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Dr. Tobey-Ann Pinder, ND (Class of 2009), Sydney, Australia

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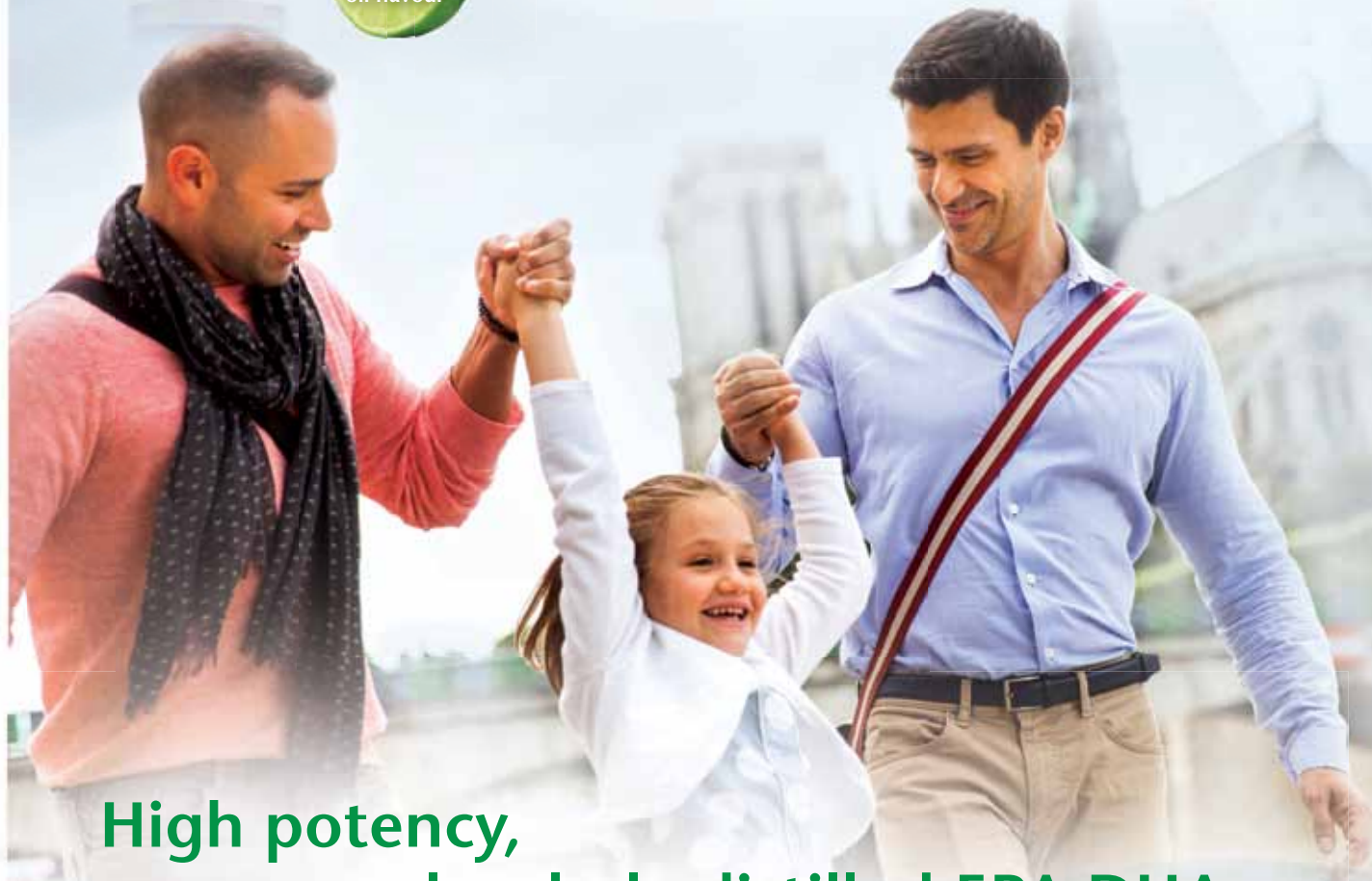
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SPRING 2017



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Class of 2012 grad Dr. Zain Ladha, ND, lives and practises in Dubai. Read her story on page 19.



Success as a journey

What does it mean to be a successful ND? Just as each ND is different, so too is each one's definition of success. Dr. Rahima Hirji, ND recently provided us with her unique perspective on success in the story that begins on page 28. Her journey of success has been informed, built and transformed by the many roles she has in life – ND, granddaughter, mother, friend and entrepreneur, to name a few.

The globetrotting NDs we have featured in this issue in our cover story have been on a journey of a different kind. Armed with their CCNM education as naturopathic doctors, the three NDs we feature in this issue are also armed with initiative, drive and a sense of humour about what you need to do to adapt to new places and cultures.

Each one has found success in her corner of the world, from Dubai to Cairo to Sydney through their practice and/or through advocacy of the profession.

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND, has a unique perspective on naturopathic medicine around the world in her role as the President of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF). Working with global agencies like the World Health Organization and other supra-national agencies, the WNF works to support the growth and diversity of naturopathic medicine worldwide. You can read more on page 8.

Ultimately, as all of these NDs make abundantly clear, the ND journey is never the same, rarely boring and the definition of success will continue to be as individual as every one of our graduates.

