



Left: Bisbee, Arizona clinic co-founder Cheyenne MacMasters.  
Right: MacMasters speaks with a client during a recent clinic.

# Free Reiki Clinics

## *In Service to Their Communities and the World*

BY PATRICIA MAHAFFEY

Free clinics dip into the sparkling stream of Reiki and spill generous buckets of relaxation, peacefulness, rejuvenation, clarity, compassion, joy, hope, and healing onto treatment recipients. Those who are touched inevitably radiate something positive to others; these similarly affect others, and so on, endlessly, like rippling circles in a pond. The benefits are limitless and can affect the world in ways that go far beyond the simple act of giving a Reiki treatment. • It is clear that the sacred graces of service and healing radiate brightly through free Reiki clinics in three very different locations: Bisbee, Arizona; Saratoga, California; and Eastport, Maine. While the communities they serve may seem like different worlds, the benefits yielded from each clinic are strikingly similar, for Reiki and service bring people together in a way that reveals the unity beneath all surface differences.



**Left:** Susan Plachy has worked at the Eastport clinic since 1999. Walt Loring founded the clinic in 1998.  
**Right:** Tables set up inside the Eastport Health Center in preparation for the Sunday evening clinic.

## The clinics

Ten miles north of the Mexican border, Bisbee, Arizona is an old mining town nestled a mile high in the Mule Mountains and surrounded by sparsely populated desert terrain. The town sprang up in 1880 around the richest copper deposit ever discovered—eight billion pounds of copper were eventually mined there! After most mining operations ceased in the 1970's, artists, free spirits, and retirees flooded into the inexpensive housing that became available. Today, Bisbee is a laid back town of about 6,000. Although there are still some Old West saloons in town, many of the saloons and the old miner boarding houses are now cafes, art galleries, bed and breakfasts, and interesting little shops.

Bisbee's clinic started out as part of a free medical clinic in the border town of Naco, where people from both sides of the border could receive medical testing and health education. Reiki clinic co-founders Cheyenne MacMasters and Judy Perry offered Reiki there, but as needs grew and changed, they spun off in 2005 to form the Bisbee Wellness Initiative, offering clients a 20-minute Reiki session, plus an additional session from a choice of six other modalities. In addition to practitioners, volunteers work at a front desk where clients sign in as they arrive. The clinic's medical beginnings are evident in privacy screens and ongoing client charts kept by practitioners.

In contrast to Bisbee's rural setting, Saratoga, California is part of a fast-paced, densely populated metropolitan area known as Silicon Valley—headquarters to tech giants like Google, Yahoo, IBM, Apple, and Hewlett Packard—and home to nearly

two million people. Although housing prices are among the highest in the country, residents are attracted to the year-round Mediterranean climate, the cosmopolitan culture, and the spectacular beauty of the nearby Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay, and the redwood-forested wilderness and panoramic views of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Saratoga's Reiki Clinic meets at a large YMCA facility offering health, fitness, and wellness programs with the intention, says the Y Web site, "to help build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all." Regina Richmond started the clinic out of her deep personal yearning "to introduce Reiki to people who wouldn't normally come across it in their lives, to take the mystery out of the process, and to let people know it's completely natural, and that they can do it, too." She felt the Y was a great location because it reaches so many people, and she thought that it might be less intimidating than other locations.

Regina started by simply offering free Reiki in the lobby to anyone who wanted to try it. She soon saw the need for more structure, and in 2002 a monthly afternoon clinic was born. A Reiki share night for practitioners subsequently sprang up, and last year another monthly clinic was added in the evenings. Looking over her records of the past six years, Regina was amazed and pleased to realize approximately 1300 sessions have been given through these programs.

Eastport, Maine, a little island connected to the mainland by a causeway to the north, is the easternmost city and most northeasterly port of the United States. Richly shaped by the sea, its salty maritime history encompasses sardine canneries, shipbuilders, and sea captains. Its work force still teems with longshoreman and com-



Bisbee clinic co-founder Judy Perry.



