

NURSING:

A LEADING FORCE FOR CHANGE

Walking a labyrinth to serenity

by Diana Ng, Surrey, British Columbia

The Canadian Nurses Association has long championed the notion that a person's health is influenced by many factors outside the health-care system, including education, transportation, housing and the environment. No one knows this better than Diana Ng, who has been a nurse and educator promoting health and well-being as well as a leadership consultant for more than 25 years. She recently led a project to build the first public labyrinth in Greater Vancouver's Lower Mainland, in partnership with the City of Surrey. Located in Fleetwood Park, this 12.8-metre diameter pathway is a seven-circuit classical labyrinth, designed to promote mindfulness and peace. Mindfulness practices have been shown to have health benefits.

Labyrinths dating back 4,000 years have been found in connection with cultures around the world, ranging from the American Southwest to Scandinavia, India, Sumatra and Java. Although historic labyrinths are associated with great myths and legends, modern ones are enjoyed secularly by people who wish to practise mindfulness through walking meditation. Mindfulness involves developing a clear and more effective mind, as one purposely pays attention, non-judgmentally, in the present moment. The key concepts of mindfulness are easy to articulate, but most people struggle to practise it. Diana Ng believes that to walk a labyrinth brings mindfulness and serenity. She leads community labyrinth walks and promotes World Labyrinth Day, a day on which people from all over the world are encouraged to walk labyrinths for the good of all and to create a wave of peaceful energy washing across the time zones. Diana worked with the City of Surrey to organize a celebration of Surrey World Labyrinth Day on May 3, 2014, to encourage values of peace, respect and pluralism.



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