We hope you enjoy this issue. *

Simone Philogène
Editor in Chief



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Fifteen minutes with Dr. Kim Bretz, ND

Dr. Kim Bretz, ND (Class of 2001),
on ensuring a strong profession, public speaking,
and her “superstar” classmates



“I do a lot of work in the area of gastrointestinal (GI) health and have found that collaboration with my patients’ gastroenterologists or surgeons has improved their level of care.”

Dr. Kim Bretz, ND (Class of 2001) helps explain microbiota and why they’re important on ROGERS TV



Q Describe your involvement in recruitment for CCNM.

A – I’ve been speaking at Discover CCNM events and recruitment fairs for over 10 years. I share my experience of how I became an ND, starting from first attending a Discover CCNM event, to establishing my own business, Fundamentals of Health, and working integratively with other health care professionals. Students should understand the profession through those of us who do it on a day-to-day basis. We can talk to our passion, share the ins and outs of going through the schooling and working on the business side of things. Being involved in recruitment is a great way to ensure we have a strong profession.

Q What is the importance of engaging in public speaking? How it has helped in your professional development?

A – Public speaking is by far the best soft skill I’ve picked up since graduating. It has allowed me to help build my practice as I can speak clearly and confidently with my patients. It has also allowed me to work with local companies, lecture at universities, teach and present at conferences with ease.

Q Describe your work in women’s health at the Human Nature Network.

A – I worked with CHUM radio on a nationally syndicated radio program, starting with weekly health clips on herbal medicine and moving on to talking about women’s health in 1-2 minute clips. It helped develop my public speaking and taught me to be able to get things down to the details people really needed to know. It also worked towards my strong belief that as naturopathic doctors we are teachers. This was a way to get across information to more than just my patients.

Q Describe your involvement with the College of Naturopaths of Ontario (CONO).

A – I was elected to the executive committee and council in 2016. I also sit on the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

It’s been a great experience but with a steep learning curve that has helped me understand our role as health care providers in the context of public interest and safety. CONO ensures the public is able to access safe, competent and ethical naturopathic care, CCNM educates students in their road to becoming NDs and associations like the OAND and CAND advocate for the profession. The success of these bodies, help us as professionals work to the best of our abilities to provide amazing health care.

Q What are your professional goals and hopes for the future of integrative medicine and patient-centred care?

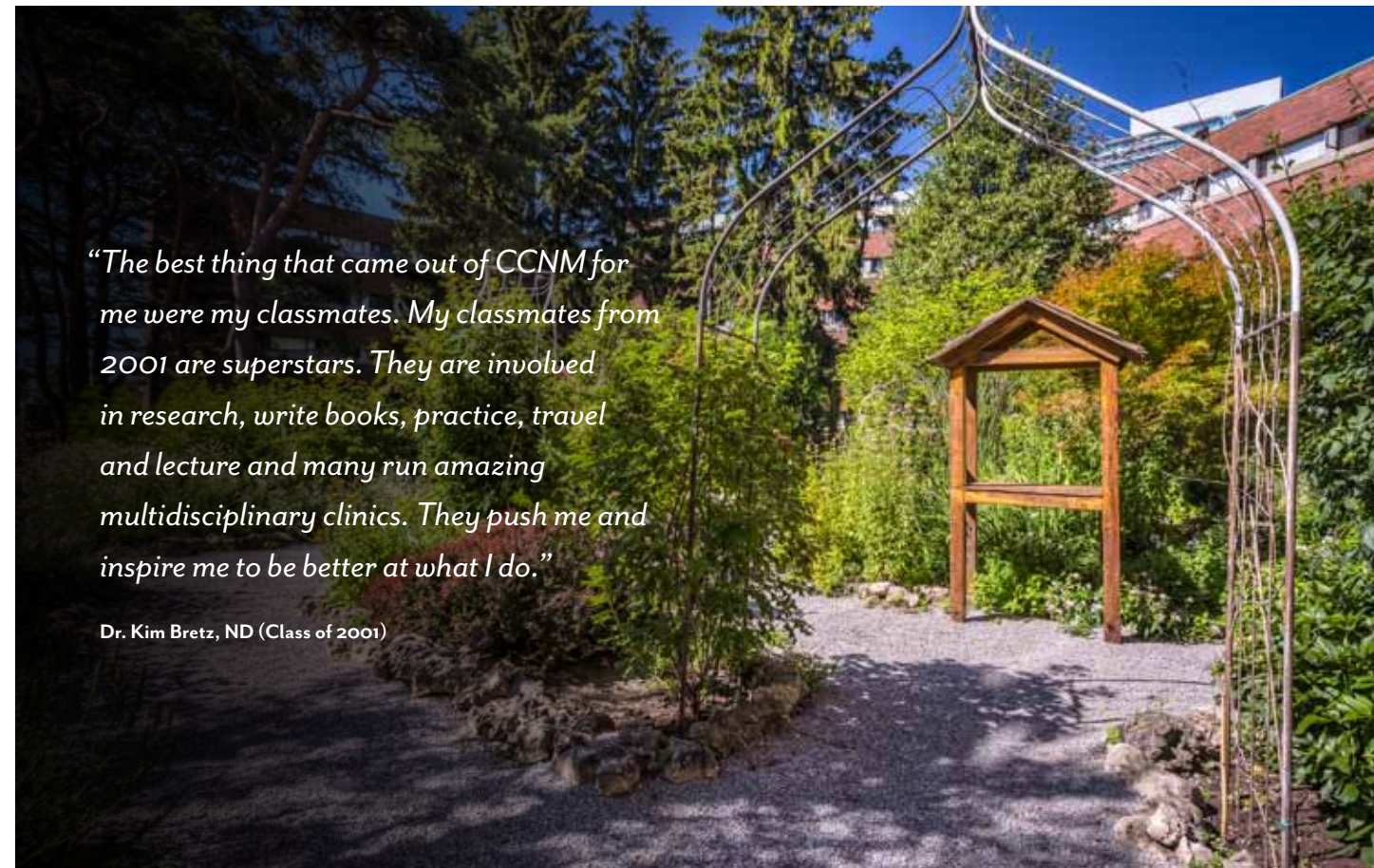
A—I’ve been very lucky throughout my career to have been able to work quite regularly with numerous MDs, pharmacists, researchers and universities. Now, I do a lot of work in the area of gastrointestinal (GI) health and have found that collaboration with my patients’ gastroenterologists or surgeons has improved their level of care. If we are able to all do what we’re best at, our patients tend to have the best health outcomes.

