to be good to each other.



A retreat is an intentional pause from the busyness and noise of everyday life—a sacred stepping away to reconnect with yourself on a deeper level. It's a space where you can rest, reflect, and realign with what matters most. Whether nestled in nature or created at home, a retreat offers the opportunity to quiet the mind, nurture the body and listen to the whispers of the soul.

Unlike a vacation, which often fills time with external activity, a retreat is about coming home to yourself. It invites stillness, presence and practices that support healing, clarity and growth—such as meditation, breathwork, journaling, movement or simply being.

Taking yourself on retreat is an act of self-leadership and self-love. It's a way of honoring your inner landscape, tending to what's been neglected, and returning to life with renewed energy, purpose and connection.

In a world that constantly demands more—more productivity, more connection, more noise—retreating can feel radical. But there is profound power in the pause. Taking yourself on retreat is not an escape, it's a return; a return to clarity, to simplicity, to the rhythm of your own breath and heartbeat. It is where your soul can finally exhale.

**What is a retreat, really?**

A retreat is not a vacation. It's not about checking out—it's about tuning in. It's a conscious decision to

step away from the noise and immerse yourself in stillness, self-care and soulful nourishment. It's time set aside to listen, to realign and to remember who you are beneath the layers of busyness.

**The power of a conscious environment**

The environment of a retreat is everything. Whether you are in a mountain cabin, seaside cottage, forest yurt or a quiet corner of your home, it becomes a sacred container free from distractions, toxic inputs and external pressures. You may leave behind alcohol, caffeine, sugar and processed foods—not as a punishment, but as a loving boundary—creating space for clean, vibrant nourishment that supports your body's healing and clarity.

Imagine starting your day with warm lemon water, slow intentional movement, and the sound of birds instead of notifications. A retreat space is an atmosphere that whispers "you're safe here" and allows your nervous system to soften.

**Organic movement: reclaiming your body's wisdom**

On retreat, movement becomes less about performance and more about presence. Whether it's a gentle yoga flow, a barefoot walk through the woods or spontaneous stretching beneath the stars, you begin to move in rhythm with your own energy. You're not trying to fix your body, you're listening to it. This kind of movement is deeply healing, unlocking stored tension and opening new channels for energy and insight.

*Continued on page 6*



## Stroke Care

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Earth  day  
everyday



Don't you think we need to celebrate our planet more often? I've been longing to reconnect with Mother Earth lately; to get back to my roots in an effort to feel more grounded.

When I was young, my mother took us on a cross-country camping trip in a red Volkswagen bus lovingly named "Chugaboom." It remains one of my favorite childhood memories and I am forever grateful to her for the experience.

To celebrate a milestone birthday in March this year, I wanted to camp with friends and family. Schedules didn't allow for a campground excursion, so I set up tents in the backyard enticing apprehensive guests with a pool or garden view, and saving the "beach" view (below) for my headshaking husband.

We cooked meals on the barbecue and sat around the firepit sharing stories and s'mores. It was the BEST birthday ever and an important reminder to embrace activities that nurture our soul (p.1). We can't wait to do it again.


This edition is full of pointers and practices to help fuel mind, body and soul: from the energy around us (p.8) to our own awakenings (p.11); from magical meals out (p.19) to recipes for home (p.18); from avoiding plastics (p.9) to fasting for cancer (p.11); from yoga inspired by our beautiful desert to the power of Pilates (p.22); and from doctors prescribing food as medicine (p.20) to neighbors helping neighbors (p.16).

Let's nurture Mother Earth, ourselves and those around us today, and every day.

With love and kindness,



Lauren Del Sarto  
Founder/Publisher





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[lauren@deserthealthnews.com](mailto:lauren@deserthealthnews.com) • (760) 238.0245  
  @DesertHealthNews



Lauren Del Sarto  
FOUNDER/PUBLISHER



Carlotta Rinke,  
MD, MBA  
LEAD EDITOR



Heather McKay  
GRAPHIC DESIGN  
m kaydesign.com



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May/June 2025





# MMR Booster: Facts and Recommendations

By Jeanne Perafan, RN, MSN, FNP-bc

If you have been keeping up with the news, then you have heard that there have been over 700 cases of measles across several states. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus has been spreading mostly in people who are unvaccinated.

How serious is contracting the measles? Two children have died in Texas and one adult in New Mexico. How contagious is measles? Very. As an airborne virus, it can spread when those infected breathe, sneeze or cough.

Is the measles virus here in California? Yes. The Los Angeles Public Health Department has reported five cases which appear to have come in through the Los Angeles airport.<sup>1</sup>

What are the symptoms? Measles starts in the upper respiratory tract with runny nose, cough, watery eyes and high grade fever. It is followed by a rash that appears three to five days later. The rash starts on the face then spreads to neck, trunk, arms, legs and then the feet. Fevers can reach as high as 104 degrees.

While most can recover from measles, it can lead to pneumonia, blindness, brain swelling and even death. There is no specific treatment for the disease, other than treating the symptoms and being prepared for possible complications.<sup>2</sup>

The best way to avoid the measles is with the MMR vaccine (measles-mumps-rubella). The CDC recommends all children get two doses of MMR vaccines starting with the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at four through six years of age.<sup>3</sup> Here are some interesting facts:

- If you were born prior to 1957, you do not need a booster.
- If vaccinated between 1957-1962, check with your doctor and have a titer drawn (a blood test that measures the concentration of antibodies in a sample).
- If born between 1963-1967, you need a booster as the measles vaccine at this time was considered ineffective.
- If born between 1968-1989, check with your doctor as you may or may not need the booster.
- If you were vaccinated after 1989, you do not need the booster.
- If you received two doses, your vaccines are considered effective.<sup>4</sup>

With the ongoing influx and outflux of visitors to the Coachella Valley from other states and countries, protecting yourself from illness and disease is imperative. Make sure to ask your doctor if you should get an MMR booster. Please make sure to have your child's vaccines up to date, as they are our most vulnerable population.

Jeanne Perafan is a board certified family nurse practitioner with Ruiz Family Physicians in La Quinta. She can be reached at (760) 564.9205.

References: 1) <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/health-wellness/measles-california/3651807/>; 2) <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html>; 3) <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccines/>; 4) <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304458/measles-vaccine-boosters-health>

# College Nurses Inspiring Health Care Careers Through Mentorship

By Michael Singer

Nursing students at Cal State San Bernardino's Palm Desert Campus (CSUSB) are stepping into leadership roles through a new Nursing Peer Mentoring Program designed to inspire and support local high school students interested in pursuing health care careers.

The mentorship and career guidance program is part of OneFuture Coachella Valley's Regional Healthcare Initiative to increase access to health care locally. The program is funded by the Inland Empire Regional K-16 Education Collaborative.

Program highlights include:

**Strengths-based mentorship.** Each participating high school student completes the CliftonStrengths assessment to identify their unique talents which serve as a foundation for career planning and leadership development.

**Engaging mentoring sessions.** Students take part in three structured mentoring sessions, one in-person and two via Zoom, within small cohorts of 5-10 students. Each cohort is led by a trained CSUSB nursing peer ambassador.

**Expert guidance.** Mentoring sessions are supervised by OneFuture Coachella Valley staff and CSUSB nursing faculty with health academy teachers welcome to join.

**Mentor training.** CSUSB nursing peer ambassadors undergo mentor training; their own strengths are assessed and they receive guidance on how to support mentees.

**Resource accessibility.** Participants have access to shared program materials and assessments via a digital platform.

**Career readiness.** By the end of the program, high school students will gain valuable insights into patient care, college readiness and career pathways in health care.

The program is already making an impact, with two mentoring sessions completed at Desert Mirage High School in Thermal and Cathedral City High School.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for both current nursing students and high school students interested in a career in nursing," said Justin Schneider, assistant professor, CSUSB Department of Nursing. "Nursing is a demanding profession, and admission to nursing programs is highly competitive. Through this mentorship, nursing students are developing leadership skills, while high school students gain insight into what it takes to succeed in a nursing program."

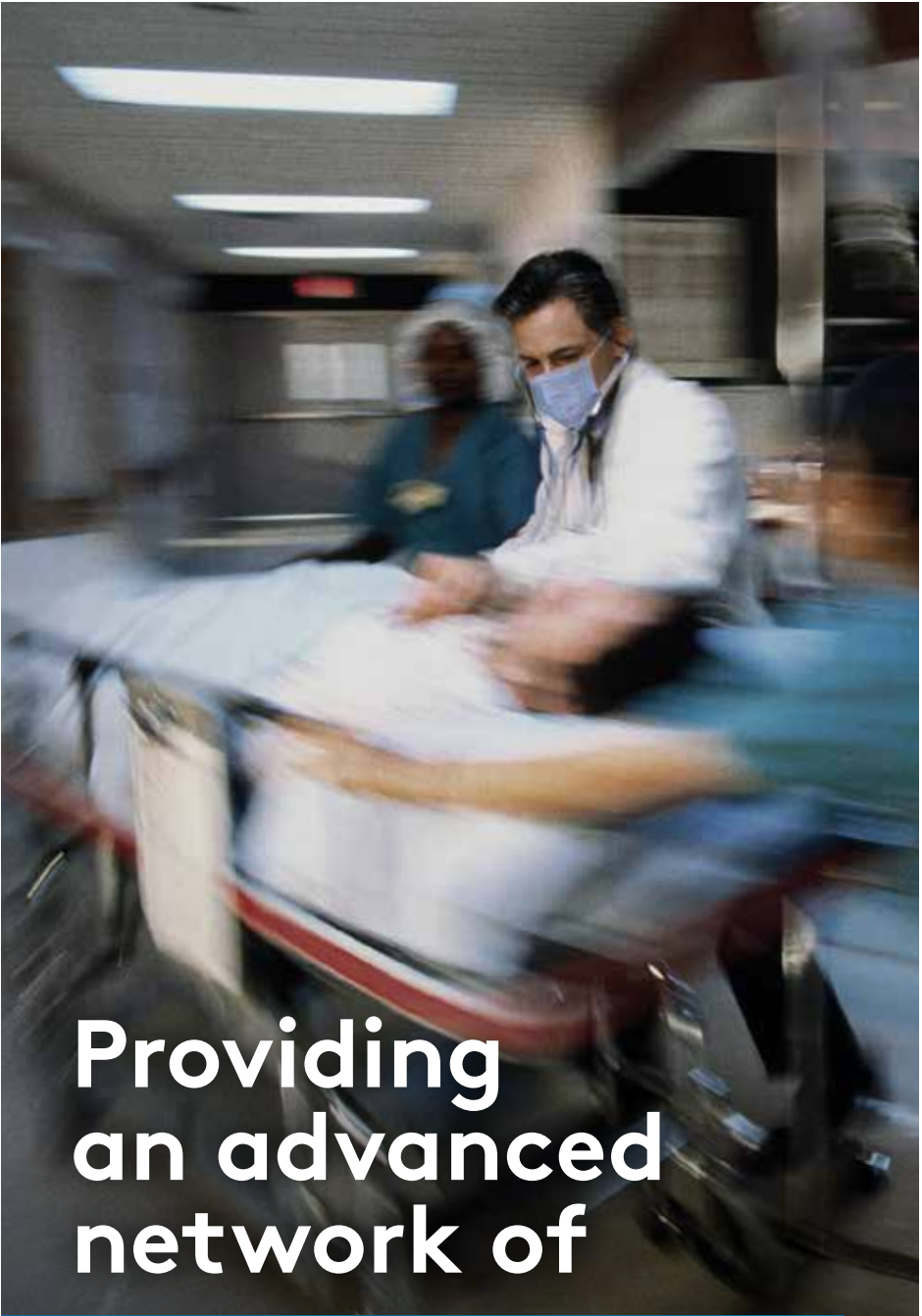
Schneider adds that it was inspiring to see their nursing students effectively leading discussions with high school students, engaging them and asking thoughtful questions. "I can't wait for the day when one of our mentees steps into my classroom as a nursing student."

