

Massage offers significant health benefits

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Many folks still think of massage as a bit of an indulgence — a nice way to relieve stress and the aches and pains of the active Sisters Country lifestyle.

But for many, massage is a critical element in preserving and enhancing their health in the face of serious conditions.

Lenetta Colbert was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2009. As described by the Mayo Clinic, "Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects movement. It develops gradually, sometimes starting with a barely noticeable tremor in just one hand. But while a tremor may be the most well-known sign of Parkinson's disease, the disorder also commonly causes stiffness or slowing of movement."

Massage can have a powerful effect in relieving the strains of Parkinson's and enabling a patient to stay active — which is critical in staving off the effects of the disorder.

Colbert discovered the benefits of massage for her

condition when the school she was working for provided her with a gift certificate, which she used in Portland.

When she and her husband moved to Sisters, she discovered Shibui Spa. She has been able to get a massage and sauna and hot tub treatments once a month there, through the Gift of Giving Back. An anonymous person recommended her for the program, and Shibui has been providing her with the services at no charge.

"It's the best place I've been, and I was surprised to find it in Sisters," Colbert told *The Nugget*.

Massage helps profoundly with dystonia — spasms that pull her head down toward her chest and her arms into her body. On her own she has no means to deal with those episodes.

"There's nothing you can do to make them relax," she explained. "Massage really helps with that."

Colbert goes once a month for an hour-and-a-half massage and also spends time in the sauna and hot tub.

"I'd say it's the highlight of my month when I go," she said. "I can't say that they last

a whole month, but you kind of get a fresh start."

A knowledgeable, well-trained massage therapist is key to effective work and can do much more than relieve tight muscles.

"I have a problem with the lymph nodes in my legs," Colbert said. "I didn't know a therapist could do anything with that."

Selah Borderick of Sey-La-Vie! Studio is well familiar with the benefits of massage.

"The magic word is parasympathetic nervous system," she says.

Massage's affect on the parasympathetic nervous system can put the body into a deep state of restfulness where the body works to heal itself.

"That's the place where your body heals," Broderick says. "The nervous system accepts that healing; it doesn't resist it."

Broderick notes that massage can assist with changing a person's gait and posture, further helping to relieve chronic problems. And, since it stimulates the muscles, it is a form of exercise for people who might not be active enough to exercise



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Yes, massage is relaxing — but it's also a critical element in helping people with chronic conditions.

themselves.

"It's magical," Broderick says. "It's a wonderful modality for healing."

And that healing is not only physical. Massage can have profound psychological benefits, especially for those dealing with a chronic condition or illness.

"Massage is one of the things that gives you a positive outlook and makes you feel better about who you are and makes you feel like you can conquer at least a little bit

of what's going on with you," Colbert reflects.


With the power to help the body heal and the mind and psyche rest, massage is far more than an indulgence.

"I couldn't see the expense of it being worth it," Colbert says. "Now, I wouldn't miss it, because I know how much better it makes me feel."

To help someone in need through the Gift of Giving Back program, send a narrative of their story to info@shibuispa.com.

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