More and more programs are focusing on integrative care and working with NDs. Some recent evidence of this includes my invitations to speak at McMaster’s

Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (PIPER) program, as well as being part of a public health panel on understanding the issue of antimicrobial resistance through Health Canada.

Q What was one of the best things for you that came out of CCNM?

A—The best thing that came out of CCNM for me were my classmates. My classmates from 2001 are superstars. They are involved in research, write books, practice, travel and lecture and many run amazing multidisciplinary clinics. They push me and inspire me to be better at what I do. We work together, collaborate on speaking and writing and have shared our experiences together for over 15 years. *



“The best thing that came out of CCNM for me were my classmates. My classmates from 2001 are superstars. They are involved in research, write books, practice, travel and lecture and many run amazing multidisciplinary clinics. They push me and inspire me to be better at what I do.”

Dr. Kim Bretz, ND (Class of 2001)

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Tracing and holding onto our roots

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND, on why keeping a hold on the principles and philosophies of naturopathic medicine is critical as the profession moves forward



Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND (Class of 2002), at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.



The inaugural meeting of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF) in Calgary, Alberta in June 2015.
 Back row, from L-R: Jill Dunn, naturopathic doctor (New Zealand); Bob Bernhardt, CCNM president; Fatiha Lavand'homme, naturopathic doctor (Belgium); Amie Steel, naturopathic doctor (Australia); Ryan Cliché, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Dan Seitz, Council on Naturopathic Medical Education; Eta Brand, naturopathic doctor (Australia); and Dr. Michael Cronin, ND (USA).
 Sitting, from L-R: Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND; Dr. Tabatha Parker, ND, WNF; Dr. Jon Wardle, WNF; Phillip Cottingham, naturopathic doctor (New Zealand).

You could say that Iva Lloyd was destined to become a naturopathic doctor. A graduate in life sciences from Queen's University, she spent several years working at IBM before deciding to enter corporate health and wellness. While flipping through a magazine, she came across an ad for the College. According to Iva, CCNM sounded intriguing so she applied and the rest, as they say, is history.

"I really didn't even know very much about naturopathic medicine when I started the program; I just knew that it felt right. I have loved every moment since that day," she says.

An active member of the profession

Iva graduated from CCNM in 2002 and opened Naturopathic Foundations Health Clinic shortly after. It started out as a multi-disciplinary clinic but four years ago she decided to focus just on naturopathic medicine.


"I find that patients gain the most from naturopathic care when a treatment plan

addresses the psychological, functional and structural aspects of whatever is going on. I love every aspect of naturopathic medicine."

In addition to running a successful practice for the past 15 years, Iva is an active member of the profession: she is the naturopathic editor-in-chief of *Vital Link* (the official naturopathic medical journal of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors [CAND]), served as Chair of the CAND for three years, founded ND Health Facts, has published over 50 articles in various health magazines and journals, and given over 30 presentations at various conferences and organizations worldwide.

No matter what the task, research has played a key role in Iva's success.

"Research is essential to naturopathic medicine. All types of research. As editor of *Vital Link* for the past twelve years, I have had an opportunity to contribute to the volume of peer-reviewed research-based naturopathic articles, she says.



THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, FUNCTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF NATUROPATHIC CARE

"I find that patients gain the most from naturopathic care when a treatment plan addresses the psychological, functional and structural aspects of whatever is going on. I love every aspect of naturopathic medicine."

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND (Class of 2002)

The definitive guide to the profession's history in Canada

During her time as Chair of the CAND, Iva was asked by fellow naturopathic doctor and elder Dr. Verna Hunt, ND (Class of 1982), to write a book about the history of naturopathic medicine. What she initially thought would be a small project took on a life of its own.

With some help with from her mom who had experience in genealogy, Iva spent three years and over 2,500 hours reading hundreds of documents from naturopathic organizations, schools and old naturopathic journals.

In 2009, *The History of Naturopathic Medicine, A Canadian Perspective* was published. The book:

- Provides a detailed look at the philosophy and principles of naturopathic medicine
- Explores the history of naturopathic modalities including hydrotherapy, hygiene, nutritional therapies, mind-body medicine, herbalism, homeopathy, physical medicine, acupuncture and others
- Highlights the early founders of naturopathic medicine including Benedict Lust, Louisa Lust and Henry Lindlahr
- Explores the history of provincial formation and regulation, highlighting some of the naturopathic doctors that have played an instrumental role in the profession
- Provides an overview of research and its role and history in naturopathic medicine



Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND, collaborated with her mom who had experience in genealogy when writing *The History of Naturopathic Medicine, A Canadian Perspective* in 2009.

