



making a difference

THE GIFT ROOM FOUNDATION

A Patient's perspective

Khrystyna C. was a typical college-bound student: she loved spending time with her friends, playing with her dog, and was excited to turn her love for travel into a career in international relations. Her plans were derailed, however, when she was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2007. With conventional medical treatments, numerous sessions of chemotherapy, and new clinical trials with some of the best doctors in the country, Khrystyna's body was ravaged. These therapies brought her closer to remission, but were not enough to bring this young girl back to life or even feeling at least a tenth of her old self.

Undergoing cancer treatment was dark and frightening time for the 18-year-old, who found herself completely drained and isolated. That is until she began seeing Dr. Christine Grimaldi. Through the use of Integrative and Alternative Therapies, Dr. Grimaldi was able to breathe life in Khrystyna, which ultimately gave her the strength and desire to fight the rest of her battle. Today, Khrystyna is officially cured and continues to attend various yoga/barre classes with Dr. Grimaldi, along with salt room therapy sessions, but now she attends them as a recovering cancer patient at the Body Mantra and Barre studio in Smithtown, NY.

Khrystyna is just one example of the many clients with special needs that visit the Body Mantra and Barre studio. It is not because there are no other yoga and barre classes around, but

because Body Mantra and Barre is an Integrative Wellness Center that also has "The Gift Room Foundation."

The Gift Room Foundation was started by Dr. Christine Grimaldi and offers donation-based wellness services that focus on children and adults with chronic illnesses in the community. The Gift Room

Foundation was inspired by Christine's very good friend and celebrity, Barbara Walters. Christine was her exercise therapist for over 25 years and believes that "the best part of it all was Barbara Walters' kindness and humanity."

Walters was an avid supporter and a generous donor to the Integrative Medicine Program at the Pediatric Department of Columbia University Medical Center in New York City, where Dr. Grimaldi worked for nearly 20 years. After giving it all to the cancer pediatric patients at Columbia, she had a new idea for the place she was born, in the heart of Smithtown, NY, and opened Body Mantra and Barre studio and The Gift Room Foundation.

The Gift Room Foundation was created to help the young adults with chronic and devastating illness not only go about their every day with healing yoga and barre sessions, salt therapy sessions, meditation, massage, acupuncture and medicinal oils but to also gain the strength and desire to see the sunrise of tomorrow. It is a foundation to help the families during a medical crisis or to help learn how to excel even with that chronic illness.



"If just one person shows compassion, then maybe it will cause a chain reaction..."

Christine's perspective

I am grateful to say that I was a celebrity trainer and yoga therapist for thirty years. I was gifted to be able to travel the world with celebrities for years,

coaching them on healthy lifestyle habits and teaching them daily exercise classes. There was always someone on the movie set going through some kind of cancer treatment so I would spend a lot of time with that person helping them stay healthy through treatment. Unfortunately at the same time, my husband was stricken with this devastating disease. I then changed for being a celebrity trainer to going back to medical school to learn the physiology of diseases and how to supportively care for these patients. My journey had begun. I developed the Integrative Therapies program for patients going through treatment at Columbia University Medical Center. At the same time, I would still travel with high end clients when I had the time. I wanted to mix the two populations -- "science and celebrities" -- because I knew in the end one population would help the other and vice versa. All my celebrities had two things in common, they liked to give back and they all had "Gift Closets" Gift closets were a room they developed in their homes that were filled with hundreds of thousands of expensive gifts that they would either acquire from their friends or charity events, all of these expensive gifts were just sitting there and going to waste. I started having them liquidate these rooms to pay for children's and young adults special needs and bills unpaid that accumulated as hospital stays increased. Before you knew it, the word was out and I was raising millions of dollars to fund patient integrative therapies programs to help assist supportive care for patients going through treatment. I sustained being doctor by day and mornings, nights and weekends I will still the "celebrity trainer." I would laugh with Barbara Walters daily and told her some day I am going to open "The Gift Room foundation" in her name because of her gift closet and all of her friends..My foundation was born. After many years of hard dedicated work with both populations, I decided to bring my work back to my birth town of Smithtown. I am happy to announce the birth of body mantra and barre salt spa. We are a full range exercise studio, salt spa with a salt therapy room, acupuncture, massage, reiki healers and integrative nutritionists. We are here daily to serve the well and the sick population of the surrounding areas. Our studio offers a variety of classes from barre fitness to aerial yoga to gentle yoga, we have something for everyone..We are also dedicated to helping all the kids and young adults the power of positive thinking and healthy life style habits, so that they can become the most happy and productive adults. Come in for a full day of exercise, salt therapy sessions, acupuncture and or massage. We will put you on the path to sustainable health and wellness, teaching you the art of extreme self-care.