In November, the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus Department of Nursing and OneFuture Coachella Valley hosted a dinner and college night to further support aspiring health care professionals. The evening offered high school students and their families the opportunity to explore the CSUSB nursing program, tour state-of-the-art labs and engage with faculty and enrolled students.

Micheal Singer is a communication specialist with CSUSB Palm Desert campus. For more information about CSUSB's nursing programs, visit [www.csusb.edu/nursing](http://www.csusb.edu/nursing).



Nursing peer ambassadors meet with students at Cathedral City High School.



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# Reflection Turns Knowledge into Wisdom

By Tracy Smith

Learning is the cornerstone of human progress, enabling us to adapt, innovate and thrive. It is about acquiring knowledge and engaging deeply with experiences, facts and concepts to draw meaningful conclusions. The true essence of learning is revealed in reflection—when we take a step back, process what we’ve encountered, and connect it to our lives and understanding of the world.

Reflection is said to be the point at which learning occurs, transforming passive learning into active understanding. We can identify patterns, grasp underlying principles and solidify our knowledge by asking probing questions. Here are some reflective questions that stimulate learning:

- What did I learn from this experience?
- How does this knowledge apply to my current situation or goals?
- What assumptions or biases did I challenge or confirm?
- How can I use this information to solve problems or make decisions?
- What emotions or perspectives emerged during this learning process?

Reflection amplifies the impact of learning by transforming raw experiences or information into meaningful insights. Here’s a closer look at how and why reflection is so powerful:

**Deepens understanding.** Reflection allows us to examine not just *what* we learned, but *why* it matters. It helps us connect new knowledge to existing beliefs or experiences, uncover patterns, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject. For example, after completing a project, reflecting on what went well and what could be improved helps solidify both successes and lessons.

**Encourages self-awareness.** Taking time to reflect fosters self-awareness by revealing how we approach challenges, process information and respond to outcomes. This awareness can highlight personal strengths on which to build, and areas for growth. For instance, reflecting on a difficult conversation might reveal biases or assumptions we didn’t notice in the moment.

**Enhances problem-solving.** By reflecting on past successes and failures, we can identify strategies that work and recognize pitfalls to avoid. This makes us more effective problem-solvers.

**Strengthens memory retention.** Reflection reinforces neural pathways in the brain, making it easier to retrieve information later. When we actively think about what we’ve learned, such as by summarizing or explaining it to someone else—we help the brain consolidate that knowledge.

**Promotes lifelong learning.** Reflection cultivates a mindset of continuous learning. It trains us to ask thoughtful questions, seek feedback and embrace challenges as opportunities to grow. This reflective habit carries over into all aspects of life, encouraging curiosity and adaptability.

**Builds emotional intelligence.** Reflecting on experiences helps us process emotions and gain perspective. For example, looking back on a stressful event can teach us how we manage pressure and prepare us to cope more effectively in the future.

Learning is a lifelong journey, fueled by curiosity and sustained by reflection. When we take time to analyze our experiences and ask the right questions, we transform mere facts into wisdom.

*Tracy Smith is an energy medicine practitioner with Blissful Release Now. Her books, Moments of Divine Inspiration and Women Who Trust are available on Amazon. For more information, visit [www.blissfulreleasenow.com](http://www.blissfulreleasenow.com) or [tracy.blissfulrelease@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.blissfulrelease@gmail.com).*



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## Real World Preparation

By Student Violet David

As a junior at Palm Desert High School, it feels like the future is approaching faster than ever, and the only thing we can truly control is how we prepare for it.

One of the most impactful ways I've been preparing is through the Health Academy, an outstanding program that has left a lasting impression on me. This isn't just a class about medical terminology or human anatomy-it's a transformative experience that builds our confidence, professionalism and readiness for life beyond high school.

One of the most valuable and unique aspects of the Health Academy is the professional interview preparation. While most high school students never receive this type of training, we're given the rare opportunity to practice the art of interviewing. Our teacher, Mr. Ron Paiz, recognized that many students across the country enter interviews unprepared, so he decided to change that by helping over 200 students learn how to present themselves with professionalism and confidence.



*Students display certificates to accompany the valuable lessons learned in mock interviews.*

The interview prep process is taken seriously. We participate in full-scale mock interviews designed to mirror real-life scenarios whether it's a job, internship or college interview. We're expected to dress professionally, carry ourselves with poise and communicate clearly. It's challenging, but the growth we experience is undeniable.

Mr. Paiz invites individuals from the community to conduct our interviews-people who work in health care, the military, and even former Health Academy students. Their feedback is not only detailed and insightful, but also incredibly encouraging. They help us understand our strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and reflect on how we present ourselves to the world.

The transformation we go through is truly powerful. Students who were once shy or unsure walk out of their interviews with confidence and clarity. We learn to speak about our goals with purpose, tackle tough questions and carry ourselves like professionals. These interviews push us out of our comfort zones and show us what we're capable of achieving.

The Health Academy doesn't just prepare students for college-it prepares us for life. It teaches us how to show up, speak up and succeed. Joining this program has been one of the best decisions I've made in high school and the skills I've gained-especially through our interview preparation-will stay with me for years to come.

*Violet David is a junior and the PDHS Health Academy Class President. For more information on OneFuture Coachella Valley and local health academies, visit [www.onefuturecv.org](http://www.onefuturecv.org)*





Desert Well-being: New Gallup Data Reveals How People are Doing in Palm Springs and Coachella

New Gallup data, conducted in collaboration with the Blue Zones Project, offers a snapshot of well-being in Palm Springs and Coachella. This research, done between October and December 2024, examines five key dimensions of well-being: career, community, social, physical and financial health, providing localized intelligence.

The data highlights positive mental health scores in Coachella, with clinical depression rates better than the national average. This suggests a resilient community, and Coachella residents report strong levels of career and social well-being. While the data also points to areas needing attention, such as financial well-being and rates of obesity and overweight residents, the strong foundation in mental and social health provides a valuable asset for future well-being improvement.

Palm Springs emerges as a leader in physical well-being as a community that actively prioritizes health and fitness. This is a significant positive aspect of the city's overall well-being profile. The data also indicates that social well-being scores are the lowest among the four cities polled (including Riverside and Banning), which means there are opportunities to foster greater social connectedness.

Additionally, the broader regional data reveals a positive trend with area employers exceeding national levels in providing healthy food options for their employees, a factor that Blue Zones Project can leverage to further promote healthy choices in both Palm Springs and Coachella.

This localized annual data, part of a larger report that includes Riverside and Banning, offers valuable insights for Blue Zones Project. By tracking well-being metrics year over year, Blue Zones Project can identify trends, measure the impact of their interventions and tailor future strategies to the specific needs of each city.

For a deeper dive into the specific Gallup well-being findings for Coachella and Palm Springs, visit [www.bluezones.com/riverside-gallup-webinar](http://www.bluezones.com/riverside-gallup-webinar).

Blue Zones Project Palm Springs Community Kickoff Event  
Thursday, May 15 • 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
The Festival Theaters Palm Springs

Hear about the community-crafted blueprint that will drive the Project over the next three years, enjoy a reception with wine and light bites, and meet the local Palm Springs team and national leaders from the Blue Zones Project. It's a chance to be part of the movement shaping a brighter future for the city's well-being.

RSVP at Eventbrite: search Blue Zones Project Palm Springs Community Kickoff  
To learn more about Blue Zones Project and sign up for the newsletter, visit us at [www.bluezonesprojectcoachella.com](http://www.bluezonesprojectcoachella.com) and [www.bluezonesprojectpalmsprings.com](http://www.bluezonesprojectpalmsprings.com).





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Nearly Half of Local Children Are Overweight or Obese

Tips for healthy growth at home

Provided by HARC



Healthy habits learned in childhood can last a lifetime.

Childhood obesity is a serious public health issue that affects millions of children across the country. Children with obesity are at higher risk for other chronic health conditions and diseases, such as asthma, bone and joint problems, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. In this article, HARC provides Coachella Valley statistics and resources to promote healthy growth in our local children.

The way to determine a child's body weight category is determined by using the body mass index (BMI). BMI is a measurement used to determine weight category, including underweight, healthy weight, overweight and obesity. BMI is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the person's square height in meters. For children and teenagers, there is an age-specific and sex-specific BMI. Childhood obesity can then be defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile, meaning that the child's BMI is greater than the BMI of 95% of children in the same age and sex.

**Coachella Valley data**

HARC's 2022 community survey indicates that 46.1% of local children aged 2 and older have a BMI that puts them in the "overweight" or "obese" category; this is roughly 25,790 children in our valley. However, when parents were asked about their perception of their child's weight, only 14.4% of parents believed their child was overweight. With so many parents unaware that their child is overweight, these parents are less likely to make changes to the child's lifestyle to support healthier development.

**How to support your child from home**

Addressing obesity starts at home and there are several ways that parents and caregivers can support a child's healthy growth. First, it is important to be aware of your child's BMI to assess potential weight issues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a Child and Teen BMI calculator available for parents to use (search BMI calculator at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/child-teen-calculator/index.html) or see link below), and any concerns should certainly be discussed with the child's pediatrician or doctor.