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“We must continue to grow from our strength – that is our philosophies, theories and principles that unite the profession at the local, national and global level.”

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND (Class of 2002)

“My deep appreciation and recognition for the power of naturopathy stems from the research that I had to do while writing the book,” explains Iva. “The strength of the naturopathic foundation has been based on a few people holding on tight to the philosophies and principles that are foundational to naturopathy.”

Strengthening naturopathic medicine around the globe

During the International Congress on Naturopathic Medicine (ICNM) conference in July of 2014, Iva was asked to sit in on a meeting to discuss the formation of a world federation for the naturopathic profession. The World Naturopathic Federation (WNF) took shape shortly thereafter and its inaugural meeting took place at the CAND Health Fusion conference in June, 2015. Iva currently serves as president of the WNF.

“The WNF is composed of national organizations and naturopathic educational institutions that promote and strengthen naturopathic medicine globally,” she says.

So where does the profession stand today? Iva says that global surveys conducted by the WNF over the past few years show that there is a strong degree of consistency with respect to naturopathic philosophies and principles and a tremendous diversity with respect to naturopathic educational standards and regulations around the world.

“I hope that the profession will be able to unite on a global basis and will remain one strong profession. In order for that to happen, some world regions need to embrace higher educational standards and other world regions, such as North America have to ensure that as they grow they ensure that they stay true to the roots of naturopathy, she explains. “We must continue to grow from our strength – that is our philosophies, theories and principles that unite the profession at the local, national and global level.” *

THE WORLD NATUROPATHIC FEDERATION

The World Naturopathic Federation (WNF) represents national naturopathic organizations, as well as naturopathic schools and associate naturopathic organizations. The goal of the WNF is to promote and advance the naturopathic profession.



The Mission of the WNF:

- 1 Supporting the growth and diversity of naturopathic medicine worldwide.
- 2 Supporting the appropriate regulation and recognition of naturopathic medicine.
- 3 Promoting accreditation and the highest educational standards for our global profession.
- 4 Encouraging naturopathic research.
- 5 Establishing and maintaining a database of Naturopathic organizations, regulation, accreditation, conferences and research activities.
- 6 Working with world agencies (World Health Organization, United Nations, UNESCO) and national governments and supra-national agencies in order to promote naturopathic medicine and the naturopathic profession.



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CCNM grads are all over the world

Ready to pack up your belongings and practise naturopathic medicine in a foreign, unfamiliar land? These grads were – and they'll tell you that the risk is well worth the reward



Dr. Laura Batson, ND
Nūn Center, Cairo, Egypt

DR. LAURA BATSON, ND (Class of 2012)

CAIRO, EGYPT



“Naturopathic medicine is not well-known in Egypt, but complementary medicine is greatly sought after. When I sit down with a new client I explain what naturopathic medicine is and they become very receptive and eager to begin.”

In the shadow of an ancient civilization

In 2014, two years after graduating from CCNM, Dr. Laura Batson, ND, and her husband received an offer that would change their lives.

Laura was operating her clinical practice in Ottawa when her husband, who had a teaching degree, received a two-year contract to become an educator in Egypt. Receiving the news with a fair amount of doubt, Laura found herself (eventually) coming around to the plan.

“‘You’re crazy’ I thought. ‘We’re not moving to Egypt.’” Laura remembers. “It just seemed so far and foreign and I had no idea how I could work there. But it was his dream job. The more I thought about it, the more I began to fantasize about ancient Egypt, the pyramids, and the great pharaohs. I was in.”

Her husband accepted the opportunity. And six months later they were on their way to their new home.

Practising at Nūn Center

Located on Zamalek Island, in the middle of the Nile River in an affluent section of Cairo, Nūn (pronounced “noon”) Center was established by Nada Iskander (homeopath and nutritionist) and Hana Holdijk (homeopath and massage therapist) in 2011.

Laura first found out about Nūn from one of her patients in Ottawa, and after meeting with a practitioner who had worked there she promptly emailed her resume.

“Within two weeks of arriving in Egypt, I was at the center, sitting down for tea with the owner, speaking about my practice

philosophies and which days of the week best suited me. It was so much easier than I thought it would be,” says Laura.

Her practice is more general, as family doctors are rare in Egypt. As a result, Laura is often her patients’ first point of contact, referring to other medical practitioners and ordering blood work directly from labs.

“Naturopathic medicine is not well-known in Egypt, but complementary medicine is greatly sought after. People often call the clinic looking for nutritional support or simply a natural alternative treatment for their health condition and get referred to me. When I sit down with a new client I explain what naturopathic medicine is and they become very receptive and eager to begin,” Laura says.



Laura, with her family, exploring their new home.





Laura, centre, leads yoga with a group of Egyptian women at the clinic.

Laura estimates that about **90%**

of her clientele are English-speaking, Egyptian women

One of only a handful of health and wellness centres in Cairo, people come to Nūn from all over the city. Laura estimates that about 90% of her clientele are English-speaking, Egyptian women.

“Very little promotion is required on my part. Clients come in through word of mouth referrals or are drawn in by the reputation of the center,” she remarks. “The potential is wide open for the profession to grow here. The demand is great and the practitioners are few.”

Getting started

Laura offers some practical advice – “bring a proper voltage converter!” – and encourages any new grads or NDs who are leaning towards practising in a foreign country to start Googling – holistic clinics, healing centres, yoga studios, and the like.

