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## Acupuncturists feeling good about move to Alfred

Located at 29 W. University St. in Alfred, The Center for Traditional Acupuncture offers acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and a Chinese medical massage.

Seattle-based acupuncturists Kevin Ferst and Sarah Nelson were looking for a small college town in a mountainous area where they could set up a practice.

Their search led them to Traditional Acupuncture, a rural private practice in Alfred that acupuncturist Graham Marks had owned and operated for about 20 years.

And in November 2013, the couple officially took over Marks' business, renaming it The Center for Traditional Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs. Ferst said the village of Alfred has been "unbelievably supportive" since he and Nelson opened their clinic there.

"So many people have just come out and been great," he said.

Located at 29 W. University St. in Alfred, the clinic offers acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and a Chinese medical massage. The clinic is open by appointment.

In addition to being licensed New York state acupuncturists, Nelson and Ferst are graduates of the Seattle Institute of Oriental Medicine, where they received master's degrees in Oriental medicine.

Nelson said some common misconceptions about acupuncture are that it can be painful and expensive.

"There's a lot of nervousness about needles here, I think. There is a group of patients who saw Graham and so of course they're comfortable with it and many of them have just continued to see us," Nelson said. "But a few of the challenges that we have are that people don't know what acupuncture can be used for and that they are afraid that it's painful and some people think it's cost-prohibitive."

Ferst added, "We were acupuncturists out (in Seattle) and the general population there is quite familiar (with acupuncture). I would say more people than not have tried it, are kind of familiar with it and here there are almost no acupuncturists, so we have a lot of education to do. That's a big important part for us."

Speaking on how pain-free the procedure is, Ferst said, "The needles are ridiculously thin and a lot of people don't even know they go in. I would say maybe even half would say, 'Just let me know when you're going to start,' and there are already like three needles in. That's very common. It's not painful, the needles get used once and they're sterile."

Conditions treated at the clinic include chronic and acute pain, arthritis, depression, anxiety, digestive concerns, sciatica, gynecological and reproductive concerns, asthma, headaches, hypertension, side effects to chemotherapy and radiation and more.

The first office call lasts between 90-120 minutes and costs \$85, while a return office call lasts 60-75 minutes and costs \$60, Nelson said. A Chinese medical massage takes about 60 minutes and costs \$60. The clinic also does free consultations.

For customers who are low-income or are on a fixed income, the clinic offers a sliding scale, Nelson said.

"I think that a lot of people think that acupuncture is prohibitively expensive, so what we did is lower our initial office call rate. It had been \$110, we lowered it to \$85 and then the returns are \$60," she said. "But for people who are low-income or on a fixed income, we do a sliding scale, so we can work with people on what's affordable for them."

When asked what they enjoy most about their business, Nelson said, "Helping people, getting good results from our patients is wonderful, improving the quality of life and easing their pain."

Ferst noted, "This is a medicine that has been around for 2,000 years and when Western medicine hit China, acupuncture didn't vanish and that's because it's highly effective and relatively inexpensive, so I would encourage people to give it a try."

For more information about the clinic, visit [alfredacupuncture.com](http://alfredacupuncture.com) or [facebook.com/alfredacupuncture](https://www.facebook.com/alfredacupuncture) or call 607-587-9401.



PHOTO/ JEFF COLE

Pictured are Kevin Ferst and Sarah Nelson, owners of The Center for Traditional Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs, located at 29 W. University St. in Alfred.