Regardless of the child's BMI, it is essential for children to have a healthy diet. Low-calorie foods with fruits and vegetables instead of foods with high amounts of added sugars and fats are a good start. Getting into the habit of reading labels when shopping can help cut down on foods with high sugar and carbohydrate contents. Another way to promote healthy growth is ensuring the child is drinking plenty of water while limiting high-sugar drinks.

It is also important for the child to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. The CDC recommends that children get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Parents may find a list of age-appropriate activities for a child by visiting the CDC's Physical Activity Guidelines. Lastly, it is beneficial for children to develop healthy sleeping habits to encourage healthy growth and improve the child's attention and brain functioning. Multiple studies have found that lack of sleep is associated with higher risks of weight gain and obesity.

Certainly, we want our local children to experience a childhood that is healthy and happy. Moreover, behaviors in childhood lead to long-term habits that often carry them through much of their lives. It is critical to develop healthy habits so that a healthy weight can be maintained into adulthood, leading to a long and vibrant life.

HARC is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health, wellness and quality of life in the Coachella Valley through data-driven research and evaluation. Learn more at [www.HARCdata.org](http://www.HARCdata.org).

Sources: 1) <https://harcdata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>; 2) <https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/child-teen-calculator/index.html>; 3) <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/guidelines/>

Let's Retreat

Clean eating as sacred practice

Food on retreat becomes medicine and meditation. You slow down, chew mindfully and savor the nourishment that comes from whole, vibrant, plant-rich meals. You might eat locally grown produce, drink herbal teas and cook with intention—or be lovingly served by others who honor food as a sacred act.

By removing processed foods, stimulants and alcohol, your body and mind begin to clear. Cravings dissolve. Intuition heightens. Your taste returns, not just for food, but for life itself.

Stillness, silence and soul connection

The silence you find on retreat is not empty—it's full of insight, emotion, memory and soul. In this quiet, the distractions fall away and your inner voice becomes audible. Journaling, meditating, walking in nature or simply watching the sunrise all become spiritual practices. You may meet parts of yourself you forgot existed.

Why take yourself on retreat?

You don't have to wait for an invitation or a curated group experience. You can take yourself on retreat anytime and anywhere you wish. You can choose a day, a weekend, or a full week to turn inward. You create your own rhythm, your own rituals. It's an act of radical responsibility and deep self-love to say, "I am worthy of my own time, my own attention, my own healing."

Finding a retreat for you

You don't have to spend a lot of money to reap the rewards of a sacred pause. A home retreat can work just as well as an external getaway and can teach you a lot about yourself. If you'd prefer to attend a retreat organized by others, reach out to local wellness practitioners for their recommendations, or simply search "local wellness retreats" in your desired destination and find one that resonates with you based on offerings and reviews.



Clean cuisine is at the heart of rejuvenating retreats.

Continued on page 13





# Feeling Beautiful and Well

## Day of support for cancer survivors

By Lauren Del Sarto

June is National Cancer Survivor Month and the first Tuesday (June 3) marks an opportunity for those in the beauty and wellness industries to show their support. Celebrated as Cancer Survivor Beauty and Support Day, the movement encourages businesses to offer complimentary services of their choice to all men, women and children who are cancer survivors—regardless of their type of cancer or when they were diagnosed.

With businesses in all fifty states, along with beauty salons in Canada, Mexico and Italy, the initiative was started in 2003 by Barbara Paget of Rancho Mirage. At 80 years young, Paget continues to work on her goal of making this a nationally designated day.

The idea for the volunteer movement arose from a morning show segment Paget saw over two decades ago. In response to the large number of clientele being diagnosed with cancer, a local spa decided to offer a day of complimentary beauty services to those affected. The act of kindness hit a nerve and she thought out loud, “I can do that!”



Beauty and wellness professionals can make a big difference on this special day.

Paget approached the owner of a spa she frequented who immediately agreed to the gesture of support. With only a small flyer in the spa and one at a nearby breast center, the day was filled with a waiting list. After three years, Paget decided to expand the movement, but never dreamed it would go beyond her home state of Illinois.

Today, Cancer Survivor Beauty and Support Day is supported by Great Clips®, Pivot Point International, Stand Up 2 Cancer and other national organizations, along with hundreds of small businesses across the country. To take part, businesses simply display the organization’s flyer (available on their website) in their salon, studio or clinic and contact Paget to be added to their national roster of participants.

“I do not ask any participant what they are offering,” she says. “I am simply grateful for their support to help those affected. I ask that they simply let their clients know about the day.”

Local organizations taking part include Myokinetix Functional Performance Health & Wellness, Blown El Paseo at Shear Hair Design, Lucky Boys Hair Salons, Mirela’s Spa & Salon, The Private Club Barbershop, Josef Saliba Salon and Thyme to Tease to name a few. A full list can be found at the organization’s website.

“If you know a cancer survivor in another state, reach out to them with the website information,” recommends Paget. “I encourage any cancer survivor to reach out to

*Continued on page 14*



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## Energies Around Us Can Impact the Energies Within

By Cindy Douglas

The amount of solar radiation hitting the Earth varies with the phases of the moon and appears to correlate with human behavior. Observations show an increase in 911 calls and a rise in psychotic behavior on the day of the full moon, higher suicide rates with the waning moon and peak death rates two days after the full moon. Periods of calm in the Earth's magnetic field are associated with increased sensitivities such as intuition and clairvoyance.



Every person carries a flowing stream of energy systems.

Similar to the Earth's energies, the energies of other people can affect our mental state, as indicated by statements like, "Her presence is very pleasant," "The tension in the room was palpable," "The atmosphere at the meeting was positive."

Scientific studies using electrocardiogram demonstrate that the energy generated by a person's heart affects the heart activity and brain waves of another individual, as detected by electrodes attached to the skin. This effect is most pronounced when individuals are in physical contact, but can still be observed when they are seated up to three feet apart.

Rooms and spaces can have their own energy. Think of your grandmother's kitchen. How does your body respond to the memory of that room? It may even make you smile! Consider the energy of various classrooms where you were a student, an office where you worked, a garage, a theatre or a church. Your memories attached to these locations were influenced by their energy.

You may even find yourself pulled toward specific kinds of energy and not toward others. Some people, for instance, are drawn to the energy of horses, others to dogs, cats, or tropical fish. Some people are drawn to the energy of those in need, others to the energy of homeless pets, or activities such as hiking, skiing, golfing, biking or pickleball. We feel a warmth of excitement when we think about these animals or activities, but it is actually the energy produced through the enjoyment to which we are connected.

It's important to pay attention to both our internal energy and the external energy around us. Every person carries a flowing stream of energy systems, remarkably complex, coordinated and entirely unique. Every cell, every organ, and every system of the body carries a distinguished energy.

Awareness of this complex web of internal energy emanating from our bodies and how external energies impact it is key to thriving both physically and emotionally.

*Cindy Douglas is a certified Reiki master, life coach, speaker, HeartMath Institute trainer and founder of Takota Alchemy. She also creates and facilitates retreats to unplug and reconnect to the power within. She can be reached at (619) 726.0408 or [www.takotaalchemy.com](http://www.takotaalchemy.com).*

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## Dreaming Lady Gaga

By Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

As described by Sigmund Freud, our dreams can be complex inner conversations between our id, ego and superego.<sup>1</sup> Our evening slumber is often when our inner divas, movie and rock stars appear to help us navigate situations that are hard to address in waking hours. What might a dream mean if our inner rock star is Lady Gaga?

One morning, a friend phoned. "Kat, it's Debbie. I just had the strangest dream! Lady Gaga walked into my living room with her entourage, plunked down in a chair, and said, 'We're here to take you dancing.' She was sexy in a skin-tight body suit and high-heeled boots."

"Well, what'd you do?" I asked.

"I hid in my bedroom because I felt so ugly. When Gaga stopped singing, 'You're on the right track, Baby!' I went to see if they were gone. She was sitting on the arm of the chair and said, 'We're still waiting for you.' So I went with them. I think the dream is important but makes no sense. Can you help me?"

Debbie was in treatment for bone cancer. Understandably, she felt unattractive and feared she might never play tennis, go dancing with her friends or play music as she had done before her diagnosis. Now, she spent most of her time alone.

To me, the dream made perfect sense. "If this were my dream, I would remember how I longed to sing with Lady Gaga, who is unafraid to embrace or flaunt her inner goddess and femininity. Hiding in the bedroom where you sleep is hiding in your dreams. Your inner musician and tribe have come to rescue you from loneliness by patiently waiting for you to join them in the living room, in your life. See the play on words?" I advised her to bring that dream into her waking world, to join the friends waiting for her.

Belonging to a tribe, the third level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of our most important emotional wellness states.<sup>2</sup> Lady Gaga never hides or apologizes for being herself and sings that she was Born This Way!

I asked Debbie if any of that resonated with her and she said it did. She slowly began re-engaging with life and her physical wellness improved.

Being alone is normal. However, extreme depression and loneliness can be a form of living death. If suffering an illness, it can be a side effect of medications and treatments.<sup>3</sup> Check with your doctor if this is true for you.

Fortunately, we often have inner artists who can help rescue us through our dreams. If you know a friend hiding themselves away, be their Lady Gaga. Who knows, maybe the next time you feel lonely, Lady Gaga or rapper Snoop Dogg will party in your dream living room to remind you that "you're on the right track, Baby!"

*Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos of Rancho Mirage is a survivor, author, dream expert, speaker, TV/radio host/producer and has been featured on Dr. Oz and The Doctors. Her book, *Dreams That Can Save Your Life*, is available now. Visit [www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com](http://www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com).*

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Rock star dreams could signify unrealized desires or needs.





# Tips to Avoid Micro and Nanoplastics

By Sonja Fung, ND

Plastics are a large part of our daily life for good or for worse. Plastic contamination has been a growing topic of concern for both health organizations and environmental groups globally. In 2009, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (USA) standardized sampling and defined microplastics as a fragment with size less than 5mm (333µm micrometers).

Microplastics and nanoplastics have infiltrated every part of our ecosystem including our soil, air, water and food systems, especially our seafood and even sea salt. Scientists are concerned about how microplastics affect our health. They may contain endocrine disrupting chemicals that can affect hormonal balance and have been linked to dementia, diseases of the kidney and heart, and cancers of the lung and colon.

How can we reduce the amount of microplastics entering our bodies and remove what's already built up?