Left: A sign inside the Saratoga, California Southwest YMCA directs clients to the area where the clinic is held.  
 Right: Saratoga clinic founder Regina Richmond (left) and Katie Schutz give a treatment during a recent clinic.

mercial fishermen such as lobstermen, salmon farmers, and scallop draggers. When summer temperatures hit the sixties, the local population of less than 2,000 spikes slightly with the arrival of summer residents who come to enjoy beautiful cobble beaches, art galleries, restaurants, rugged forested shoreline, tour boats, deep-sea fishing, and wildlife watching for whales, porpoises, seals, and bald eagles.

Motivated by compassion honed through experience, Walt Loring started the Community Reiki Clinic in Eastport in 1998. Walt has been to Bosnia four times to offer Reiki through “Reiki Worldwide,” is involved with hospice and hospital Reiki, and a Reiki hotline which allows callers with urgent needs to receive distant Reiki from many practitioners. At one time Walt managed four clinics. He is currently involved with two.

His Reiki teacher, Sara Seifert-Piper, initiated twelve clinics in New Hampshire. The Eastport clinic follows a structured format initiated by Seifert-Piper, in which all practitioners do the same hand positions at the same time and switch at the same time. “It’s more structured than people might expect,” says Walt, “but it seems to work really well.”

Susan Plachy, who has worked at the Community Reiki Clinic since 1999, says she’s amazed that “after ten years in our part of the world, new people keep coming...This area is sparsely populated. We’re not in the *middle* of nowhere; we’re on the far side of nowhere. You’d have thought we’d have run out of people by now!”

### The benefits

The most obvious benefits from these three clinics are the same ones that come to anyone who receives Reiki. The clinics overflow with Reiki stories, including experiences of reduced pain, increased energy, peace, deep relaxation, better sleep, lifting of depression, improved lives, increased clarity, more comfortable and more rapid than expected recovery from surgery or

injury, spiritual experiences, emotional release, life insights, solace and improved quality of life for people struggling with HIV, addiction, the side effects of chemotherapy, and terminal illness.

Susan described one woman who came to the Eastport clinic “at the end of her life process, on an occasion when she was well enough to be out of bed. She was almost other-worldly, just radiant, so happy to be there, to be out of bed. She was so fragile, her skin was almost translucent. She *beamed* through the treatment. You could see that it was just huge. In that moment, life was very different for her.” Experiences like this, says Susan, provide “a very compelling reason for working at the clinic.”

Bonnie Bea, 24, of Saratoga, has severe rheumatoid arthritis. She began receiving Reiki for the first time at the clinic, and after coming only a few months, she reported, “Before Reiki, my body had extreme pain in the legs mostly, my circulation was very poor, and I felt frozen to the bone. After my first Reiki experience, my body began to warm up and I felt lighter overall. Over time Reiki has helped alleviate a lot of pain...Now I can even walk around without my cane. Reiki has been a wonderful ...part of the healing process. I would recommend it to anyone.”

One of the most common clinic stories is of people feeling amazed and grateful at how relaxed they feel. “That relaxation is significant,” said Judy Perry of Bisbee, “because when people learn to relax, they can open themselves to healing.” Katie Schutz observes that Reiki provides a much-needed “window into balance” for people who may really be stressed from demanding, fast paced lifestyles in Saratoga. Through Reiki, people tune into and remember what deep relaxation feels like in their body. Then they can sense more readily when they’re out of balance and develop everyday strategies to get back to relaxation.

Since Reiki heals on all levels, clients are often affected emotionally and spiritually, as well as physically. A man from the



Left: Carol Ouellette and Katie Schutz provide a treatment during a recent clinic at the Saratoga Southwest YMCA.  
 Right: Church and fellowship hall location of Bisbee clinic, painted by Judy Perry.

native Passamaquoddy population just outside Eastport told a clinic practitioner that Reiki felt deeply spiritual to him, like meditating, talking to Great Spirit, or participating in the spiritual cleansing rituals of a sweat lodge.

