

BusinessINDUSTRY

Acupuncturist opens second clinic

Many local people started their lives in the room where acupuncturist Carola Stepper now works to heal people.

Stepper, 40, is the owner of Cascade Acupuncture Center, and has just opened a second clinic at 414 Washington St., The Dalles.

Somed locals remember her new clinic as their birth place, as it housed The Dalles hospital for decades.

While giving a tour of the new clinic, Stepper said one of the rooms she is occupying was actually part of the maternity ward.

The clinic is on the second floor of The Dalles Medical Arts Building, the three-story brown building on the northeast corner of Fourth and Washington streets.

Stepper had been working at the Mid-Columbia Medical Center's Celilo Center for more than four years.

But when she outgrew the space and purchased the acupuncture practice of Eduardo Fernandez, she needed more room.

Stepper signed a 5-year lease with Medical Arts building owners Rob and Dean Delavan of Portland.

Her new clinic now has 1,100 square-feet of space with three treatment rooms.



ACUPUNCTURIST Carola Stepper administers tiny needles to Cindy Conlin in her new clinic on the second floor of The Dalles Medical Arts Building, 414 Washington St., The Dalles.

Tom Peterson photo

The biggest of which, Stepper termed the "healing room" where up to four patients can be treated at one time in plush reclining chairs.

Stepper created the room after traveling to China and seeing such rooms in operation.

Stepper likened it to praying alone versus praying in a church surrounded by others. "It feels more powerful," she said of practicing acupuncture in the room. "It's easier to work in there. There's more energy in the room. The

biggest joy for me is to work in that room," she added. "It's the pinnacle. It feeds your passion even more."

Stepper is splitting her time between The Dalles and her Hood River clinic.

She is running The Dalles Clinic with the help of Suzanne Schevene, a holistic health practitioner and massage therapist; licensed acupuncturists Cindy Conlin and Bridgit Beasley, and office managers Melanie McCloskey and Cassandra Mullins. Stepper said she may add more-

massage therapists in months to come.

The clinic also offers Chinese herb treatments and nutrition products. It also has a payment plan that works on a sliding scale, which is based on household income.

Stepper and the building owners have been working since August to transform the age-old maternity ward. The Medical Arts Building was built in two parts, the first coming in the 1890s and the second in the 1920s, said building owner Rob Delavan.

The Dalavan's put about \$15,000 into the remodel and upgrade of the air conditioning system.

Stepper and the Delavans are both banking on the potential growth of The Dalles.

"We started looking closely at The Dalles, and it's a growing town," said Delavan of why they purchased the building a year ago. "The Dalles is starting to break out so to speak with new business... and it's still affordable."

Delavan said there is another 600 square feet of space for rent in the building. Bob McFadden is managing the building for the Delavans.

Stepper is set to hold a grand opening Friday from 5-8 p.m.