



SHAKER SQUARE AREA
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - SHAD

the SHAD Connection SPRING 2021

Vol. 43 No. 3

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK AND SHOP IN THE SHAKER SQUARE AREA

Willow Cove Teaches Teen Girls Self Love During Difficult Times

by Pamela Zoslov

Lawna Gamble left a comfortable management job in Minneapolis, with “all the material things any person would desire,” to follow her dream of opening a business to help people heal in body, mind and spirit.

Her personal journey, inspired by a therapist who urged her to share her artwork and listen to what it was saying, led to her founding of Willow Cove Art and Wellness Boutique in 2018. Willow Cove resides in an exquisitely renovated house at 12404 Larchmere, providing art therapy, emotional support coaching, massage, Reiki and other holistic services.

Gamble, an artist, therapist and educator, has now turned her attention to helping adolescent girls. The idea was sparked by her experiences working at an area high school. “The students had so much trauma in their lives,” she says, from family problems, racial injustice, and deaths of friends and relatives by violence. Added to these stresses is the anxiety and isolation arising from the pandemic. “They don’t know how to identify the trauma, how to express it and cope.”

Young people also contend with social media messages that make

them feel inadequate. “There is an overarching ‘I’m not good enough’ message.” Adolescent girls, Gamble observes, can be led to believe “I’m not as pretty as the girl on social media, the superstar, or the influencer. I don’t have that kind of money, or that kind of job.”

To address these challenges, Gamble designed an eight-week program called Treasure Cove, tailored to adolescent girls, ages 12 to 15. The program’s mission, she says, is “to teach young women how to love themselves.”

The program, funded by a grant from Neighborhood Connections, was originally planned for spring 2020, but was put on hold by the pandemic. The funding has been extended, and Gamble hopes to be able to launch it this spring.

“The themes and activities are designed around three things: Positive connection, personal and collective strengths, and confidence and competence.” The six core sessions will focus on “adventurous, spiritual, physical, mental, sensory and emotional self-care.”

The young women will learn how to create art and about how color, in their clothing and environments, can affect their moods. They will learn how to prepare healthy food.

They’ll learn to do self-massage. They will go on a guided nature hike, during which they’ll journal, take photos and do nature-inspired art projects. The sessions will be led by practitioners in various disciplines, a team of presenters that will include some Larchmere merchants. Enrollment in the program is limited to 12.

Gamble wants to rescue the self-care concept from commercialism. “Wellness is everyone’s birthright,” she declares. “It should be a household agenda.”

For more information, call 216.230.7636, or log on to willowcove.org or Facebook.



Pamela Zoslov

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