“You may not find a naturopathic clinic but you are sure to find a related health-care practitioner. Put feelers out as to whether

they would like to have an ND join their team. Make sure there is an English speaking population to serve. Most countries also have an established English-speaking expat community (and they likely have a Facebook page you can find and join). Expats are often looking for good alternative care,” she advises.

Or, if your travel plans include sightseeing at the Valley of the Kings, asking the Great Sphinx a riddle, or perusing the ancient artifacts at the Egyptian Museum, drop by Nūn and pay Laura a visit.

“If you’d like, you can get involved with the clinic by running a weekend workshop or even participating in a longer retreat,” she encourages. “Seriously – I’d love to have you!”

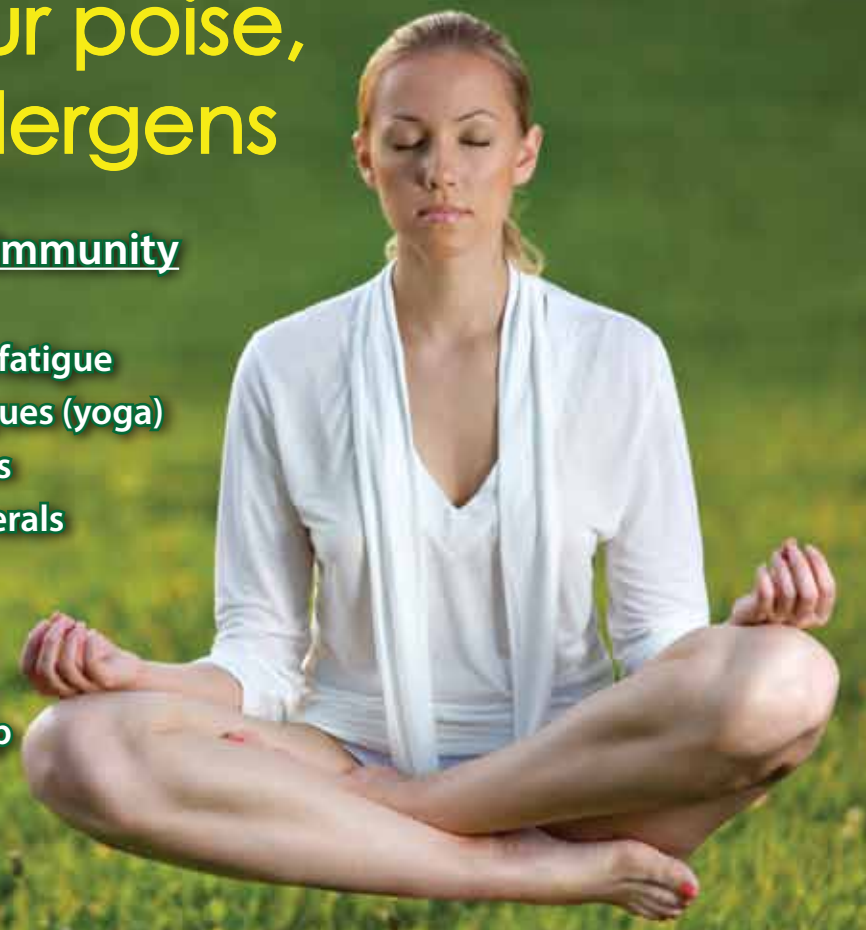
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Dr. Zain Ladha, ND
The Chiron Clinic
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

DR. ZAIN LADHA, ND (Class of 2012)

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Of the reasons that attracted Zain to the city – its pluralism, standard of living, and travel opportunities – the most important one is to practise at The Chiron Clinic, founded and owned by Dr. Lanalle Dunn, ND (Class of 2003).

Combining medicine of the east and west
Fellow Class of 2012 graduate Dr. Zain Ladha, ND, is no stranger to working abroad.

After receiving her undergraduate degree in kinesiology from the University of Western Ontario, she taught local and Kenyan youth at a residential camp in Antananarivo, Madagascar. It was there that she realized she wanted to be part of a profession that embraced healthy living, education and individualized care.

Years later, after becoming an ND and working as a clinic resident at CCNM, Zain is living in Dubai and enjoying the adventure.

“Within a few months, I went straight from completing the residency program to travelling for my extended honeymoon, to uprooting myself and moving to Dubai,” she recalls. “The last few years have been about personal growth, diversifying how I practice and learning about new and exciting modalities.”

The Dubai difference

Dubai, on the southeastern coast of the Persian Gulf, is recognized as a global city and a major business, economic, technological, and innovation hub in the Middle East. Of the reasons that attracted Zain to the city – its pluralism, standard of

living, and travel opportunities – the most important one is to practise at The Chiron Clinic, founded and owned by Dr. Lanalle Dunn, ND (Class of 2003).

“It is a beautiful space based on anthroposophy (a philosophy based on developing perception, imagination and inspiration through sensory experiences) and allows patients to feel at ease as soon as they walk in,” she says.

Another of Zain’s favourite aspects of Dubai is the prevalence of alternative medicine. Many of her patients have been exposed to it while growing up, so she rarely has to do any convincing.



The Chiron Clinic is located a few blocks from the seashore. Dr. Zain Ladha, ND, right, at her desk.



Dr. Zain Ladha, ND, outside her clinic room.



“The Chiron Clinic is a beautiful space based on anthroposophy (a philosophy based on developing perception, imagination and inspiration through sensory experiences) and allows patients to feel at ease as soon as they walk in.”

