

KLIFE



Serenity in the tip of a pin

By ERIC A. HOWALD *Of the Keizertimes*



If Travis Bueckner had his way, he'd stick a needle in the top of everyone's head, and maybe have them sit down and put together a moderately difficult Lego set.

Before panicking about the needle, know that Bueckner is a licensed acupuncturist and owner of Monarch Health and Wellness at 4855 River Road North.

"Imagine your body having roads and highways. For the most part things function pretty well, but then you have an accident and develop pain - or even struggle with depression or PTSD - those are traffic jams. Acupuncture is the same as [the Oregon Department of Transportation] going in and clearing up the roads and replacing bridges and allowing things to move smoothly again," said Bueckner.

For those new to the idea, acupuncture involves the placement of needles in the skin to stimulate nerves, muscles and connective tissue. The techniques are rooted in traditional Chinese medicine as a way of balancing the flow of energy through the body. Placing a single needle at the vertex of a patient's skull produces, in some, a quick release of tension through the shoulders and sternum. The sensation is akin to dropping a towel and letting air flow across the chest.

"It may feel a little weird at first, but my goal is to make you float away on a cloud," Bueckner said.

Bueckner is well aware that not everyone relishes the idea of needles, especially the ones inserted into them, but he has intention behind every decision in his approach. His first technique for disarming patients is his office décor, which is Lego-themed.

In the Monarch lobby, there is an 878-piece bonsai, a 5,923-piece recreation of the Taj Mahal, a 1,688-piece model of the Statue of Liberty and, his latest acquisition,



TOP: Lego's recreation of the Colosseum in Rome clocks in at more than 9,000 pieces. **LEFT:** A Lego bonsai tree. **ABOVE:** Monarch Health and Wellness owner Travis Bueckner with a reproduction of India's Taj Mahal. It was Bueckner's largest Lego project at the time and helped him process grief after his mother lost a battle with cancer. Bueckner's mother is pictured in the photo above the model on a trip to India. Photo by ERIC A. HOWALD of Keizertimes

a 9,036-piece reproduction of the Roman Colosseum in Italy. The hallway is lined with smaller Lego models of major city skylines from around the globe. He is in the process of acquiring Lego bouquets for each room where he treats patients.

"I decided on the skylines because I've had a number of patients with PTSD and that can make the outside, outdoor world a very scary place. The skylines are a reminder that seeing other places can also be peaceful," Bueckner said.

The Taj Mahal in the lobby was the first large-scale project he tackled, and

discovered how therapeutic and cathartic Lego-building can be. He built it in memory of his mother who lost a second-round battle with cancer. She visited the marble mausoleum in India and came back with a forced-perspective image of her touching the top of the dome.

"Building it was a very meditative experience. There were times when I was crying as I built," Bueckner said.

He hasn't gotten to the point of combining Legos and acupuncture yet, but he

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VOLUNTEER of the Week

presented by



LINDA BAKER

Where and how do you volunteer?

"Nine years ago I founded Keizer Homegrown Theater and that is the center of my volunteer efforts. For almost thirty years I have been involved with the Keizer Junior Miss/Distinguished Young Women Program and I am a Board member of Keizer Rotary, Salem Theater Network, The Keizer Heritage Foundation and Children's Theater Foundation."

Why do you volunteer?

"For years, I have had a postcard that reads, 'Get involved, the world is run by the people who show up' I believe that. People who want a better community or a better world need to show up and make it happen."

What does volunteering do for you?

"It has been my experience that volunteering is like tithing - my life is better because everything I have ever done for my community has come back to me one-hundred-fold."

How would you get others to volunteer in their community?

"Do it the Keizer way by making volunteering what the cool kids do. Then open the door and invite everyone in."