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Higher Ground's new wellness center offers something for every 'body'

By Vera Kochan



Higher Ground owner, Dr. Andrea Jang Photo Vera Kochan

When Higher Ground first opened its doors in the fall, it became an extension of Jang Acupuncture. Owner Dr. Andrea Jang, DAOM, with over 10 years experience, received such positive feedback from her acupuncture patients that she decided to offer wellness-based classes --and so Higher Ground was born.

Before moving her practice to Moraga, Jang's office was located in San Francisco's Financial District. Already a resident since 2017, she decided to open her facility in town when COVID saw her S.F. clientele dwindle from over 30 a week down to three.

Licensed to practice not only in the state of California, but nationally, Jang is recognized as a Primary Care Provider. She studied Neuroscience at the University of California at Berkeley as an undergrad, which triggered her interest in pursuing a medical career.

Word of Higher Ground's existence has spread. "We asked people for feedback -- what classes they wanted and the times," said Jang. "We try to cater to the community and offer what they are interested in. We started with 14 classes and now offer 30."

The various classes are held throughout the week with time slots to accommodate busy schedules. Chair Yoga and Gentle Yoga are recommended for those with arthritis, injuries, or seniors with low mobility. Active Kids Yoga is geared toward youngsters and is a 45-minute session that introduces mindfulness and breathing techniques. "It's not meditation," Jang stated. They also offer Mat Pilates, Yoga Fundamentals, Vinyasa Yoga, Flowing Movement and Meditation, Candlelight Yoga, Core and Stretch, Strength and Sculpt, and more. She plans on adding massages to her offerings and is in the process of finding someone who will be a perfect fit for her criteria.

"We also have instructor-led and hosted workshops that are meant to promote well-being like Healing Circles and Sound Baths," added Jang. "It's all a learning experience. You may not know what you need, but you could find something that works for you. We are here to support the community."

This reporter opted for an hour-long Introductory Acupuncture session to help alleviate the decades-long neck and shoulder pain attributed to carrying a purse that contains everything (including the kitchen sink). Prior to the session, questionnaires were filled out so that the doctor could determine how best to treat the issues. The first 20 minutes of the treatment involved discussion. "I like to explain everything when I do acupuncture," Jang stated. Because many are afraid of needles, they often use acupuncture as a final and last resort, and as such Jang likes to show the patient the needles while explaining that they are nothing like a hypodermic needle, but rather as thin as a human hair and flexible to the touch. At Higher Ground, patients lie on a heated table and are given a "call button" to push in case they are uncomfortable during the procedure.

Out of approximately 10 needles, placed on my face, ears, hands, legs, and feet, I only felt two of them go in, and even those were momentary and not uncomfortable. The depth of placement wasn't deep enough to draw blood as was evidenced by the clean cotton ball that was shown to me upon removal. Actually, the entire experience was more like going to a spa thanks to the dim lights, meditation-inducing music, and warm bedding. While patient experience will vary, when I placed my offending purse back over my shoulder, I felt like I was carrying a pillow rather than cinder blocks.

When Jang needs a treatment, she turns to Myra Bautista, Higher Ground's other licensed acupuncturist, who has a decade of clinical experience in pain management and advanced techniques with a Master of Science degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine. "You can't do acupuncture on yourself, so we treat each other," explained Jang. "I am offering a New Patient Discount to see Myra on Fridays and Saturdays."

Keeping things in the family, Jang's mother Karen (whose background is kinesiology), works as the office manager. Her friendly demeanor confirms why clients have started calling her "Mom."

Higher Ground does accept insurance and various types of coverage should be discussed beforehand. "As a community I want to make sure that we are affordable. It's all an investment in our health."

Higher Ground is located at 920 Country Club Dr. For more information visit:
highergroundmoraga.com or call (925) 596-5317.

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