Dr. Zain Ladha, ND (Class of 2012)

“In many cases, I am the primary care doctor for my patients, which is different than my experience in Toronto, and I get to use the same treatment principles. They are generally excited to make meaningful and sustainable lifestyle changes, making our jobs as NDs that much easier!”

The wider medical community is also receptive to the benefits of naturopathic medicine. According to Zain, Dubai is “a very collaborative environment to work in,” making integration fairly easy, as other health-care providers are interested in knowing more about the profession and how they can work together to help patients.

Embracing a new home

Zain’s longstanding passion for facilitating community programs for early childhood and young adults – similar to what she did in Madagascar – is beginning to take shape in Dubai. She is speaking with

a neighbouring special needs school to provide free naturopathic care for one afternoon during the week.

In the meantime, Zain is learning more about her new home, interacting with the multitude of cultures and people that make up Dubai.

“Dubai has always struck me as being a very cool place to live,” she says of her decision. “It also felt like a great time to travel as I was a newlywed and didn’t have too many restrictions keeping me in Canada. And if you can find a place that facilitates your interests and passions, even better!”

Learn more about The Chiron Clinic at:

thechironclinic.com

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Dr. Tobey-Ann Pinder, ND
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Sydney, Australia

DR. TOBEY-ANN PINDER, ND (Class of 2009)

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

“I love living in a way that keeps me open to new experiences, learning, and opportunities. Australia has a great lifestyle (and climate!), and Sydney is a beautiful city. I really enjoy living here and feel grateful for all it has to offer.”



The naturopathic lawyer

That Dr. Tobey-Ann Pinder, ND, serves as the director and vice-president of the Naturopaths and Herbalists Association of Australia (NHAA) should come as no surprise to those who know her. The Class of 2009 grad is not only a former CCNM student governor but she is also a lawyer, obtaining her LLB from the University of Toronto.

Tobey describes her journey to CCNM as a “winding road to naturopathic medicine.” Having dealt with health issues during her undergraduate studies at Queen’s University, her experiences seeing an ND would end up proving formative.

Originally planning to pursue a PhD in pharmacological and animal models of addiction and behavior, she took a year off and got accepted to law school. Feeling that it wasn’t the right fit, Tobey rediscovered naturopathic medicine and applied to CCNM, eventually completing both programs.

“My law degree has allowed me to participate in the naturopathic profession in a unique cross-functional way through a variety of roles,” she reveals. “I articulated in a law firm that focused on health professional regulation, which later resulted in me being called to the bar in Ontario. I think it is

valuable to have an understanding from a practitioner and legal point of view in matters of professionalism, ethics and regulation.”

Advancing the profession Down Under

There is no regulation of the naturopathic profession in Australia, but the NHAA and other like-minded associations offer membership packages and other benefits for NDs.

This existence of multiple associations is part of the challenge for Tobey – she says that they have diverging ideas on how to best advance the profession and what kinds of regulation to enforce.

“Putting forward a clear and powerful message to the government, media, general public, and even skeptics, on behalf of the profession can be quite difficult with different professional associations with widely differing voices.

“That is why I chose to be a member of and serve on the board of the NHAA,” she explains. “It most closely aligns with the betterment of the naturopathic profession by advocating for higher educational standards, regulation of the profession, advancement of research, and professionalism and ethics. The NHAA has always championed recognition for their members and the profession as a whole.”

She never strays too far from her legal background, even in her private practice. Tobey strikes a balance between staying connected to naturopathic principles and indulging her more analytical side.

“I actually feel that my law degree assists me in working through the problems and puzzles of health as they are complex and multi-modal,” she reflects. “I see how an education in another discipline (law) can really benefit the naturopathic profession.”

Life after CCNM

Marriage originally brought Tobey to Sydney, but it has become home. Currently on maternity leave until the end of 2017, Tobey plans to continue advocating for the profession – and possibly even pursue further education down the road.

“I don’t think I could have predicted or planned my career and life path over the last eight years, but I actually think that is great,” she says. “I love living in a way that keeps me open to new experiences, learning, and opportunities. Australia has a great lifestyle (and climate!), and Sydney is a beautiful city. I really enjoy living here and feel grateful for all it has to offer.” *

Connect with Tobey at:

 /Dr-Tobey-Ann-Pinder-ND-940195882724783

 /drtobey_nd

Donation funds new CCNM mental health initiative

Chief naturopathic medical officer, Dr. Jonathan Prousky, ND, brings his extensive experience to new patient focus



Dr. Jonathan Prousky, ND

According to research conducted by CCNM, mental health is listed as one of the top three reasons patients visit the RSNC; of that number, psychosocial problems rank as the highest. Through the generous gift of the Integrated Orthomolecular Network (ION), CCNM will be able to specialize more on this area of health care which is still stigmatized and persistently misunderstood.

The donation will be divided into three main components – establishing a mental health focus at the RSNC, developing clinical curriculum for interns and content for continuing education, and hosting an annual lecture series and call for papers. The latter will honour the memory of Dr. Abram Hoffer, MD, the founder of orthomolecular medicine.

More focused care for chronic mental illness

CCNM's chief naturopathic medical officer, Dr. Jonathan Prousky, ND, will be taking on a pivotal role, supervising and mentoring interns in the new focus area and monitoring patient outcomes. He's excited about the possibilities of having a mental health focus and the impact it could have on the greater community.

“We can improve our ability to understand chronic mental illness and build experience in terms of what works and what doesn't,” says Jonathan of the focus. “Lots of good research will be generated as well. Many people with mental illness don't have access to naturopathic care because it's cost prohibitive for them, so we're providing a really important service to those who need it at a reduced rate.”

