

Tucson Non-Profit — Spotlight

Integrative Touch for Kids (ITK) was created when founder, Shay Beider's life was forever changed by one little girl in the hospital, who was frightened and alone as she was about to undergo surgery. As a pre-med student, Shay witnessed this little girl go under anesthesia in a state of intense fear and in that moment something inside of her said, "No. It doesn't have to be this way." Shay understood the profound importance of caring for the whole child in body, mind, heart and spirit. Integrative Touch for Kids was founded in 2005 to honor that little girl, to protect children from unnecessary suffering and to address all aspects of the healing process.

ITK'S purpose is to enhance well-being, minimize suffering and facilitate healing for families with children with developmental disabilities, genetic conditions, cancer, and other chronic, acute and life-limiting illnesses

The positive impact Shay's vision has had on a local family:

"Today we took a break from our therapy-filled life to truly relax and reflect on this past year that challenged me, and continues to do so, beyond my capabilities. Thanks to Integrative Touch for Kids, Joseph and I were part of something that exceeded any expectation I could have had. We spent the day alongside other families with extra special kids receiving massages, acupuncture, sound therapy, healing treatments and group therapy while our kids enjoyed being KIDS.

Seeing the joy on their faces as they played with the other children, therapy dogs, sensory-friendly games and activities was enough to warm my heart for a lifetime. Tears were shed, hugs were given, and bonds were formed. The parents of children with special needs are some of the strongest I have ever met and I am proud to be one of them. Instead of crumbling, we conquer; instead of fleeing, we fight.

Having two children on the autism spectrum has affected our entire family...so to be a part of something that appreciates the need of treatment for the entire family is something I will hold near and dear to my heart...To all the parents fighting this fight, we are in this together; take care of yourself before attempting to take care of others. Find joy, don't lose hope, and most importantly... breathe." — *[about Healing Circles Program]*

From a 13- year-old program attendee with liver and kidney disease:

..."I liked being in a place where I could be myself. I really liked meeting people who didn't judge me when I said I couldn't do something because of my disease or that I was

just too tired. I never had to worry about what other people thought. That's because the other families we were with had gone through a lot of the same scary stuff me and my family have gone through"....[*about Healing Retreat Program*]

Tucson medical professionals agree:

"It is not just the child. It is everyone in the family and every relationship in the family. And that is being addressed by Integrative Touch for Kids in an amazing way."

—*Katie Landherr, MD [about community and hospital programs]*

"I'm grateful to Shay and her volunteers that help our kids have a better life through integrative touch." — *Fayez Ghishan, MD, Pediatric Chief of Staff, Diamond Children's at Banner Children's Medical Center [about Hospital Heroes Program]*

Integrative Touch for Kids has developed a pioneering form of integrative therapy that utilizes over 100 modalities (massage, reiki, healing touch, play and sound therapy, and more). Their programs work and the results are far-reaching. Program studies and family feedback show that their hospital and community programs: 1) Relieve children's pain and fear, 2) Strengthen the entire family's coping ability and well-being, 3) Enhance comfort care at the end of life, 4) Decrease social isolation, 5) Help kids respond better to medical treatments.

ITK's vision is to break down social barriers and engage communities in support of families struggling with special medical needs, improving the quality of life for all.

When a child suffers, the family suffers. With their Whole Child, Whole Family, Whole Community wellness model, Integrative Touch for Kids is the only pediatric integrative therapy program to treat the entire family. The result is that family members suffer less trauma, anxiety, and depression, and are able to provide better support to their child with special medical needs.

Want to get involved or learn more? Visit www.integrativetouch.org

*Integrative Touch for Kids' 11th Annual Butterfly Gala fundraiser
will be held February 1, 2019 at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
Tickets are available from the website
or by calling 520-308-4665*
