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Chai Walla pop-up wellness salon to offer tea, conversation and holistic healing at Modern Art



JENELLE JANCI | Staff Writer 1 hr ago



Jenny Schulder Brant in the space at Modern Art where she'll host her Chai Walla pop-up wellness salon.

SARA CODE-KROLL

After Jenny Schulder Brant chose home birth over a traditional hospital birth, she became more interested in alternative medicine and wellness practices.

Brant was living in Portland, Oregon, at the time, where naturopaths and alternative health care practices weren't all that alternative. After moving to Lancaster in 2010, Brant wanted to continue that lifestyle for her and her family, but she wasn't sure how.

"I thought, 'Well, I need to continue on this path for them, for us,'" Brant, of Lancaster city, says.

After practicing yoga at Briala Bodyworks, Brant attended a yoga and wellness retreat at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Massachusetts.

There, Brant immersed herself in learning about Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine originating in India that emphasizes the connection between the body and the mind.

Brant now wants to expose residents here to Ayurveda and other alternative wellness practices through a two-week “Chai Walla” pop-up wellness salon at Modern Art in Lancaster city. Most events are free, with others costing \$15 and under. The wellness salon will have an opening party Monday night featuring yoga, live music and more.

The salon was inspired by informal get-togethers Brant hosts in her home. Brant wanted to share her love of masala chai, tea infused with healing spices, with friends and family.

“I’m always joking I just want to be a chai walla, which means chai vendor,” Brant says.

While Brant and her guests sip the spicy tea, they discuss various wellness topics.

Brant drew further inspiration from her family’s habit of morning dance parties to kick off the day. That’s how the wellness salon will start each day.

“Sometimes, to get our kids out of tired and grouchy moods in the morning, we just put on some music in our house and it just lifts the mood instantly,” Brant says.

The wellness salon will also feature “invoke spirit” sessions featuring music, poetry and guided meditation to provide attendees with daily inspiration. Brown-bag lunch discussions will focus on health and wellness topics, and drop-in sessions with palm readers, reiki healers and more will be available throughout the week.

Brant says it was a priority to keep a majority of the events free of charge.

“I just want people to feel empowered that they don’t need a lot of money to feel good in their body and in their mind,” Brant says.

The wellness salon is the first public event to be held in Modern Art’s back room. The space was previously used as office space, and when it became vacant, Modern Art’s co-owner Libby Modern wanted to find a way to utilize it to continue the art and design studio’s mission.

Modern Art does graphic design work for social causes, which funds its community artwork projects. The studio’s projects have included artfully decorated bikes available to the community to ride, and its Phonotel, which allows guests to check in their cellphones so they can “check out” of technology for a designated period of time.

“What we try to do is try and take some of these things people have to do and make it something that is more they get to do,” Modern says. “It’s a way of approaching the issue, not preaching to them what they should do, but how changing their habits or doing something else that’s healthy can be really fun.”

Offering a space for the community to try out some alternative wellness practices fits perfectly into that mission, Modern says.

Brant says she understands the attitude of skeptics — she says she’s one herself — and encourages people to question. But she hopes her wellness salon will create a space for the community to experience new things.

“Just keep an open mind, and if it’s calling to you, try it out,” Brant says. “If nothing else, you’ll have some fun and some chai.”

IF YOU GO

What: “Chai Walla” pop-up wellness salon.

Where: Modern Art, 529 W. Chestnut St.

When: Opening party from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Nov. 6; Daily events 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 6-10, 13-17.

Cost: Most events free, some sessions \$10-\$15.

More information: bit.ly/chaiwallasaloon.

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