### Avoid drinking or eating out of plastic

So many materials contain plastic in our everyday lives. Avoid plastic water bottles, "microwave safe" styrofoam, plastic containers, wrappers, utensils and straws. Plastic wrap, ice trays, plastic-coated paper cups, and melamine plates and cups should not be used during food preparation and ingestion. Microwaving plastic food containers can release more than two billion nanoplastics and four million microplastics per square centimeter within only three minutes of microwave heating. Use glass, ceramic, cast iron and stainless steel instead when cooking or heating up food or drink.



Wooden cutting boards and utensils are a simple place to start.

### Retire your plastic cutting boards and plastic cooking utensils

Using a polypropylene chopping board (common white plastic boards) equates to consuming 49.5 grams of microplastics while using a polyethylene chopping board equates to 7.4-50.7 grams. Switch to wood or sustainable bamboo cutting boards instead.

### Stop using mesh or "silk" tea bags

Steeping a single plastic tea bag at brewing temperature (203 degrees Fahrenheit) releases more than 11 billion microplastics and 3 billion nanoplastics into each cup. It's best to use a glass and metal French press or stainless-steel mesh tea strainer instead when brewing your next cup.

### Check your personal care products

Avoid phthalates, bisphenol A and other plastics in lotions, soaps, sunscreens, detergents, deodorants, perfumes and cleaners. There are helpful apps like EWG SkinDeep, ThinkDirty and CodeCheck to make cleaner choices.

### Update your laundry habits

Laundry is one of the top sources of microplastic pollution. Wash full loads, use less detergent, wash in cold water, filter your wash water if possible, hang your clothing to dry and avoid using dryer sheets to help reduce wastewater contamination.

### Boil and filter your tap water

A 2024 Chinese study found that boiling water, letting it cool and then filtering it, can remove over 90% of micro and nano plastics in water. Keeping well hydrated also helps your body flush out toxins daily.

### Eat plenty of fiber

Not only is fiber great for mopping up excess cholesterol in your body, it also helps bind microplastics as well. Shoot for 25-35 grams daily.

### Work up a sweat

Sweating via exercise, sauna, etc. mobilizes toxins through the largest organ in your body, your skin! Not only do you detox microplastics, but you also detox solvents, heavy metals and mold toxins as well.

Remember, the best way to get rid of nano and microplastics in your body is to reduce consumption in the first place. Reduction doesn't have to be 100 percent; mindful consumption leads to better overall health and sustainability for our body and for our planet.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor with a focus on integrative cancer care and PRP regenerative joint injections at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information, call (760) 771.5970 or visit [www.livewellclinic.org](http://www.livewellclinic.org).

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# Housing and Health

## Building stronger communities in the Coachella Valley

Provided by Habitat for Humanity

Access to safe, stable and affordable housing is a fundamental pillar of good health. In the Coachella Valley, housing availability remains a challenge, but many local organizations and community leaders are working toward solutions. By expanding access to homeownership and improving living conditions, these efforts are helping to create a healthier future for residents.

**Progress and challenges in housing affordability**

Housing affordability is a pressing issue in many communities, and the Coachella Valley is no exception. Home prices have risen significantly, making it increasingly difficult for many residents to achieve homeownership. According to the Desert Housing Report by Palm Springs Regional Association of Realtors (PSRAR) and the California Desert Association of Realtors (CDAR), the median sale price for a detached home reached \$700,000 as of January 2025. The Housing Affordability Index (HAI) measures whether a typical household earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home, with a score of 100 meaning the household has exactly the income needed. A 2023 report from the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) indicates that the HAI in the Coachella Valley is 46, well below the state and national averages.



Habitat for Humanity volunteers help build a home in India.

Thankfully, dedicated efforts are underway to expand housing opportunities. Local organizations, policymakers and housing advocates are working to increase housing inventory and supporting housing policies that help make homeownership more attainable. Through these efforts, communities can create more pathways to stable and affordable housing.

**How housing impacts health and well-being**

Housing is about much more than just a place to live. Inadequate living environments, overcrowding and financial stress can contribute to both physical and mental health issues. Recognizing this, the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control classify housing as a key social determinant of health.

For families facing housing insecurity, the stress of frequent moves or high housing costs can take a toll. Children growing up in unstable housing situations may experience higher absenteeism from school, increased stress, and long-term health effects. Addressing housing challenges is not just about affordability, it is a vital step toward improving quality of life and long-term health outcomes.

**Creating long-term housing solutions and stability**

Across the Coachella Valley, organizations are expanding access to affordable housing through home construction, renovation programs and financial education. One organization making an impact is Habitat for Humanity of the Coachella Valley, which helps individuals and families achieve homeownership through affordable housing programs. Habitat's model not only reduces financial strain for families but also creates a foundation for long-term stability. Homebuyers contribute "sweat equity" volunteering in Habitat programs and projects, fostering a sense of ownership and community investment.



Volunteers help clear shrubbery in Thousand Palms.

In addition to homeownership programs, Habitat's "A Brush with Kindness" program assists low-income seniors and disabled residents with free critical home repairs, addressing safety hazards and improving accessibility. These efforts allow residents to remain in their homes safely while enhancing their quality of life.

By working in partnership with volunteers, donors and local agencies such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, Habitat for Humanity and other housing-focused organizations are helping to strengthen communities, providing residents with the security of a stable home and the foundation for a healthier future.

"At Habitat for Humanity of the Coachella Valley, we are deeply committed to enhancing community well-being through our Housing Insecurity Prevention Program. Recognizing that the impact of housing insecurity often extends beyond physical needs, we also offer valuable links and referrals to crucial community services," says Executive Director Dave Thornton.

**A collaborative effort toward a healthier future**

Beyond individual housing projects, community-wide initiatives are paving the way toward a healthier and more equitable future. For instance, Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) conducted by organizations like the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, help identify critical health priorities and inequities throughout the Coachella Valley. These assessments, while highlighting challenges in areas such as North Shore, Mecca and Thousand Palms, also highlight opportunities for improvements and community empowerment.

Policy advocacy is another vital avenue for change. By championing policies that promote affordable housing, improve access to health care, and address the social determinants of health, local non-profits, government agencies, and community members are collaborating to create lasting, systemic change that benefits every resident.

At the heart of these efforts are organizations like DAP Health and Habitat for Humanity, working tirelessly to provide affordable housing solutions and create stronger, healthier communities. Through these important initiatives, more residents can gain access to the security of homeownership and the benefits of a healthier, more stable future.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity of the Coachella Valley and how you can get involved by volunteering, donating, or supporting their programs, visit [hfhcvc.org](http://hfhcvc.org).

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# Are You Experiencing a Personal Awakening?

By Delphine Channels

In recent years more people have reported experiencing profound inner shifts—heightened intuition, deeper emotional sensitivity and a pull toward a greater sense of purpose. This phenomenon can be referred to as a personal or spiritual awakening—a period of personal transformation that expands awareness and invites individuals to reconnect with their most authentic selves.

But what does personal awakening actually mean? Is it reserved for monks and mystics or is it possible that many of us are undergoing this shift without even realizing it?

A personal awakening is a process of inner evolution. It often occurs after a major life event, personal crisis or deep reflection, but sometimes it unfolds gradually as people become more in tune with their inner world and life’s deeper meaning.

If you’ve been feeling different lately such as questioning old beliefs, sensing a deeper connection to life or noticing synchronicities more often, you may be experiencing an awakening. Here are seven common signs that indicate you’re in the midst of this transformation.

**1. Heightened awareness and presence.** Many people going through an awakening report feeling more present than ever before. Colors seem brighter, nature feels more alive and small details that once went unnoticed now carry profound meaning. This heightened awareness often leads to a deeper appreciation for life and a sense of wonder at the interconnectedness of all things.

**2. Deep empathy and compassion.** A common sign of awakening is an increased sense of empathy. You may feel more deeply connected to others, more intuitively sensing their emotions. While this can sometimes feel overwhelming, it also fosters greater compassion, patience and understanding toward yourself and the world around you.

**3. Desire for authenticity.** As your awareness grows so does your desire to live more authentically. You may find yourself drawn to new relationships, career paths or ways of expressing yourself that align with your true nature. You may also feel the urge to let go of things that no longer resonate with your evolving self, even long-term relationships or established routines.

**4. Increased intuition and inner knowing.** Have you been experiencing strong gut feelings, vivid dreams or moments of knowing things before they happen? Many people find their intuition becomes stronger during an awakening, guiding them toward decisions and paths that feel deeply right—often without a logical explanation.

**5. Sensitivity to energy and environmental shifts.** As you become more attuned to yourself, you may also notice an increased sensitivity to energy. Certain environments, foods or even people may feel more draining, while others feel uplifting. This often leads to a desire to create healthier energetic boundaries, spend more time in nature and engage in practices that keep your energy clear and balanced.



A personal awakening is a process of inner evolution.

## Dr. Longo’s Fasting Cancer

A Review by Joseph E. Scherger MD, MPH

Good things happen in your body when you do not eat. Circadian code research shows that we spend 12 hours digesting and processing what we eat for a day. After 12 hours, we start burning fat for energy and releasing ketone bodies that have a number of health benefits. One of those benefits is to retard the growth of cancer.

In 1931, German scientist Otto Warburg won the Nobel Prize for showing that the growth of cancer required the glycation of carbohydrates, and that cancer growth is suppressed or eliminated on a ketogenic diet. From this the concept of “starving” cancer developed.

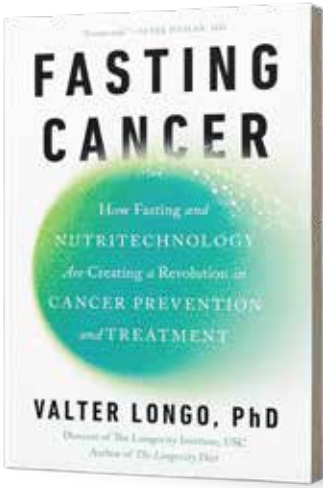
Valter Longo, PhD, director of the Longevity Institute at the University of Southern California (USC), used this science to lead a number of studies on how fasting may prevent and treat cancer. Dr. Longo is well known for a “fasting mimicking diet” based on the intake of about 500 calories. For the cancer trials, the fasting days were five at a time every two weeks. Working with the cancer center at USC and one in Rome, he has had successes with a wide variety of cancers. In his book *Fasting Cancer*, Longo also presents the research of other fasting cancer trials.

Since weight loss is common in patients in cancer, the idea of fasting during treatment is counterintuitive, and even resisted by many cancer-treating physicians. Some oncologists are hostile to the idea of fasting as part of cancer treatment. “Eat whatever you want” is the more common recommendation. Because sugar and carbohydrates may “feed” the cancer, this approach would be detrimental to the patient’s health.

