

business

# HERBS



# PLUS

by Claudia Newcorn

Photographed by Stephen Browning

## To Your Wholistic Health

“You are the person most responsible for your health, and need to take charge of it.” This advice is at the heart of Herbs Plus in Modesto, owned by Kathy Hester. For over 25 years “Dr. Kathy,” as her clients affectionately call her, has been helping people take a holistic approach to their health.

Kathy has earned multiple degrees: ND (Doctor of Naturopathies), CNC (Nutritional Counselor), CNHP (Certified National Health Professional), and MH (Master Herbalist), and is continuously studying to stay current with new modalities in her profession. “I love helping people to feel better, and go the extra mile to take care of them.”

### Taking the Time to Listen

One of the hallmarks of her success is listening and asking a lot of questions.

“My goal is to try and understand more than just the symptoms. I’m trying to learn about what may be triggering them, possible underlying causes, or other problems. I want to do my best to address a person’s whole health – as I say, take a ‘wholistic’ approach” – to helping them feel better.”

Herbs Plus carries the Nature’s Sunshine product line, as well as a selection of aromatherapy and homeopathy products, plus books and other items.

“I’m very selective about what I use. Ingredient quality is essential to delivering health benefits. Unfortunately, as has been shown in the news, there are a lot of brands out there which have more filler than anything else, and can’t produce good outcomes, which in turn raises doubts about the efficacy of supplements.”

As one of her clients, I find it fascinating how she uses muscle-testing to assess whether or not a particular product is right for a person.

“Many products are a combination of ingredients, and the question is to identify which blend is best for your situation. It’s all about personalizing the treatment to your specific needs. There’s no ‘one size fits all’ in holistic medicine.”

At the same time, she feels that traditional medicine and holistic medicine can complement each other. “Both serve important roles

in helping a person address health issues – but an individual has to take the initiative on being informed and asking questions, not just being passive about their health.”

### Overcoming Obstacles

Kathy has had to overcome major obstacles along the way. Located in the Frontier Village, her business was in the block that burned down in 2009. “I had to start all over – right in the middle of the recession. My customers were amazingly supportive, and I was determined not to let them down.”

Perhaps one of the hardest challenges was when Kathy was diagnosed with a brain tumor two years ago. “The doctors said it was probably growing since childhood. I began to notice trouble hearing and had some balance issues. I made the difficult decision to have surgery to remove it.” While the surgery was successful, nerve damage has partially paralyzed the right side of her face, giving her a lop-sided smile and a weak right eye. She drew on all her expertise to help heal herself.

“The doctors told me I probably wouldn’t be able to work again, and I refused to accept that. I took charge of my recovery, and was back in my office after six months. It’s taken time to come back up to full speed, but my clients say I’m a walking testament to my commitment to my profession.”

### Moving Forward

She is looking forward to resuming classes after the two-year hiatus. “I cover a wide range of topics, from cholesterol management, nutrition, and understanding blood types, to how to create your own cleaning solutions and reduce your exposure to chemicals. I believe in sharing expertise, not hoarding it. It creates a ripple effect, because people then share that knowledge with others, who are in turn also helped.”

I asked her what she did before she decided to enter this field, and she gave me her cheery half-smile. “Customer service. I’ve always loved working with people! So many are wrestling with health issues, and frustrated with not finding solutions that work. I’m here to listen and do my best for them. I also work with other practitioners, and when necessary, will direct people to them.”

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