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New owner brings extensive wellness background to Ayurvedic Health Center

Katrina Svoboda Johnson, new owner of Bellingham's Ayurvedic Health Center, has 10 years' experience in private practice as a wellness care provider, but fun and games are never far from her mind. In fact, her first career involved typesetting Pokémon cards and packaging at Wizards of the Coast, maker of the wildly popular Dungeons and Dragons game.

Disillusioned with that company's increasingly corporate culture, Svoboda Johnson discovered she was drawn to explore more holistic forms of maintaining balance, health and wellness. A New York City native and graduate of University of the Arts in Philadelphia, she became a certified ayurvedic practitioner after studying at the California College of Ayurveda.

In 2006, she founded a wellness practice in Tacoma, offering yoga and Structural Integration deep-tissue bodywork and teaching BioSomatics movement. Over the past four years, she began to incorporate ayurveda and vedic astrology into her work after moving to Portland, Ore.

“I am very comfortable with the Western medical model,” she says. “My mother was a nurse, my husband is a nurse, and I have worked in hospitals and private medical practices. However, I prefer a mindset of being proactive about one's health and wellness with the idea that simple things such as diet, meditation and massage can have powerful therapeutic effects.”

Svoboda Johnson draws on herbalism, nutrition, therapeutic exercise and movement in her work. “All of the modalities that I practice are tailored specifically to the client,” she says. “We are all distinct individuals with different needs when it comes to supporting ourselves in health and wellness. We need flexible and adaptable approaches to stay in a state of balance.”

An avid book fan, Svoboda Johnson laughs that she will miss Powell's Bookstore but is eager to move with her husband to Bellingham.

She enjoys outdoors activities and cooking, making her own teas, herbal formulas and body-care products as part of her practice. Other interests include ceramics, photography, printmaking, bookbinding and graphic design.