



Quad-City Labyrinth Project



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Group looks for spiritual healing

Tamara Fudge | Sunday, February 01, 2004 Quad City Times

Some Quad-Citians have found a new way to relax: walking the labyrinth.

The Quad-City Labyrinth Project sponsored special activities over the weekend at the Star Cres Building in downtown Rock Island. Thirty people participated as guest speaker Jessica Peters, of Davenport, presented "Living Your Dreams" and "Transforming Your Reality."

Peters, a third-year student at Palmer College of Chiropractic, Davenport, is working to "find a deeper level of consciousness, to connect with your own divine purpose," she said.

According to the American Cancer Society's Web site, a labyrinth is a pattern drawn or laid on the ground that serves as a walking path for meditation. Walkers travel only one way in the circle.

Labyrinths, dating back as far as 4,000 years, are incorporated into many religions, such as Judaism's Tree of Life and the Hopi medicine wheel.

While the society states that there is no evidence that labyrinth walking can be used to treat diseases, "many health-care practitioners consider any activity that promotes relaxation and relieves stress beneficial to overall health."

While Saturday's workshop was personal for each participant, Peters said it also focused on "our connection to each other, the earth and the universe. What we desire is to create positive change for the higher good."

"This was a good opportunity to work with different people for a different experience," Trish Hepner, of Moline, said.

The huge room had little furniture, and in the center was a large circle and heavy canvas with the "Chartres" labyrinth design painstakingly hand-painted in deep purple. This pattern is found on the floor of a 13th century cathedral in Chartres, France.

The group owns another labyrinth, designed for resolving conflict after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

During a regular labyrinth walk, prayer shawls and small light disks are available for use by those who feel the need, said Q-C Labyrinth Project co-founder Patricia McLaughlin. One side is the "creative arts area," where participants can express feelings through drawing or journal entries. People walk at their own pace, and the only rules are to be quiet and to remove (or cover) your shoes.

"People walk for different reasons," McLaughlin said. "It could be for emotional or physical healing -- or just to relieve stress."

McLaughlin's high school friend Gayle Gibson, an engineer with DuPont in Wilmington, Del., flew to the Quad-Cities to participate and relieve stress due to job changes.

"I came to reflect," she said.