A man in Bisbee lost his wife a year before coming to the clinic. "On the table for Reiki," reports Cheyenne, "he started to cry and couldn't stop. He'd bottled all the hurt up inside and finally found relief." When such release happens, clinic practitioners can use the opportunity to gently educate people, to normalize the experience and help clients understand what's happening in simple ways, such as describing it as simply energy moving.

Regina says it's very empowering when people "begin to realize they are more than a physical body, that they're energy, a spiritual being. . . They begin to see they have the power to heal themselves."

What is particularly joyous about these stories is that the benefits come to people who otherwise may never have had access to Reiki due to reluctance about trying something "alternative," financial reasons, or just not coming across it in their lives. Walt Loring of the Eastport clinic reports that in ten years of running clinics, he's seen people fitting "every possible cross section [of the population] you can think of."

Clinic benefits spread into the community. "You see people forming friendships. There's a lightness of being to those who come, and people have more grace about themselves," observed Cheyenne of the Bisbee clinic. "We're here consistently, and that's very comforting to people," added her co-worker, Judy. "Having this resource in town gives people hope. . . It's also a way for people to come together in a really positive way. . . When people come for healing, we see them with a whole different feeling."

"The [Saratoga] clinic is touching so many different people in the community," says Regina. "More people learn Reiki; they bring more people to the clinic, and the circle keeps growing. What is manifesting is amazing. This clinic was created out of nothing,

really. It fuels the desire in me to do more." Katie Schutz, who coordinates Saratoga's newly opened evening clinic, said, "People come to the Y for exercise, but they see the flyers and say, 'Oh, what's Reiki? Oh, it says it's relaxation, and it's free. Maybe I'll try it.'"

### Clinics educate

Free clinics not only heal, but also provide an opportunity to educate. "It's a very good way to spread the idea that it's not just about going to the doctor when you're sick," said Judy, "but about attending to all aspects [of your health]—not just the physical—and that there are different ways to heal yourself." The Bisbee clinic's Web site names its primary mission as "to educate the community about the effectiveness of complementary therapies." Many people who come to clinics wind up taking Reiki classes. Regina teaches about a dozen Reiki classes a year at Saratoga. Approximately 75% of her students are from the clinic.

Free clinics help bring Reiki into the mainstream, exposing more people to its healing power and allowing them to experience it in everyday places as something natural and gentle. "This part of the world is very conservative," Susan remarked about Eastport. "The clinic offers an opportunity for conservative people to try it. . . Some people come with a great deal of anxiety. They don't know what we're going to do. . . It's great to see them have a treatment, watch their breathing change, see them slowly sit up with a great sense of relief, feeling relaxed."

Susan also notices people are often surprised when they first come in and see who the practitioners are. "You can see them looking around, thinking, 'What? The person who works at the grocery store? The woman who does my hair? The guy who fixes my car?' It's not at all what they expected."

Free clinics also educate practitioners. Katie observed that the clinic in Saratoga is "such a place of learning for practitioners.

There's a sharing that happens and a lot of networking for personal growth and development. It's very nurturing. We've become such a support and inspiration for each other." Practitioners get practical, hands on experience with lots of different people who may have lots of different issues. They receive feedback and the experience of seeing return clients. It helps build confidence.

"It's a great opportunity for the very experienced or the newly initiated," says Cheyenne. "For new practitioners, it reinforces what they learn in class and gives them an opportunity to get over any initial shyness of working with people. For those who don't have a practice, it provides a continuing opportunity to use Reiki. For those who do, it can bring clients."

The experience helps practitioners shift into a deeper relationship with Reiki. "We learn how to use the energy and then the energy teaches us what we need to know," said Susan. "The more we use Reiki, the better we learn what to do. You learn about yourself by using the Reiki and that learning comes on the levels we learn Reiki—physical, energetic, and spiritual." Regina notices the experience helps practitioners "shift into seeing how Reiki works in and through you for whatever right purposes are yours."

"You want people you live with to be healthy," says Judy. "Reiki has helped me in my life in so many ways; I really do want to share that with people." Judy also discovered that having the clinic helps her set healthy boundaries. "I'm always meeting up with people who need healing, and I have a tendency to spread myself too thin. It's nice to have the clinic to invite people to, instead of stretching myself out all over the place."