In *Fasting Cancer*, Longo begins by giving a modern view of what cancer is and its causes, especially unhealthy dietary habits. He promotes a “longevity diet” consisting mostly of healthy vegetables, eating meat sparingly and limiting protein. After setting the stage for this approach in the early chapters, Longo reports on successes in subsequent cancers addressing breast cancer, gynecological cancers, prostate cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, blood cancers, brain cancer, kidney cancer and even skin cancer. Throughout the book, Longo emphasizes that the fasting method is done along with standard cancer therapy and should not stand alone as treatment.

While there is no guarantee of cancer remission from fasting, and the successes are case by case, using fasting to treat cancer is exciting and should be more widely used. This book by a respected scientist working in an academic setting has the potential to spread this knowledge to other major cancer centers. Dr. Longo did not originate this treatment method, but may be credited with helping change the paradigm of cancer treatment.

Dr. Scherger is the founder of Restore Health Disease Reversal in Indian Wells, a clinic dedicated to weight loss and reversing chronic medical conditions. To schedule a consultation, call (760) 898.9663 or visit [www.restorehealth.me](http://www.restorehealth.me).





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**6. Physical and emotional symptoms.** Personal awakenings aren’t just mental and emotional but may also bring about physical changes. Some common physical signs include:

- Fatigue or changes in sleep patterns (difficulty sleeping or needing more rest than usual)
- Body aches, headaches or ringing in the ears
- Changes in appetite and food preferences
- Sudden bursts of energy followed by deep exhaustion
- Heightened sensitivity to sound, light or crowded spaces

These shifts can be challenging but are often temporary and part of the body’s process of recalibration as you align with a new frequency. Staying hydrated, eating nourishing foods and getting plenty of rest can ease the transition.

**7. Yearning for purpose and meaning.** Many who experience an awakening feel a deep pull toward something greater—a desire to understand their purpose and make a meaningful impact. This could manifest as a new interest in personal growth, holistic wellness, creative pursuits or service-oriented work.

The process of awakening is deeply personal yet collective and it is happening to individuals throughout the world. Whether your awakening is just beginning or you’ve been on this path for a while, know that you are not alone. You are part of a larger movement toward consciousness, healing and transformation.

Delphine Channels is a life coach, host of the Delphine’s Circle YouTube interview series (@DelphinesCircle) and founder of Harmoneum.com, an online community for coaching, daily practices and inspiration. She can be reached at [Delphine@Harmoneum.com](mailto:Delphine@Harmoneum.com).

Sources: 1) <https://www.centreofexcellence.com>; 2) <https://www.verywellmind.com/>



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## Welcoming Monica Price

*UK health expert brings talents to the desert*

By Lauren Del Sarto

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting Monica Price, a business leader, broadcaster, writer and wellness expert from the United Kingdom. Price is a go-to health and wellbeing advisor for the BBC, ITV, Sky News, GB News, XPTV1, TalkTV and Times Radio, and a regular contributor to *Great British Life* magazines.

She advocates for the use of complementary therapies alongside conventional health care and is CEO of Homeopathy UK, a charity that supports doctors and practitioners in the industry. With a degree in nutritional therapy and clinical practice from the University of Worcester, Price works with clients across the globe as a qualified nutritional therapist.



Monica Price and Lauren Del Sarto on set at CVHS



Student crew assists show producers with filming.

She also hosts "The Monica Price Show," a talk show featuring celebrities, musical artists and health and wellness experts streamed live to a global audience.

Price and her business partner and director Barry Tomes are regular vacationers to Palm Springs and recently decided to increase their time spent locally. After being invited to speak about his life and career at a Coachella Valley High School (CVHS) student assembly, Tomes had an idea: work

with the school's Digital Design and Production Academy to build a set on campus to tape the "Monica Price Show" from the U.S.

Students helped build the professionally designed set which featured colorful artwork on loan from local artists Karen and Tony Barone. When filming began, they assumed educational roles behind the cameras and as makeup artists, photographers, AV techs and production assistants.

The first nationally produced "Monica Price Show" filmed in February and focused on health and wellbeing. I was invited to be a featured guest along with naturopathic doctor Lisa Amerine, ND of Colorado, President of the American Institute of Homeopathy, and Coachella Valley Unified School District Wellness Specialist Jason Tate.



Students prep host and guests with mics and makeup.

It was an honor to be a part of this collaboration and to see the students doing such a professional job on set. What an amazing opportunity to study under these professionals and for their work to broadcast to an international audience. Few will ever know that the show was filmed on their school campus.

"The students did such an incredible job and it was wonderful to bring them along on this journey with us," expressed Price, adding in her British humor that dismantling the set was very sad for all, so they ate cake.

We are pleased to announce *Desert Health* will be featuring a Monica Price column in upcoming editions. International health topics she will

cover include nutrition and wellbeing, homeopathy, autism, government policy and trending health concerns.

"I truly believe we need a more integrative approach to our health care now, and it was wonderful to find so many likeminded people here in the Coachella Valley," Price adds.

She and Tomes will return to the valley in the fall and hope to film more episodes of her show at CVHS where the layout of the set remains and will be used for students to continue practicing filming and performing.

To view the locally filmed episode, visit "The Monica Price Show USA Health & Wellbeing Special 2025" on YouTube.com.

For more information on Monica Price, visit [www.monica-price.co.uk](http://www.monica-price.co.uk). She welcomes your topic ideas and can be reached at [monica@monica-price.co.uk](mailto:monica@monica-price.co.uk). Lauren Del Sarto can be reached at [Lauren@deserthealthnews.com](mailto:Lauren@deserthealthnews.com).



Inaugural guests Lauren Del Sarto, Jason Tate and Lisa Amerine, ND, with Monica Price (third from left)





Let's Retreat

Continued from page 6

**DIY Retreats.** For a home reprieve, follow this simple guide, or create your own space and time to realign, reflect and renew:

Create your sacred space

- Location ideas:**
- A cozy cabin, yurt or Airbnb in nature
  - A dedicated space in your home—unplugged, candle-lit, cozy
  - A tent in your backyard or a quiet, rustic getaway
- Atmosphere tips:**
- Clear clutter and bring in natural elements (plants, stones, wood, soft fabrics)
  - Diffuse essential oils (lavender, frankincense, cedarwood)
  - Turn off your phone or put it in airplane mode
  - Add sacred objects: journals, crystals, altar items, books that nourish



A moment of solace at Xinalani retreat near Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Nourish yourself with clean, intentional food

**Retreat food philosophy:** Eat simple, whole, plant-based meals that are lovingly prepared and mindfully eaten. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, sugar and processed foods to allow clarity and vitality to arise naturally.

- Suggested staples:**
- Herbal teas (chamomile, peppermint, tulsi)
  - Warm lemon water in the morning
  - Fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Brown rice, quinoa or millet
  - Leafy greens, sweet potatoes and lentils
  - Soups, stews and smoothies
  - Nuts, seeds and nourishing broths

- Daily nourishment practices:**
- Eat without screens or distractions
  - Offer gratitude before meals
  - Chew slowly, taste deeply, listen to your body



Author Alison Mullins practices yoga at Xinalani

Move from the inside out

- Daily organic movement:**
- Gentle yoga (sun salutations, yin, intuitive flow)
  - Walks in nature or barefoot grounding
  - Stretching while listening to calming music or silence
  - Dance or free-form movement if it arises organically
  - Breath-led movement: inhale to expand, exhale to release

- Sample practice flow:**
- Morning: Seated breath work, yoga sun salutations and cat/cow stretches
  - Afternoon: Nature walk and mindful body scan
  - Evening: Legs-up-the-wall, twists and a long savasana

Go inward: meditation and reflection

- Simple daily practices:**
- **Morning meditation** (10-20 minutes): Start in silence or with a guided track
  - **Journaling prompts:**
    - What am I ready to release?
    - What do I long to feel more of?
    - Where in my life do I feel most alive?
    - What whispers is my soul offering today?
  - **Evening gratitude practice:** Write three things you're grateful for each night
- Optional practices:**
- Breath work sessions
  - Sound healing (bowls, playlist or tuning forks)
  - Fire ceremony or symbolic letting go ritual



Cherokee Elder Abe shares Native American wisdom at a Takota Alchemy retreat.



Yoga and sound bowls help ground and center.

Suggested schedule

- Morning**
- Rise without an alarm
  - Drink warm lemon water
  - Breath work and movement
  - Journaling or meditation
  - Light breakfast
- Midday**
- Nourishing lunch
  - Nature walk or creative practice (painting, writing, vision boarding)
  - Rest or nap
  - Optional workshop or reading
- Evening**
- Light movement or restorative yoga
  - Dinner
  - Reflection journaling
  - Candlelight meditation, sound bath or warm bath
  - Early to bed

Closing your retreat

- Before reentering the world, ask yourself:**
- What do I want to carry forward with me?
  - What boundaries, practices or intentions will I honor?
  - What will I not return to?

You may want to write a letter to yourself, light a candle or do a final meditation to seal the experience.

**Returning renewed.** When you emerge from retreat, the world hasn't changed, but you have. You return with clearer eyes, a calmer heart and a deeper sense of connection to what truly matters. And from that space, your presence becomes medicine for others, too.

Alison Mullins is a certified holistic life and health coach, yoga therapist, sound healer and founder of Coppermoon Rising. She can be reached at [alison@coppermoonrising.com](mailto:alison@coppermoonrising.com) or [www.coppermoonrising.com](http://www.coppermoonrising.com).

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## Vitamin C in Skincare

### Magic, myths and reality

By Brook Dougherty

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is a current darling of the skincare industry. It is essential for collagen production, helps neutralize free radicals from sun and pollution and can fade dark spots and discoloration. Plus it can help maintain skin firmness and brightness. So, what’s not to love? Nothing, but it’s tricky.

Vitamin C isn’t just one thing. There are multiple forms, and each behaves differently on your skin. If you know what type is likely to work best on your skin, you’re less likely to spend ridiculous amounts of money on a product that may be totally wrong for you.

Here are the different forms of vitamin C and their individual superpowers:

**Ascorbic acid (also known as L-ascorbic acid).** This is the super model of the vitamin C products. It can deliver impressive results but it’s finicky and breaks down quickly when exposed to light, heat or air, and it can irritate sensitive skin. It lives in water-based serums stored in dark, air-tight bottles, but if it’s not offered in a concentration range from 10 to 20%, it’s not worth the dough.

**Sodium ascorbyl phosphate.** This is the boy-next-door version. It’s more stable than ascorbic acid and better suited for sensitive or acne-prone skin. It still offers antioxidant benefits and helps brighten, but it tends to be gentler and less likely to cause redness or breakouts. Great for younger skin.

