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All creatures can seek healing through 'Best Intentions'

By April Wilkerson

SNS Reporter

A new center for holistic healing has opened its doors in Shawnee, and its welcome mat beckons both two-legged and four-legged creatures.

Best Intentions, at 678 Kickapoo Spur, Suite C, is a place for the restorative practice of healing touch. The animal practice of the method grew out of its human equivalent, and the two are a perfect balance for owner Lynn Davis. She is a registered nurse whose skills have expanded to take in the practice of healing touch, which addresses mind, body and spirit, no matter the creature.

"My goal is to have a 50-50 practice of healing touch -- one-half for two-leggeds and one-half four-leggeds," Davis said. "I want to have a holistic health center where people, and their pets, can come to learn and to take care of themselves."



Lynn Davis, a practitioner of Healing Touch for Animals, gives a treatment to Shadow recently at Best Intentions, a new holistic health center. *ED*

*BLOCHOWIAK/SNS Photo*

Davis is a certified healing touch practitioner for humans and one of only a handful in North America who leads courses on Healing Touch for Animals. She had been providing the service out of her home just outside Shawnee, and the timing seemed right to open an office in town that would be more accessible, she said. The result is Best Intentions, whose name is a reflection of the practice of balancing a person or animal's energy flow.

"The whole idea behind energy work is that energy follows intention," she said. "The first thing I do in a treatment is to set the highest good intention for an animal or person. Whatever is the highest good is what I want to happen."

There are many reasons why people or their pets might seek healing touch, Davis said. Injury, chronic pain, emotional trauma, post-surgery healing and stress relief are just a few that cross animal-human boundaries.

The essence of healing touch is placing one's hands on the person or animal to help the energy freely flow through the body, Davis said. When there's stress or injury, the energy flow can be blocked, resulting in a less-than-balanced feeling, she said. Humans can voice the source of their problems ("My workplace is a nightmare" or "My home life is stressful"), but animals can't express such a specific message. However, communicating with them is possible. Davis offers the additional service of animal communication, sometimes in conjunction with healing touch.

"Because my background is in nursing, I'm used to doing an assessment: Where does it hurt? Where is the problem? With animals, I'm a translator for the language they use," she said. "Animals communicate with one another through emotions and physical sensations. Once they realize we're willing to receive, they will send those messages to us as well. It's a way of looking at things through the animal's eyes."

Sometimes animals suffer from behavior problems that their humans can't seem to correct, such as a cat not using its litter box or a dog chewing on shoes. Animals, particularly dogs, can feel grief when a family member dies, a child goes off to college or another pet in the household dies, Davis said. Healing touch and animal communication can address problems in a way far beyond verbal commands or treats. Between talking to the pet owner and communicating with the animal, a solution can often be reached, she said.



Lynn Davis provides a healing touch treatment for Margaret Jeffers. Davis offers the practice for both humans and animals.

*ED BLOCHOWIAK/SNS Photo*

Margaret Jeffers, who is a student in healing touch for both animals and humans, recently brought her dog Angie to Best Intentions for a session. Angie was a shelter dog who had been abused, Jeffers said. Even though Angie is greatly improved, Jeffers still wants to address several of her dog's fears, such as her dread of water.

"I do healing touch with Angie at home, as well as with my cat," Jeffers said. "It increases your bond with your pet. It's communicating with them on an energetic level. And it's relaxing for both of you."

However, healing touch in animals is not a substitute for veterinary care, Davis said. Rather, it's a complement. Animals still need to see a vet for illnesses, but healing touch can address the accompanying emotional distress.

Davis has a collaborative relationship with Shawnee Animal Hospital, where Dr. Mike Steward has seen her impact on animals. It's a new concept, he said, and though everyone won't understand it, that doesn't mean it's a sham. It is perhaps like the arrival of acupuncture, once considered a farce in veterinary circles, Steward said, but now a more common treatment. He also relates Davis' work to his treatment of horses: he simply understands them.

"I communicate with the horse in my own little way. I'm gentle with the horse, asking him if he'll trust me," Steward said. "I have a saying: 'Don't be a horse whisperer; be a horse listener.'

"I'm just like everyone else -- I'm a little skeptical of things I don't understand. But we sure need to give Lynn's work a good looking at. Even though we don't understand it, it can still work."

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How to schedule a healing touch treatment

Best Intentions will be open from noon to 6 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment on Fridays and Saturdays.

Owner Lynn Davis can be reached for appointments at 503-1080.

Treatments are done inside the soothing-yet-animal-friendly space at Best Intentions. Walls are a calm blue, and animal photographs dot the animal treatment area, along with tile flooring. In the humans' room, a floor-to-ceiling waterfall mural sets the tone.

Human healing touch treatments last about an hour. The client lays on a massage table fully clothed. However, healing touch is not massage therapy, Davis said. She uses a light touch or hands just above the body to assess energy flow and correct imbalances. When the treatment is done, the client feels very relaxed, she said.

The treatment is good for people whose physical conditions can't tolerate massage, such as those with fibromyalgia, she said.

Healing Touch for Animals is similar. It takes about 45-60 minutes and can be done on all animal species. Davis said she welcomes creatures like cats, dogs and birds at her office, but she makes house calls for large animals like horses.

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