### Service is the heart chakra of the world

In true service, everyone benefits. The line between who gives and who receives dissolves. For Regina, seeing the peace on people's faces after receiving Reiki is most rewarding. "When I see that look of awe, I feel like I receive more than I give."

"You'd think you'd feel exhausted after a clinic," says Katie, "but I feel charged up. It can be so stimulating...especially seeing people have 'big wow' moments – receiving Reiki for the first time, experiencing a significant change in pain level, or receiving an insight or inspiration after a session."

"I feel a glow of well being and pleasure afterwards that can last for days," said Cheyenne. "Seeing people's eyes looking brighter, watching people's faces change from when they arrive and when they leave is one of the greatest pleasures, it makes it all worthwhile."

There is a deep fulfillment for everyone because service is rooted in our most fundamental and enlightened reality: our one being and our love. Service brings us into our wholeness, which is the essence of healing. In fact, the word heal is derived from the Old English word "hælan," meaning "to make whole."

"We are servers of the wholeness and mystery in life," states Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. in her essay, "In the Service of Life." She notes that in service we aren't trying to fix something broken, or help someone weaker. Instead, she says, we not only see and trust the wholeness and integrity of the other person, but that is precisely what we respond to and collaborate with. "We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected," she says. "We serve life not because it is broken, but because it is holy."

"The wonder our clients express at having the clinic as a healing resource contributes to the glow of being in sync with the divine essence of our lives," says Cheyenne. "We are all grateful for the opportunity to be of service and to partake of the gifts offered by our community, gifts that flow from all who come together at the clinic."

"Clinic work has given me the opportunity to offer Reiki to many people I would never encounter in private practice. My original intent of assisting people to come into balance energetically has blossomed into a resource available to the whole community and people now travel over a hundred miles to come to our once a month clinic. As my teacher, Ron Gregory, often said, 'Find the work that is yours to do.' I have found mine in helping people be the best they can be by opening to the healing flow of divine love."

Service, like the heart chakra, unites the ground of our essential human energies with our limitless divine nature. A clinic may appear mundane, yet it flows in sacred unison with the most tender and powerful impulses of the heart. In her book, *The Seven Healing Chakras*, Brenda Davies, M.D. describes love at the heart chakra, but could equally be speaking of service:

*"Love at the heart chakra involves the relationship of all things throughout the whole universe, allowing us to rise to the highest level within ourselves and to have compassion for all living things. It gives us exquisite joy in togetherness...It transforms the commonplace into the sublime, and touches not only our own lives, but the life of everyone with whom we come into contact. Its charismatic power draws others to us and inspires them with confidence and hope as it enables them to open their own hearts also and to love just for the sake of loving, with openness and enthusiasm."*

**Starting a Free Reiki Clinic** Bisbee Wellness Initiative co-founder Judy Perry encourages anyone with the urge to start a free clinic to do so. "I don't think it would be hard for anyone to start this, anywhere. It doesn't have to be a big complicated thing."

"All it takes is a location," said Susan Plachy of the Community Reiki Clinic in Eastport. "You can start a clinic with two people and a table...There are lots of possibilities for locations—a nursing home, a clinic for health care providers in a hospital. The only limitation would be a person's imagination."

Katie Schutz of the Reiki Clinic in Saratoga suggested places such as shelters or juvenile halls. "It's really exciting when I hear people thinking of places to reach into the community with clinics. Maybe we're just seeing the beginning of what we're going to see."

The chart opposite gives additional information about the founding, operation, and logistics of each of the clinics.