**Magnesium ascorbyl phosphate.** If you have sensitive skin, this form may be enough for you. It can sooth redness and provide moisture while gently brightening. Like going to prom with your cousin; it’s nice, but may not be as impactful as you’d hoped.

**Tetrahexyldecyl ascorbate.** This is the one you marry—especially if you’re a desert dweller of a certain age. It’s not irritating and penetrates the skin more deeply than its cousins while remaining stable for longer periods. It lives in oil and in great formulas it’s used at 10%. You may find it combined with other nourishing ingredients like coenzyme Q10 for added anti-aging benefits.



Different types of vitamin C have different benefits.

**“You can’t use vitamin C with retinol.”** Old myth. While layering vitamin C and retinoids in the same routine may cause irritation, newer, stable derivatives like tetrahexyldecyl ascorbate can be paired with retinoids—especially when staggered (vitamin C in the morning, retinoid at night).

**“You get what you pay for.”** Not anymore. It’s true that vitamin C is an expensive ingredient, but it’s a flat out lie that you need to spend in the three digits to achieve top-notch results.

#### Helpful tips

**Apply it in the morning.** That’s when your skin faces the most environmental stress; vitamin C helps shield against it.

**Pair with sunscreen.** The antioxidant boost enhances your sun protection.

**Be patient.** You might notice a brighter glow in a few weeks, but long-term benefits like firmer skin and fading discoloration usually take eight to 12 weeks of consistent use.

The bottom line: only you know you. Try a sample or a mini-size before making a mistake and let your skin tell you all you need to know. Take the time to explore lesser-known brands, read the labels, respect your wallet and trust your own knowledge rather than the hype.

Brook Dougherty of Indio is the founder of JustUs Skincare and welcomes your questions. She can be reached at (310) 266.7171 or brook@justusskincare.com. For more information, visit www.justusskincare.com.

#### Feeling Beautiful and Well

Continued from page 7

me if there isn’t a place taking part in the event near to where they live.”

The website also offers information on companies that go above and beyond for cancer survivors including Walgreens which has trained sales associates to help those affected through their “Feel More Like You” campaign, and Great Clips’ “Clips of Kindness” for those starting chemotherapy and concerned about hair loss.

Each year, Paget calls the businesses on her roster to ensure they are once again showing their support. “At 80, it is a wonderful feeling to hear a business say they were waiting for my call, or that they already have Cancer Survivor Beauty and Support Day on their calendar. It just shows that you are never too old to have an idea, pursue it and continue to grow your vision!” She adds that the real beauty of the day, however, is the support it gives those in need.

Businesses interested in taking part can simply download the flyer at [www.cancersurvivorbeautyandsupportday.org](http://www.cancersurvivorbeautyandsupportday.org) where the list of participating businesses can also be found. For more information, contact Barbara Paget at [bnpcsbsd@aol.com](mailto:bnpcsbsd@aol.com).



Cancer Survivor Beauty and Support Day helps heal inside and out.





# The Rise of Hospital-at-Home

## A game changer for older adults

By Tammy Porter, DNP, MLS, RN-BSN, CPHQ, CCM

As health care continues to evolve, one model gaining significant traction is “hospital-at-home.” Designed to deliver hospital-level care in the comfort of a patient’s home, this innovative approach is transforming how older adults experience health care. For many, it’s a welcome change.

Hospital-at-home (H@H) programs provide hospital-level treatment—such as IV medications, oxygen therapy and close clinical monitoring outside the traditional hospital setting. Initially launched in select health systems, these programs have expanded nationally, especially after Medicare created waivers to support them during the COVID-19 public health emergency. According to the American Hospital Association, 378 hospitals in 39 states have been approved to provide H@H services to patients as of November 2024.

A 2024 report by Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services found that H@H patients had fewer readmissions, lower costs and improved patient satisfaction compared to those receiving traditional hospital care. Now, with evidence backing its safety and cost-effectiveness for patients with lower health care complexity scores, the model is positioned to become a permanent fixture in how care is delivered to older adults.

### Why it matters for older adults

For many older patients, hospitalization comes with risks: hospital-acquired infections, falls, functional decline and even delirium. These complications can lengthen recovery or lead to long-term health setbacks.

With H@H, patients stay in familiar surroundings, maintain better sleep and routines and avoid many of the disorienting effects of hospital stays. Families often report greater satisfaction, and studies show equal or better outcomes in clinical recovery.

### The role of nurse advocates

Transitioning care from the hospital to the home environment requires thoughtful planning, and that’s where nurse advocates can make all the difference. As certified case managers, nurse advocates ensure the home is safe and properly equipped; care instructions are clearly communicated; support services are in place (i.e., physical therapy, social work and in-home nursing), and that patients and families feel confident managing care. Nurse advocates also serve as the bridge between health care providers, patients and caregivers to ensure no detail is overlooked.

### Key considerations for families

H@H isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. Here are a few things older adults and their loved ones should consider:

- **Eligibility:** Not all conditions qualify. Programs typically focus on conditions like pneumonia, heart failure, COPD exacerbations and urinary tract infections without other complicating diagnoses requiring closer monitoring.
- **Support:** While H@H reduces the need for inpatient hospital stays, caregivers may need to assist with basic tasks. Families should evaluate whether additional in-home support is needed.
- **Technology:** Remote monitoring tools such as Bluetooth-enabled vital sign devices and telehealth visits are essential care components. Comfort with technology—or support in using it—can impact the experience.

### What’s Next?

As reimbursement structures shift and technology improves, H@H is poised to become a viable option. Major health systems like the Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins and Mount Sinai are expanding their programs, and many smaller community hospitals are following suit.

For older adults, H@H is more than a trend—it’s a shift toward more personalized, dignified, and patient-centered care. As a nurse advocate, I believe this model holds enormous promise, especially when paired with the guidance of professionals who understand both the medical and personal sides of care.

*Dr. Porter is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert. She is an experienced health care professional with over 30 years of nursing practice dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of health care processes and advocating for patients, families and caregivers. Immediate assistance is available by calling (760) 851.4116. [www.myhealthmyadvocate.com](http://www.myhealthmyadvocate.com).*

Sources: 1) American Hospital Association (2025). Fact Sheet: Extending the Hospital-at-Home Program. <https://www.aha.org/fact-sheets/2024-08-06-fact-sheet-extending-hospital-home-program>; 2) Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2024). Acute Hospital Care at Home Reports. <https://qualitynet.cms.gov/acute-hospital-care-at-home/reports>



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Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco



Looking Out for Each Other

On February 18, Gene Hackman passed in Santa Fe, New Mexico at 95 years of age. A legend of the movie screen for over four decades, this accomplished actor played roles embodying tough, strong, steady and warm characters. Thus, the circumstances of his death with wife Betsy Arakawa shook the country's conscience. What lessons can be learned with this loss?

The tragedy is a story of a couple who chose isolation. This tendency is prevalent in our own neighborhoods where many older citizens prefer independent living. It is also a tale of estrangement from family in a time where increased family separation is prevalent.

This tragedy reflects on current societal trends, yet with awareness, we can create change from this loss. Stardom did not protect this couple from their final unexpected circumstance. The experience that may have improved this situation rests in noticing, connecting, community and outreach.

As we now know, Arakawa passed from a rare syndrome called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. Hackman then passed from heart disease and Alzheimer's after his caretaking wife. Both were found days after their deaths by a maintenance worker who grew concerned when he did not hear from them. After going to the house, he noticed their bodies through the window.

Learning about this story invoked significant reflection in my own 91-year-old mother. A family discussion revealed a recent experience with a neighbor who noticed my mother had not picked up her newspaper one morning. The neighbor came to the door bringing the paper and concern for her welfare. This simple act was greatly appreciated.

Finding ways to offer extra attention as a neighbor or family member can make a difference. Asking an elderly person in your community what safety backup plan they have, or if you can help, is another act of compassion that can have a significant impact.

We live in a time of social isolation where the act of caring not only helps someone else, it can also help us. In a 1989 interview, Hackman shared that the pursuit of acting led him to become selfish due to stepping away from family for long periods. It was difficult to turn down opportunities, he said, in a quest to stay relevant. A nature that neglects family may potentially lead to estrangement.

Our society quietly encourages us to look after ourselves first ("put on your oxygen mask first, before helping others"). As we navigate a purpose-driven life, learning balance for our own well-being while making meaning for others is paramount. Our world needs us to step outside our comfort zones and share our attention with others: making a difficult call to a loved one from whom we've become distant, checking on a stranger, being a concerned neighbor. Challenging our selfish quotient is a wonderful start.

Poet William Wordsworth eloquently noted, "The best portion of a good man's life are the little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness."

Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at [www.coachellabellaboho.com](http://www.coachellabellaboho.com).

Lighten Up with Small "I" Intention

By Amy Austin PSYD, LMFT

Google defines intention as something Intended (note capital I), an Aim or Plan, a GOAL. Living life with Intention means making conscious, purposeful choices that align with your values; it's about being mindful of your actions and ensuring they contribute to a life that feels meaningful to you.

Those living with Intention (capitalized) may not let life dictate their path; they are too busy living with shoulds, supposed tos, wishing, hoping, relenting to current trends, viewing life with an all-or-nothing, black-and-white lens, or as society dictates.

Let's consider intention with a small "i." This intention could simply be intending to show up and be present, embracing the moment, taking baby steps and having a one-day-at-a-time attitude. Intention with a small i is recognizing that there are miracles happening all around us; all we need to do is look with our third eye and listen, not just hear.

Intention with a small i can offer a more functional, adaptive and healthier life with subtleties that can show us the true definition of living with intention.

A state of "beingness" instead of "doingness" is intrinsic within the nuances of intention. In a state of simply being, we can release ourselves from being held emotionally hostage by our mind. We can attain freedom knowing that we are not our thoughts. A soulful connection can ensue while the critical sabotaging self, the wounded inner child, the all-or-nothing thinking can be gently quieted.

There is an understanding and acknowledgment that living in a state of small i intention can add more light to the world and dispel the darkness.

In his book *Living Each Day*, Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, MD posits, "Creating light is the prototype of an unselfish act, because even if you create light for yourself, the light shines for others as well. And if you create light altruistically, it illuminates your own world as well."

Whether it's performing daily random acts of kindness or giving charity, good deeds are not about the fulfillment of a plan or goal, they are the very essence of who we are.