The focus is set to open in May 2017, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Fridays. Clinical nutrition will be the main recommended treatment method, although lifestyle modifications and botanical medicine will also be used.

The Integrated Orthomolecular Network donation will be divided into three main components:



1. MENTAL HEALTH

Establishing a mental health focus at the RSNC



2. CLINICAL CURRICULUM

Developing clinical curriculum for interns and content for continuing education



3. LECTURE SERIES

Hosting an annual lecture series and call for papers

THE INTEGRATED ORTHOMOLECULAR NETWORK (ION)

The vision of the Integrated Orthomolecular Network (ION) is to empower people to enjoy balanced, optimal lives using orthomolecular treatments and approach mental and physical health using therapeutic nutrients and diet.

While the ION organization was dissolved in 2016, its work and the work of the International Schizophrenia Foundation, continue through the ION website, which provides a wealth of educational information on orthomolecular treatment for the public and professionals.

“No treatment paradigm for mental health is universal. But when you integrate treatments there are more outcomes that are positive. We’ll integrate our therapies with whatever prescriptions patients are already on – sometimes, naturopathic medicine allows people to be on fewer medications,” Jonathan says.

Opening up the clinical experience to others

As the focus area evolves, Jonathan plans to create an elective for fourth-year students, similar to what Dr. Dan Lander, ND, spearheaded in 2015. Dan, who

supervises interns at the RSNC’s cancer care focus, designed an online course that is based on interactive modules which combine assigned readings, video, audio and other case-based learning strategies.

In addition, Jonathan is looking to enlist a wide range of health-care practitioners to coordinate patient care.

“We can’t work in isolation – no provider does,” Jonathan says. “We want to position ourselves as partners and build bridges with others, and also share as much as possible with the health-care community.” *

“Many people with mental illness don’t have access to naturopathic care because it’s cost prohibitive for them, so we’re providing a really important service to those who need it at a reduced rate.”

Dr. Jonathan Prousky, ND



Dr. Jonathan Prousky, ND, with a patient.

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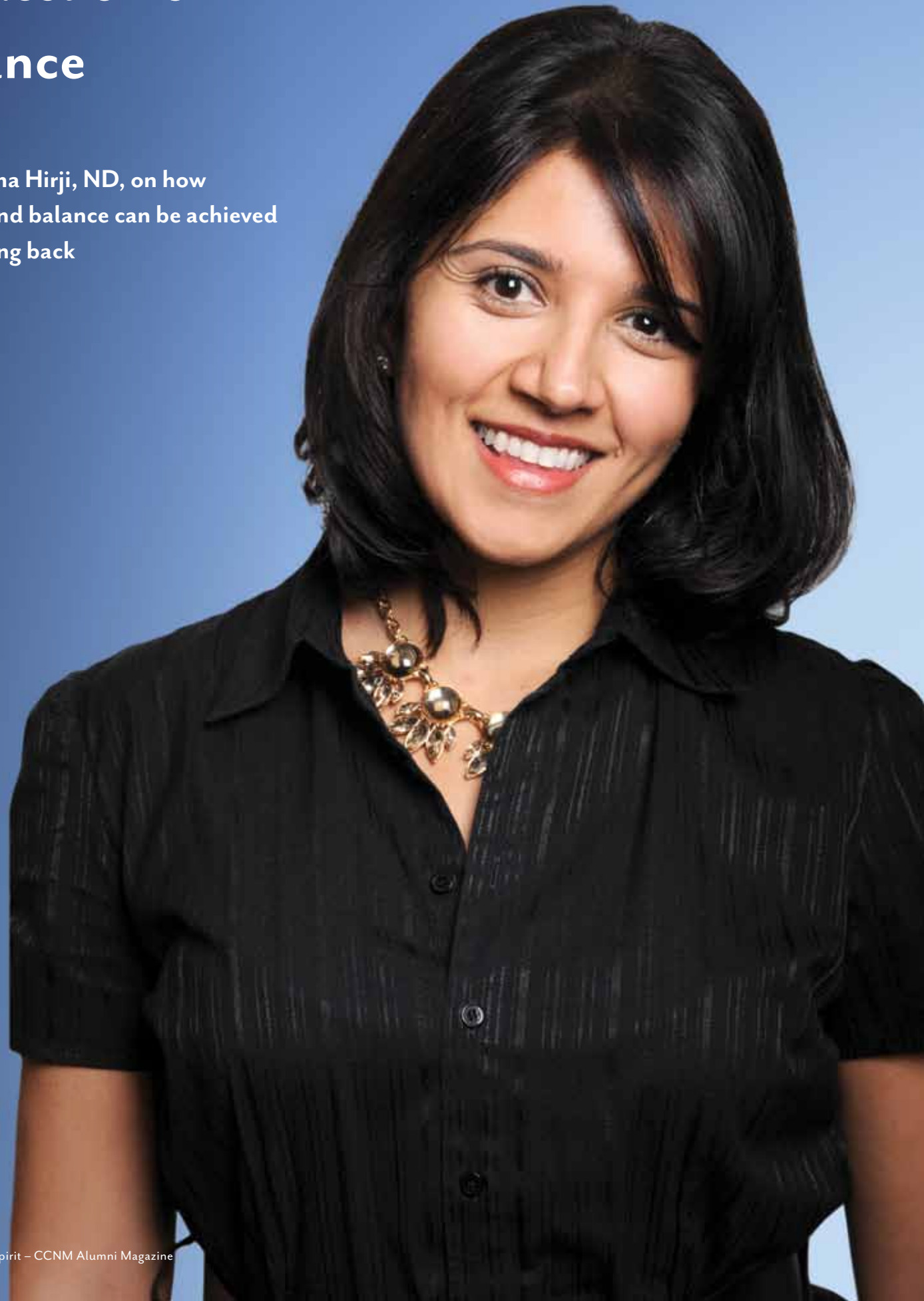
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A question of balance

Dr. Rahima Hirji, ND, on how success and balance can be achieved by stepping back



“I go home feeling good about the work I’m doing and about myself. For me, success is finding that balance where you are professionally and financially successful without sacrificing your personal health and lifestyle.”

