Back before Beider had her defining moment at the scene of an appendectomy, she had intended to become a pediatric surgeon. She was shadowing a doctor at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, that day, as part of her pre-med study.

But the experience set her in a new direction. She left the operation room wondering what might have been done to lessen the child’s fear.

To put herself through school at University of California, she decided to study Western medicine and also to support healing. "People tend to think the optimal environment may be one where families can receive the best of Western medicine and also have a chance to explore integrative therapies," Beider said. "And we’d like to invite them back."

Early this year, before an appendectomy. Only Shay Beider saw the distress on the little girl's face. Only she— the sole bystander in the room— noticed that it remained as the anesthesiologist put her under.

"There was a recognition that something like this, it needs to be in a physical place that is, itself, healing," Beider said. "We chose Tucson for the healing community here and the healing properties of the desert?"

In summer of 2009, a handful of families should arrive as the pilot group on retreat. The plan is that they will represent diverse medical conditions, income levels, ethnic backgrounds and regions of the country. They will sample not just massage but other integrative therapies such as art therapy, play therapy and meditation.

They will go home knowing what’s available for their comfort.