Intention with a small i welcomes intimacy (into me see). An unwritten permission slip exists to honor self-care, set emotionally healthy boundaries, communicate more effectively without impulsiveness and reactivity and listen with curiosity and interest. It is a more thoughtful, mindful place not just to survive, but live; a place of accountability and heartfelt amends when warranted. We can let go of shame and enter the realm of humility. We can also connect with our spiritual selves and find solace there. With greater self-awareness we can become knowledgeable teachers and pay it forward.

In the stillness of the early morning, we are offered the opportunity to capitalize on living each moment fully without the need to capitalize our intention. The world and your own authenticity (your true light) await!

Dr. Amy Austin is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFC#41252) and doctor of clinical psychology in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 774.0047.

www.DesertHealthNews.com

May/June 2025





# YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®



## Tariffs 101

Tariffs are taxes a government places on imported goods – in other words, stuff coming from other countries.

Imagine your country makes t-shirts. One day, cheaper t-shirts from another country flood the market. Great for shoppers, but not so great for local makers who can't match the price. To help them, your government adds a tariff on imported t-shirts which makes the foreign shirts more expensive. As a result, shoppers may turn back to local options, helping domestic businesses compete and keep jobs.

Tariffs can have a big impact—both positive and negative. Let's start with the good news:

- As shown in the t-shirt example, tariffs can protect local businesses by making imported goods more expensive. This helps domestic companies stay competitive and preserve jobs.
- Tariffs also bring in revenue for the government, which can be used to improve public services like roads, infrastructure, education and health care.
- In some cases, tariffs can even encourage local production, since companies may try to make more goods at home instead of importing them.

But there are also downsides:

- With less foreign competition, local companies may raise prices, knowing consumers don't have as many choices.
- Less competition can also lead to less innovation—businesses may stop improving their products if they don't have to keep up with global standards.
- Tariffs can disrupt global supply chains. Many “local” products still depend on parts from other countries. If those parts are hit with tariffs, production becomes more expensive, which leads to higher prices for consumers and slower manufacturing.

How do tariffs affect the economy? While they can protect local businesses and jobs, raise government revenue and encourage domestic production, there are also disadvantages including higher prices for consumers, less competition/innovation, disrupted global supply chains, and slower production and economic growth.

In a boom, tariffs can cool down an overheated economy while at a peak, they risk trade wars and reduced global demand. In a recession, they may worsen the slowdown by raising costs; during recovery, they can limit growth by keeping prices high.

Tariffs can help in the short term, but often lead to higher prices, slower growth and global trade tensions over time. Like any tool, they need to be used wisely.

Michele Sarna is a certified financial planner™ with Beacon Pointe Advisors and can be reached at (760) 932.0930 or [msarna@beaconpointe.com](mailto:msarna@beaconpointe.com).

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Phone 760.932.0930  
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## Simple No Oil Beet Hummus

Plantrician approved recipe by Andréa Dunnam

This vibrant pink beet hummus is as nutritious as it is beautiful—packed with fiber, plant-based protein and anti-inflammatory compounds. Garbanzo beans support blood sugar stability and gut health, while beets offer natural nitrates that promote heart health and improved circulation. Tahini provides important minerals like calcium and iron, and the lemon and garlic bring immune-boosting antioxidants. It's a flavorful dip that's perfect for heart-healthy snacking or adding color to any plate.

Yield: Four cups • Prep time: 10 minutes

**Ingredients:**

- 2 (15.5 oz) cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can beets (whole or sliced), drained (reserve the juice\*)
- ¼ cup beet juice\*
- ½ cup tahini
- 2 lemons, juiced and seeds removed (1/2 cup total)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- To taste salt or salt substitute (optional)
- 1 tbsp Lemon zest for garnish (optional)



**Directions:**

1. In a high speed blender or food processor, combine the garbanzo beans, beets, beet juice, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, coriander, cumin and smoked paprika.
2. Blend until smooth. (If necessary, you may add one tablespoon of water at a time, to reach desired consistency. Blend again.)
3. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary, e.g., adding a pinch of salt or salt substitute.
4. Transfer the beet hummus to a serving bowl and garnish with lemon zest.
5. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

**Notes:**

Serve this beet hummus with crudité, pita bread or as a spread in sandwiches or wraps. Garbanzo beans and chickpeas are the same legume, just with different names.

You may substitute the canned beets with roasted. Wrap a large beet in aluminum foil and cook it in a 400-degree F oven until fork tender (approximately 45 minutes). Let cool, then chop into smaller pieces (1 cup).

Andréa Dunnam of The Plantrician Project is a plant-based cook who enjoys sharing simple, approachable recipes through live cooking demonstrations. She focuses on creating whole food, plant-based dishes using everyday ingredients that are both nourishing and delicious. Follow on Instagram and Facebook @plantricianproject.

## Carol's Nutritious Nutola

By Lauren Del Sarto

In her search for a hearty, healthy and truly tasty breakfast, our friend Carol Buchanan decided to create her own. Friends rave about her gluten free, vegan, no sugar added “nutola” (including me!) and we are thrilled to share her recipe with you.

Prep time: 15 minutes • Pre-heat oven at 325 degrees

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup shredded organic coconut
- ¾ cup walnut pieces
- 1 cup marcona almonds
- ¼ cup pistachios
- ¼ cup macadamia nuts
- 2 tbsp chopped Brazil nuts
- ¾ cup pecans
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 tbsp organic hemp seeds
- Mix all of the above together.**
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp MCT oil (concentrated coconut oil)
- 4 tbsp yacon syrup (low calorie, low carb, low glycemic)
- ½ tsp pumpkin pie spice
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp dried orange peel shreds
- 1 tsp sea salt

**Post baking toppings:**

- 2 tbsp cacao nibs
- 2 tbsp chopped dried cherries

Mix nuts and seeds together, add extra virgin olive oil and MCT oil and stir. Add the yacon syrup and stir once again before adding all other pre-cooking ingredients. Stir one final time and pour on to a large baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Bake for 20 minutes and remove from oven before adding the cacao nibs and dried cherries.

Enjoy as a snack or with coconut milk yogurt and fresh berries in the morning!

Carol offers classes on making this nutritious nibble at Vintage Coffee in Indio. Reach out to her directly if you'd like to be notified of schedule: [rncjeanne@aol.com](mailto:rncjeanne@aol.com).



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# Come Home to Tía Carmen

Flavor, family and feeling are served

A Review by Lauren Del Sarto

I constantly seek restaurants which serve food that fuels you. It starts with fresh, conscious ingredients and is perfected when prepared with purpose and passion. It is not often you find this combination in a gourmet setting served by a seasoned staff and complemented by an international wine list, but Tía Carmen at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells has it all. It is officially my new favorite place.

As locals, we rarely visit resort restaurants however, many have the resources to make top talent dreams come true. Such is the case with Top Chef Contestant Angelo Sosa, the heart and soul of Tía Carmen, named after his favorite aunt who inspired his passion and culinary vocation.

Carmen traveled the world sharing her experiences with young Sosa in post cards. They now decorate the walls of Carmocha (“Car-MOO-cha”) as she was called, the neighboring restaurant serving global plates and craft cocktails. Her poetic words display a passion for not only food, but life itself, a trait Sosa and his team pour into their creations.

An evening at Tía Carmen is not just dining out, it is also an experience; a journey for the senses beginning with the warm greeting from knowledgeable servers. They share the story and purpose of Tía Carmen then guide you through the thoughtfully prepared menu.

Chef Sosa cultivated his philosophy from time spent in the industry and personal experience: kindness, impact, wellness and gratitude. “Wellness is everything,” he shared. “We are what we eat not only physically, but mentally and spiritually as well.” He emphasizes food as medicine and is “maniacal” about sourcing ingredients aligned with integrity, thought and care. But ingredients are only the beginning.

“Our food is intentional,” he adds. “It’s thoughtful with stories and I want people to *feel* the experience of dining with us. We are simply a conduit between the farmers and our guests, and our job is to present it with a unique perspective. I want you to be inspired thereafter and for your body to feel good.” (Yes and yes!) Their delicate, tasty lettuces come from Country Line Harvest in Thermal. The native tepary beans for their special mole madres (aged for 27 months

with the “mother” under lock and key) come from Ramona Farms in Arizona. Hypa Foods forages medicinal mushrooms including cordyceps and maitake served with bucatini pasta in a savory sauce. “Innovation for me is simplicity,” he says. “Less is more and the ingredient comes first.” Fermentation (“important for gut health”) is prevalent and added sugar minimal. Dates from Aziz Farms are his low glycemic sweetener of choice. Coming from New York City, he finds the Coachella Valley’s bounty exciting and refreshing. “We really want to showcase the beauty of the people and all the community has to offer.”

My personal favorites include the fluke crudo, delicately prepared and bursting with a unique blend of flavors (lime, pear, banana, cucumber) and the tuna crudo in coconut broth with smoked chili oil. The romaine salad is unlike any other with fennel, pear, Manchego cheese and radish on top of fried egg dressing with sage vinaigrette on top.

The roasted purple yam is a house specialty and the gluten-free pan frito is a special treat drizzled with succulent pine thistle honey. On our most recent trip with friends, I ordered all the sides to share including yucca brulee (Chef’s root vegetable take on mashed potatoes), flame roasted corn and crispy Brussel sprouts—all exceptional. We also shared the Australian Wagyu ribeye and the catch of the day (halibut) to everyone’s delight. The ribeye was honestly the best steak I have ever tasted.

“Food is alchemy,” Sosa concludes. “It is transformative in a multitude of ways and that’s the beauty of what we do.” If you are looking for quality, feel good food and a fun night out, I encourage you to try Tía Carmen. If you enjoy a personable waiter, request Miguel Gonzales. It will certainly be a night - and meal - to remember.

Tía Carmen at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells serves breakfast and dinner daily (\$\$\$). Indoor and outdoor dining is offered and valet for restaurant guests is only \$5. Reservations are recommended via OpenTable or (760) 340.0488.



Top: Chef de Cuisine Daniel Arias, Chef Angelo Sosa and Chef Hector Frausto. Bottom: Tuna crudo with coconut broth and baby romaine salad



Fluke crudo (top), gluten-free pan frito with pine thistle honey drizzle and the roasted purple yam with aged mole negro



Halibut with Israeli couscous and mole verde (top) and the Australian Wagyu ribeye



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# Food as Medicine Conference Returns

Physicians, clinicians and advocates invited to attend

This September, Palm Desert will once again take center stage in a global health movement as it welcomes the 2025 International Plant-Based Nutrition Healthcare Conference (PBNHC), a transformative event where medicine meets lifestyle, and science meets real-world impact.

