

5 Days to a Better Future

By Ian Jayne

Green Shoe Foundation offers five-day retreats for participants to address past experiences and create better futures

Sometimes, you need a fresh start, a time to hit the pause button and reassess. Green Shoe Foundation, founded in Oct. 2015, provides a space to safely explore and work through past events in order to break destructive cycles and pave a better path for the future.

“My goal was to deal with some of my trauma that I didn’t even realize, and how I still lived in that cycle,” said a local business owner and participant.

Located at 609 S. Kelly Ave., Suite B2, Green Shoe Foundation offers a five-day retreat program led by professional counselors and therapists, for those 21 and older. The retreats run from Mon. – Fri., 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and a returnable \$475 deposit is required. All materials are included; participants can bring their own lunch or order from Green Shoe’s menu.

“We really want to overcome any barriers or burdens that people might have to attending a Green Shoe retreat, because we feel like it could benefit almost everybody to do this,” said Jeanean South, Executive Director.

Essential to Green Shoe’s transformative process is its definition of trauma as “anything less than nurturing.” Whether it’s a divorce, struggling family member, death or loss, or difficulty reconciling past issues, the retreat aims to work through all kinds of past trauma. Green Shoe retreats draw from family systems theory to help individuals recognize patterns and cycles of behavior that have shaped their lives. Such self-awareness can help participants do healing work and make healthier choices in the future, South said.

“A lot of times, when something significant happens in our life... it triggers back to those earlier experiences,” South said. “By addressing the earlier experiences, we create a lot more solid foundation going forward to increase the probability of having much more successful, joyful lives.” South said that

it can sometimes be difficult to see how past events have shaped behavior, but that the week provides a lot of “a-ha” moments for participants.

“You actually go through the process of confronting it and having a perspective and a connection in your mind that you are now an adult,” said the participant, whose therapist had suggested the retreat. The participant found that stress from work could negatively affect relationships with family, but the Green Shoe retreat provided ways to break this cycle.

“When I start recognizing that I’m going through a stressful experience, I start to put myself in a realization that this is not life-ending; it’s real, but you can deal with this,” the participant said. “It’s quite an amazing place to give you a sense of tools, and that’s what I really have been looking for.”

Since its first retreat in the summer of 2016, Green Shoe has had more than 300 participants come through its program, according to South. Among the most transformative program elements are improved communication and parenting skills, a

stronger feeling of self-worth and the ability to set healthy boundaries, said South.

In order to more effectively serve the community, Green Shoe Foundation has recently purchased land on 63rd St. and Broadway Extension to build a new retreat center.

Green Shoe aims to create the conditions for both personal and collective transformation. “The goal for the future is really to be able to share this model and experience, even outside of Oklahoma,” South said.

Visit www.greenshoe.org for more information.

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