

805 LIVING

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Mind/Body/Soul

By Maryann Hammers Photographs by Gary Moss

GOOD WORK

Women entrepreneurs merge their personal and professional passions to bring heart and soul to others.

AS THIS GROUP OF WOMEN PROVES, making others feel good is one of the best, most fulfilling endeavors. When there is deeper purpose behind their actions, their generosity can make a huge difference in the lives of others.

Dannielle Crouch

Island Spray Tan, Oxnard Shores

From the time Dannielle Crouch was in high school, she craved a deep, dark tan. She got hooked on tanning beds, often purchasing monthlong, unlimited-session tanning packages. She got the tan she sought, and she got something else, too: At age 29, she developed a small black mole on her arm. It was malignant melanoma—the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Crouch was shocked. She hadn't realized that tanning beds presented a skin-cancer risk, and especially not with her olive skin and dark hair. "They removed a chunk of tissue from my arm. Luckily, the cancer had not spread, or I probably wouldn't be alive," she says. "I feel blessed to be here today, raising my two young boys. I was young and stupid—and dying to be tan."

Sad that she could never tan again, and worried about other young women who were also unaware of the danger of tanning beds, she began researching safe, sunless ways to achieve a golden glow.

Last year she launched Island Spray Tan (islandspraytan.com), a mobile airbrush tanning service that goes directly to clients' homes. Now her clients get that golden hue without the risk.

"This is the perfect business for me," she says. "I love skin care; I love helping women look and feel bronzed and beautiful; and I love that I'm protecting my clients from skin cancer."

Kathy Hartley

Lavender Inn, Ojai

Seven years ago, Kathy Hartley took over a run-down motel with the goal of transforming it into a high-end B&B. In the process, she achieved something even more fulfilling.

Built in 1874 as Ojai's first schoolhouse, today's Lavender Inn (lavenderinn.com) has a garden courtyard, trickling fountains, a vintage chandelier swinging from the branches of a mulberry tree, and an on-site spa. It's popular with couples and wedding parties, but Hartley most enjoys when groups of girlfriends take over the place. "The house is so alive and fun when women are here," she says.

Wanting to share the joy, Hartley launched Inn Courage, a twice-yearly, all-expense-paid, three-day spa retreat for up to 10 low-income women with cancer. Hartley works with counselors, aestheticians, massage therapists, life coaches, and makeup artists, who all donate their services.

Many of the women have never before had a massage or spa treatment; some have never stayed in a hotel. The goal is for them to feel comfortable enough to take off their wigs, discuss their illnesses, and forget their woes for the first time since being diagnosed. They do yoga by candlelight, take healthful cooking classes, go on scenic hikes, and sit by the fire for warm-hearted gabfests.

"With Lavender Inn, I can run not only a business, but something with heart and soul, infused with joy," Hartley says.

Diane Loring

Spa by Diane Loring, Inc., Ventura

Diane Loring's résumé includes stints as a trucker and pole-climbing lineman. She's up for a second-degree tae kwon do black belt next year, and she founded a nonprofit training program called WISE (Women Involved in Sports Evolution) to help women seeking a police or fire-fighting career pass through those respective academies.

With that kind of push-the-boundaries background, Loring wasn't about to run a froufrou day spa. Instead, she says, she aimed to build a "community of champions."

Located within the harbor-view Four Points Sheraton, Spa by Diane Loring (spaventura.com) is small in size but expansive in scope. Loring partners with sports psychologists, registered dietitians, exercise physiologists, yoga instructors, massage therapists, and aestheticians to create a women-oriented wellness community.

Guests sign up for surfing classes with professional surfer Mary Osborne. They go on meditation walks with Sondra Briggs, author of *Port Hueneme Beach Walks*. They take stress-reduction classes and healing-art workshops led by clinical psychologist and accomplished artist Dr. Priscilla Partridge de Garcia. The spa's retail shelves are stocked with jewelry made by Angolan women and sinfully rich Double Trouble chocolate-chip cookies, which Loring and de Garcia home-baked and entered in the Ventura County Fair (they took first place).

Cookies as spa cuisine? Surfing on the spa menu? Power lineman as spa director? Why not? "A champion never says 'no,'" Loring says.





“THE HOUSE IS SO
ALIVE AND FUN WHEN
WOMEN ARE HERE...”

—Kathy Hartley



Women who make a
difference (from top,
clockwise): Island Spray
Tan's Dannielle Crouch,
Lavender Inn's Kathy
Hartley, and Spa by
Diane's Diane Loring.



» Mind/Body/Soul

Caroline Loureiro

Indulgence, The Home Spa, Santa Barbara

Ten years ago, Caroline Loureiro came to Santa Barbara from her native Brazil to learn English. She fell in love with the city, enrolled in Santa Barbara Community College, worked as a nanny, and earned a hotel-management degree. While working at an upscale resort, she met celebrity guests who wanted spa treatments but didn't want to be seen in the spa.

A lightbulb clicked. "Mobile spas are common in Brazil, so I saw an opportunity," Loureiro says. In 2004, still in her 20s, she launched Indulgence (indulgencethomespa.com), a mobile spa offering mani/pedis, foot treatments, yoga classes, massages, facials, and private-chef services in clients' homes, hotel rooms, and offices.

Indulgence was a quick success. Loureiro has contracts with several fine Santa Barbara and Montecito hotels. She has more than two dozen carefully trained therapists working for her, is building a franchise in Brazil, and launched an Indulgence product line. She has flown on a private jet for a client who likes foot massages en route to New York, and offered pedis on a yacht for a client who likes harbor views.

Loureiro's most fulfilling work is as a Breast Cancer Resource Center volunteer. Every week she visits women too weak to leave home and treats them to "the best pedicure ever," she says. "I never met a girl who doesn't enjoy getting pampered! Cancer has taken over these women's bodies, but they are still uplifting and full of life. I'm grateful to help them in a small way."

Shannon Neels

Le Rêve Organic Spa, Santa Barbara

Women's wellness has always been Shannon Neels' passion. So when she launched Le Rêve (le-reve.com) more than 10 years ago, she focused on therapeutic treatments in a healthy environment and insisted on pure, organic ingredients, making Le Rêve the first and only certified green spa in Santa Barbara.

"We've been doing that since 1999, long before 'green' was hip," Neels says. "From the beginning, I focused on health and wellness, not just outward beauty. That's how Le Rêve stands apart."

After losing a client to cancer, Neels wanted to do more to help, and began offering free spa treatments to people with cancer. But she was just one person, and the need was too great. To make a true impact, she needed more volunteers, so she created Angels List (angelslist.org), a foundation that acts as a conduit between volunteers and cancer patients.

"Angels List is made up of people—including everyone on my staff—who donate their services, such as dog walking, grocery shopping, yoga classes, house cleaning, spa treatments, and so forth," Neels says. "I'd like to see Angels List grow all over the country, so that every person who has cancer will also have an angel." ■

Le Rêve Organic Spa's Shannon Neels.



Indulgence, The Home Spa's Caroline Loureiro.

