

**SHEPHERD EXPRESS
NOVEMBER 20, 2012**

CORE/EI Centro's Healing Center



Madeline Gianforte is a co-founder of CORE/EI Centro, a nonprofit, bilingual healing center in Walker's Point offering affordable wellness therapies to the community. A massage and Reiki practitioner, Gianforte is also a nun dedicated to service and social justice.

What exactly does CORE offer?

We offer affordable integrative services to help heal body, mind and spirit: acupuncture, Reiki, different kinds of massage— Swedish, therapeutic, myofascial release, craniosacral... depending on the professional volunteers that come to us. We offer holistic exercise classes in yoga, Tai Chi, qi gong, Zumba and Nia Dance.

Wow. That's a lot. I know you target low-income clients, often women from the Latino community. Can anyone come?

Yes! Everyone is welcome. Services are offered on a sliding-fee scale.

Can you describe what success looks like at CORE?

We've seen people with chronic pain get to the point where they don't need drugs. We've had people able

to avoid shoulder or back surgery... people with anxiety issues getting to a place of balance in their lives, where they're confident enough to get through their days... We serve 3,200 people a year—that's 2,500 service hours. We have over 100 volunteers—professionals that do massage, energy work, fundraising, even laundry—80 sets of sheets a week...

The fact that you're a nun is a fascinating part of this story. What called you to religious service?

When I was in college, I was engaged, but also very involved with service projects. I told [my fiancé] I couldn't commit till I'd checked out religious life. At the same time, I was being recruited to play professional basketball— so there were scouts in the stands and the Sisters of St. Agnes! I felt, in the end, I was called to be a part of a group of women that could make a difference in the world... I joined the Sisters of St. Agnes primarily because they were social justice oriented.

What was your inspiration when you and Jayne Ader co-founded CORE/EI Centro 11 years ago?

My belief came out of my master' s thesis that if everybody in the world had access to healing from the inside out, and could approach life from a place of confidence and deep healing, world peace would be possible. Low-income communities typically do not have access, so the idea was to create it for that piece of the population... Some people said, " If you can get it started in Milwaukee, you can get it going everywhere!" The name "CORE/EI Centro" came to me in a dream. The center is the core—the deepest part of who we are. It's also a place for us to gather for spiritual energy and healing—a place where we can come home to ourselves.

CORE/EI Centro is housed in the Clock Shadow Building, 130 W. Bruce St.

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