Dr. Rahima Hirji, ND (Class of 2002), pictured with her husband Rahim and their two boys, Adam and Noah



For NDs who lead a busy, entrepreneurial life, balance is pivotal. Clinical success – owning a successful practice, being an expert in the field, making meaningful contributions to the profession – balanced with enough personal time is the goal for many CCNM graduates.

But what about scaling back? Can it be as equally vital – and fulfilling – to let go? Dr. Rahima Hirji, ND (Class of 2002), thinks so.

“We all graduate and work so hard to build our practices and be successful but I believe there is such a thing as too much success,” she says. “It can be scary to step back and say no to opportunities. In the end, you have to take a good, hard look at your life and think about what you want to leave behind for your family, friends, and patients.”

The road from the local health-food store to Sage Naturopathic Clinic

From a young age, Rahima expressed an interest in healing. Her father owned a business with a health-food store located just a few steps away. Rahima remembers scouring the shelves at that store, in awe of the vitamins, herbs and “alternative” items like carob chips and rice milk.

With plans to attend medical school, Rahima’s outlook on medicine changed in her second year of university when her grandmother died of breast cancer.

“Watching how she was treated by the health-care system, the side effects of the treatments, and the ultimate failure to help her led me to look outside. I met someone who told me about naturopathic medicine and from there, I started to look into it; the more I looked into it, the more excited I became,” she says.

Rahima applied to CCNM, graduating in 2002, and went on to create Sage Naturopathic Clinic in Kitchener, Ontario. Described by Rahima as a “labour of love,” Sage is an interdisciplinary clinic with eight practitioners and one of the few in the region certified to offer IV therapy.

Making changes that lead to greater fulfillment

For 15 years, Rahima has been busy building her practice in Kitchener and eventually, in Toronto. But for some time she was reassessing her priorities and contemplating her future. Was she taking care of herself? Were her two young children receiving her full attention? Is giving up control of Sage the key to balance?

Then, on October 14, 2015, Dr. Mubina Jiwa, ND, Rahima’s best friend and well-respected member of CCNM’s community and the naturopathic profession, passed away from ovarian cancer. Suddenly, in the midst of her grief, Rahima had three practices to look after.



In December 2016, Rahima left her Toronto practice and sold half of Sage to her colleague, Class of 2013 graduate Dr. Deanna Walker, ND.

A question of balance cont'd

"I was asked to take over her practice. She was my best friend and I wanted her legacy to carry on, so I took over her clinic and ran all three clinics for a year. It was very difficult to manage, especially since we were running IV at all locations," she says.

It's been a journey for Rahima, processing her friend's death while undergoing a personal transformation of her own. Rahima knew that she wanted to do things that invited more joy into her life – spending time with family, cooking healthy meals, travelling, running, and baking. So in December 2016, Rahima left her Toronto practice and sold half of Sage to her colleague, Class of 2013 graduate Dr. Deanna Walker, ND.

"There were days when I used to see 26 patients daily. For some NDs, that might sound amazing but those days I left the clinic feeling exhausted, physically and emotionally," she recalls. "After I hired an associate and started to see fewer patients, I made less money but found my love of the profession again."

Balance in the everyday

In addition to her clinical practice, Rahima is active in her local community. She, her brother, and some friends launched Duds for Studs this year, an initiative that provides formal and business wear for boys and young men who would otherwise not be able to afford them. Rahima is also a member of CCNM's program advisory council, acts as a liaison between her kids' school and the Children's Aid Foundation, maintains a blog, and does the occasional television or public speaking appearance.

"I think success is different for different people," she ruminates. "For the struggling new grad, success might mean being able to pay the bills. For the established ND, it might mean being able to make your own schedule and hire help. For me, the meaning of success has changed over the years.

"I go home feeling good about the work I'm doing and about myself. For me, success is finding that balance where you are professionally and financially successful without sacrificing your personal health and lifestyle." *

Learn more about
Sage Naturopathic Clinic at:
thesageclinic.com

Read Rahima's blog at:
buildingmybetterlife.com



In Memoriam: (1978 – 2015)

THE MUBINA JIWA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Mubina Jiwa Memorial Scholarship was established in January 2016 by Rahima, Mubina's husband Zahir Bhanji, and Dr. Joanna Sparrow, ND, to honour the memory of Dr. Mubina Jiwa, ND, who passed away in October 2015.

An award of \$2,000 will be given to a CCNM student in Year 2 of the program who reflects the values embodied by Dr. Jiwa during her life and who demonstrates academic excellence in the naturopathic program. Once awarded to a recipient, the scholarship, a total of \$6,000 over three years, will continue on an annual basis until graduation provided a minimum GPA of 3.7 is maintained.

To make a donation, please contact Frances Makdessian at fmakdessian@ccnm.edu



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