Hosted by The Plantrician Project at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa, PBNHC is an annual gathering of health care professionals who share a common mission: using the power of evidence-based nutrition to prevent, suspend and even reverse chronic disease. Whether you're a clinician, dietitian, researcher or simply passionate about the future of health care, this conference is an essential experience.



Dean Ornish, MD is one of the conference's many renowned speakers.

**Leading experts driving the future of health care.** The 2025 conference brings together some of the most influential voices in plant-based and lifestyle medicine. This year's speakers include Neal Barnard, MD, Will Bulsiewicz, MD, Brenda Davis, RD, Joel Fuhrman, MD, Michael Greger, MD, Dahlia Marin, RDN, Dean Ornish, MD, and Kim A. Williams, MD.

Delivering the keynote is Scott Stoll, MD, co-founder and Chief Medical Officer of The Plantrician Project, whose leadership continues to shape the global conversation around whole food, plant-based nutrition in clinical practice.

**From science to real-world practice.** Renowned for turning groundbreaking discoveries into real-world solutions, PBNHC 2025 offers sessions on topics such as:

- Your Body in Balance: The Science Behind Food, Hormones and Health
- Undo It: Can Diet and Lifestyle Slow or Reverse Cognitive Decline?
- Fueling Mental Resilience Through Diet and the Microbiome
- Healing Joints, Preventing Pain: Optimizing Musculoskeletal Health

Attendees will also gain access to the latest clinical data on plant-based interventions for diabetes, heart disease, obesity and more.

**Hands-on learning and continuing education.** Beyond lectures, PBNHC offers hands-on workshops led by experts in nutrition science, behavior change, and sustainable healthcare models. Providers can earn CME credits, and all health care professional attendees receive on-demand access to recorded sessions.

**A delicious, immersive experience.** PBNHC is more than a conference—it's an experience. Past attendees describe it as a place where you're more likely to receive a hug than a handshake. Over the course of the event, participants enjoy nine chef-prepared plant-based meals, showcasing just how satisfying and flavorful healthy food can be. Attendees leave not just inspired, but equipped—with new recipes, culinary techniques, and practical ideas for applying food as medicine.

**Empowering a healthier future.** At its heart, PBNHC is about community. It brings together health care professionals united by a shared mission: advancing nutrition-forward care that transforms lives. Whether you're looking to learn, connect or lead, this conference offers the tools and inspiration to move your work—and the world—forward.

To register or learn more, visit [www.pbnhc.com](http://www.pbnhc.com). For questions, email [info@pbnhc.com](mailto:info@pbnhc.com) or call (561) 810.6713. Plantrician providers receive \$200 off in-person or virtual registration. Visit [www.plantrician.org](http://www.plantrician.org) to learn more.

# 12th Annual Women Who Rule Awards

Honoring current and future leaders

On Friday, May 9, Women Leaders Forum (WLF) of the Coachella Valley will honor extraordinary leaders of today and tomorrow at their 12th Annual Women Who Rule Awards Luncheon and Scholarship Fundraiser.

This signature event at the Agua Caliente Resort and Casino in Rancho Mirage honors individuals whose leadership, service and generosity have made a profound impact and also awards scholarships to 37 high school seniors in their Young Women Leaders (YWL) program.

This year's esteemed honorees include: Jenell VanDenBos, recipient of the Mary T. Roche Community Leadership Award, in recognition of her unwavering commitment to mentorship and community service; Kim Garcia, RN, Sabrina Carrillo, RN, BSN, Jacquelyn Sanchez, RN, and Cheryl Malone, RN, BSN, TCRN, CPST who will receive the WLF Inspiration Award for their courage and compassionate leadership in the health care field, and Dick Shalhoub, honored with the WLF Superman Award for his extraordinary philanthropic contributions.

All proceeds from the annual event directly support college scholarships for YWL participants who complete the six-month mentoring and business education program. Since its founding by former Indian Wells Mayor Mary T. Roche in 2001, WLF has awarded over \$800,000 in scholarships to the valley's most promising young women.

WLF is honored to have SBEMP Attorneys LLP as the Presenting Sponsor and Leadership Sponsors: Blanke Schein Wealth Management, Blissful Release Now, Desert Care Network, Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, *Desert Health News*, Desert Oasis Healthcare, Jenell VanDenBos and Assoc. Realtor, KESQ News Channel 3, and Wildest Restaurant + Bar.

YWL Scholarship Presenting Sponsors include Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and Theresa A. Mike Foundation. Named scholarships from community partners ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 were also provided by Acrisure Arena, Coachella Valley Firebirds, Desertcore Landscaping, Desert Oasis Healthcare, Guadalupe Cantu Scholarship Sponsored by Pure Barre, The Heart of Hospitals Scholarship, Prema's Permaculture & Compost and SBEMP.

For event tickets, membership and information on how you can support WLF's Young Women Leaders, please visit [www.wlfdesert.org](http://www.wlfdesert.org).



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**JUNE 5**  
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**MAY 9**  
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Honoree  
Jenell VanDenBos

**JUNE 2**  
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# Yoga Lessons from Our Arid Desert Landscape

By Jennifer Yockey

In the early morning light, the desert reveals itself—not as an empty wasteland, but as a living teacher of patience, resilience and hidden abundance.

As yoga practitioners in this unique environment, we have the opportunity to learn from one of nature's most profound classrooms, where survival itself is a masterclass in adaptation and mindfulness.

## Patience: the slow unfoldment

The mighty saguaro cactus grows merely an inch in its first eight years and might wait 75 years to extend its first arm. Yet these sentinels of the desert can live for 200 years, standing as monuments to patience.

Similarly, our yoga practice teaches us that transformation occurs not in dramatic leaps, but in consistent, mindful moments accumulated over time.

When students become frustrated with their progress in challenging poses, such as crow posture or dancer, I remind them of the desert's pace. The most significant growth happens beneath the surface—roots extending downward before the plant reaches skyward. Just as the ocotillo appears dead during winter only to pop with vibrant colors in the spring, our practice may seem dormant at times while profound changes are happening internally.

## Adaptation: thriving in changing conditions

Desert creatures have evolved remarkable adaptations—kangaroo rats synthesizing water internally, cactus wrens nesting in thorny protection, wildflowers completing their entire life cycle in mere weeks after a rain. These incredible acts of nature mirror yoga's fundamental teaching about embracing change rather than resisting it.

When the summer heat intensifies, we adapt our practice moving from vigorous vinyasa to more cooling practices. When injury or life circumstances change our bodies, we modify rather than abandon our practice. This willingness to adapt isn't compromise, but wisdom allowing us to sustain our practice through all seasons of life.

## Finding abundance in simplicity

At first glance, the desert palette seems limited—muted browns, sages and tans. But pause longer, and you'll discover a spectrum of color and life that rivals any ecosystem. Tiny wildflowers emerge from seemingly barren soil. Hummingbirds dart between cactus blooms. Life thrives in unexpected places.

Our yoga practice similarly reveals that simplicity contains multitudes. A single conscious breath can transform our nervous system. The apparent simplicity of mountain posture contains every alignment principle needed for advanced postures. The desert teaches us that when we slow down enough to truly observe, abundance reveals itself in the simplest forms.



The desert landscape blooms with life and lessons we can take to the mat.



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## Resilience through restoration

Desert plants don't fight drought, they prepare for it; storing resources during abundance and becoming dormant when necessary. The creosote bush can shut down all but its essential functions during extreme conditions, then spring back to life when rain returns.

Our practice similarly requires us to honor the rhythm of effort and restoration. The most resilient yogis aren't those who practice the most intensely, but those who know when to rest. Savasana (rest) isn't an afterthought but essential integration, just as the desert's cool night allows for the processing of the day's sunlight.

As we roll out our mats, we can carry these desert lessons with us—patience with our progress, adaptability to changing circumstances, appreciation for simplicity, and the wisdom of restoration. The desert, like yoga itself, reveals its deepest treasures not to the casual tourist, but to the dedicated observer who returns again and again, willing to be transformed by its silent teachings.

Jennifer Yockey is an E-RYT500 yoga instructor, an IAPRC professional life and recovery coach and owner of GATHER Yoga + Wellness. She can be reached at (760) 219.7953 or for more information, visit [www.gatherlaquinta.com](http://www.gatherlaquinta.com).



The most resilient yogis are those who know when to rest.

# The Rise of Pilates for Body and Mind

By Lauren Del Sarto

As more people seek low-impact fitness, the popularity of Pilates continues to rise. For the second consecutive year, the practice has topped the charts as the most popular workout worldwide according to ClassPass's 2024 fitness report.<sup>1</sup>

"Our growth year over year prior to COVID was consistently strong at 12-18%," says Chanin Cook, director of marketing for Balanced Body®, considered the global leader in Pilates equipment and education. "Coming out of COVID, our annual growth has accelerated to 25-30% continuously."

Why are people flocking to reformers? Beyond the physical benefits, mental health awareness may play a role.

Pilates focuses on building core strength, improving flexibility and enhancing posture. But it is also a thoughtful practice with emphasis placed on the mind-body connection. The practice encourages participants to connect their movements with their mental state through controlled breathing and awareness. This combined focus on physical exertion and mental clarity can help promote relaxation and relieve stress.<sup>2</sup>



Pilates focuses on thoughtful movement, core strength and flexibility.



The practice and equipment (including reformers pictured here) can be adjusted for ability, age and preference.

The community aspect of studios also contributes to a sense of belonging. "The availability of affordable, regularly scheduled, conveniently located, group Pilates classes continues to feed growing market demand," adds Cook. "The explosive post-quarantine growth worldwide is largely attributed to consumers' renewed focus on overall wellbeing."

Chris Dordell, owner of two local Club Pilates studios in Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage says the franchise has grown to over 1,100 worldwide. Dordell left his corporate job to open the studios in 2018 after experiencing the benefits first-hand.

Following the pandemic, his husband joined the business and growing interest in Pilates led to expansion; they now offer 170 classes weekly between their two studios.

"We often hear from members that Pilates is more than movement—it's a practice of presence," says Dordell. "During class we work on calming the busy thoughts of the day, focusing on breath and connecting the mind and body. Students often walk out of class feeling both energized and calm at the same time."

Pilates appeals to those seeking balance in more ways than one. With its combination of physical benefits and focus on mindfulness, Pilates is not merely a workout; it is a wellness routine for both body and mind.

Lauren Del Sarto can be reached at [Lauren@deserthealthnews.com](mailto:Lauren@deserthealthnews.com).

References: 1) <https://classpass.com/blog/2024-classpass-look-back-report/>; 2) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29609943/>

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