



(201)'s People to
Watch in
Health

(201)

brings attention to
20 individuals who are
making a difference in
the health and welfare
of Bergen residents



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Contemplative Couple

WILLIAM AND CATHERINE KRAME

Co-founders, Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living, Ramapo College of New Jersey

Mindfulness, a purposeful way of focusing attention in the present moment, had been part of the Krame family lifestyle long before the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., but the tragedy did help to crystallize the way in which William and Catherine Krame could use the approach to better serve the community.

"When the Sandy Hook massacre occurred, there was a huge shift for me," Catherine says. "The shooting was on a Friday, and my daughter, who was writing something for school about bringing mindfulness into education, bounced ideas off me that [following] weekend."

While debates raged in the U.S. over changes that needed to be made to prevent similar tragedies, it occurred to Catherine that incorporating mindfulness into education could help solve the problem of violence in schools.

"Teach children emotional resilience and how to cope, so that they don't turn to violence – this is the change that has to come," she says. "We have to bring more mindfulness to children."

With that goal in mind, the Krames sought a location for a spiritual wellness center and soon discovered that Ramapo College – located near the couple's home in Mahwah – was a willing collaborator. The Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living at Ramapo College was opened in 2014 to serve students, faculty and the community at large.

"For the past 15 years I've incorporated principles of mindfulness into my everyday life and my business," says William, a real estate developer by vocation. "I've seen the benefits myself and wanted others to see the benefits of a mindful approach to living life."

The stated mission of the Krame Center is to "support faculty, staff and students while serving the greater community as a distinctive center for learning and research in contemplative and mindfulness practices." Toward that end, classes and programs – including a speaker series, weekly meditation sessions and an eight-session Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course – have been made available to the Ramapo community and the public.

The objective during the Krame Center's first two years, William says, has been to "build a strong foundation to ensure the highest quality of programs." The long-term goal, Catherine adds, is to introduce contemplative studies as part of the curriculum and, ultimately, a degree program.

"We are hoping to create a model that will be used across the country in other educational institutions," she says. – JOSEPH RITACCO



Surgeon and Strategist

SHARYN LEWIN, M.D., FACS

Medical Director of the Regional Cancer Center's Gynecologic Oncology Division, Holy Name Medical Center

It was by no mistake that Dr. Sharyn Lewin would eventually find herself wandering the halls of a hospital, scrambling from patient to patient on a quest, as surgeon, to eradicate cancers that have afflicted her patients.

Lewin's grandmother was a gynecologist who practiced in Manhattan. Her grandfather was a preeminent physician who also worked on a cure for polio at the turn of the 20th century through funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. She considered her grandmother her first role model, someone who was a passionate advocate for women's health issues.

"I have always been driven to study women's health care issues," Lewin says. "Since the third grade, I began my quest for medical school. This was reinforced by participating in many women's health care programs during medical school. As an intern at Washington University in St. Louis, I was drawn to the gynecologic oncology patients. Never before had I met such a kind, compassionate group of women. I was driven to help them."

Today, as medical director of the Regional Cancer Center's Gynecologic Oncology Division at Holy Name Medical Center, Lewin, a board-certified gynecologic oncologist, spends her days diagnosing, treating and managing ovarian, endometrial, uterine, cervical, vulvar and vaginal cancers.

She employs a team approach and applies specialized skills learned during her training at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, such as radical pelvic and upper abdomen surgeries to remove any visible area of cancer. She also utilizes the state-of-the-art da Vinci Surgical System for complex, minimally invasive surgeries.

"As a surgeon as well as a chemotherapy specialist for gynecologic malignancies, we care for patients from diagnosis through surgery and chemotherapy and beyond," she says. "We also employ comprehensive strategies to ease any side effects of treatment and/or cancer including acupuncture, yoga, nutritional counseling and psychosocial support."

In late 2012, Lewin founded The Lewin Fund to Fight Women's Cancers, a 501c3 public charity, inspired by one courageous woman who battled gynecologic cancer. The organization's mission includes supporting novel patient care programs for women affected by cancer and their families, developing educational programs aimed at cancer prevention, and funding novel research to impact cancer outcomes.

"In the fragmented field of cancer prevention and cancer treatment, attempting to make a difference one step at a time, as well as providing a resource for cancer treatment is essential," she says. "We are doing this through The Lewin Fund to Fight Women's Cancers as well as our work at Holy Name Medical Center." – MICHAEL LAMENDOLA