	BISBEE WELLNESS INITIATIVE St. John's Episcopal Church Bisbee, Arizona www.bisbeewellness.org	REIKI CLINIC Southwest YMCA Saratoga, California	COMMUNITY REIKI CLINIC Eastport Health Center Eastport, Maine
<b>Founders</b>	Cheyenne MacMasters Cheyenne@bisbeewellness.org Judy Perry	Min. Regina Richmond HndsOfLight@aol.com	Walt Loring wloring@midmaine.com
<b>Founded</b>	2004 as part of Naco Wellness Initiative. 2005 as outreach program to Bisbee 2007 independent	2002	1998
<b>Clinic Times</b>	One Saturday a month, 10 am — 2 pm	<b>Afternoon clinic</b> every third Thursday, 1 — 5 pm <b>Evening clinic</b> (added in 2007) Every second Thursday, 6-9 pm	Every first Sunday, 6:30 — 8 pm
<b>Reiki sessions available</b>	3-4 tables 1-3 practitioners per table 20 minutes of Reiki with 5 minute transitions	<b>Afternoon clinic</b> — 2-3 tables 2-4 practitioners per table 20 minutes of Reiki with 5 minute transitions <b>Evening clinic</b> — 2 tables 1-3 practitioners per table 20 minutes of Reiki with 5 minute transitions	3-4 tables 2-3 practitioners per table 20 minutes of Reiki with 10 minute transitions
<b>Clients served per clinic</b>	40 - 50	<b>Afternoon clinic</b> — 16-24 <b>Evening clinic</b> — 12	9-12
<b>Purposes</b>	To educate the community about the effectiveness of complementary and alternative therapies.  To bring people into energetic balance.  To offer Reiki and other modalities to people who wouldn't be able to afford private sessions and to all who would like to experience these therapies.	To build awareness about Reiki with people who might not normally come across it, in an environment that is non-intimidating and easily accessible to all.  To show people they can learn or remember how to use this gift of healing.  To give Reiki practitioners an opportunity to practice Reiki while being of service to others.	To provide people the opportunity to try Reiki in a cost-free setting.  To provide Reiki to anyone wishing to experience it.  To support and encourage practitioners to continue to use Reiki.
<b>Advertising</b>	Advertising Flyers, refrigerator magnet with clinic schedule on it; free public service announcements in newspapers, TV, radio  Word of mouth	YMCA flyers and schedule brochures  Word of mouth	Flyers around town  Word of mouth
<b>Total number of Reiki practitioners involved</b>	9 regulars, 1-2 "guest" practitioners each clinic	6-10	25-30 overall, 10-15 pretty regularly
<b>Donations</b>	Donation jar, used for supplies, therapy tables, food for volunteers, and filing fees for non-profit status.	People can make donation to Y campaign fund, fill out form, lets Y know the donation came from Reiki clinic	Donation jar, used for supplies or donated to the health center
<b>Scheduling</b>	Drop in and sign up for one Reiki session and one other modality	Sign up in advance for specific time	Sign up in advance for specific time
<b>Other</b>	In addition to Reiki, acupuncture, clairvoyant counseling, craniosacral, reflexology, massage, and spiritual response therapy are also offered.  All practitioners get sessions each clinic.  Closed during summer		Walt Loring has liability insurance through Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals at \$200/year that covers all clinics sponsored by Walt




Left: Bill Johnson, Judi Jo Williams, and Debra Wright giving Reiki during a Bisbee, Arizona clinic.  
Right: Walt Loring and volunteer give Reiki at a recent Eastport, Maine clinic.

“I really believe that people are happier when they are serving, even if it’s just something simple, like offering a smile to someone,” said Regina.

Dr. Remen writes: “Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery which has an unknown purpose. When we serve, we know that we belong to life and to that purpose.”

“What I like most about being involved with a clinic,” said Katie, “is that I feel so connected to my purpose. We can get so caught up in goals for ourselves. Reiki is about sharing with others and that feels so much more in alignment with what we’re meant to be doing as a human race. At the clinic, I feel so in touch with that, so at peace and at one with that experience. Being connected to the true life purpose is so good.”

There is a joy running quietly through each of these three very different clinics. It is a joy that resonates with the truth of the heart, so its whispers are potent. It beckons us to lean in, and listen. It speaks softly of the truth that Reiki itself serves and teaches, and offers a fulfillment quite different from what the outer world offers. Significantly, the benefits derived from these clinics illuminate the oneness beneath superficial differences. Often, those who participate in the clinics have a strong, felt experience of this oneness, and even if the mind doesn’t grasp and put words around that experience; still, the heart swells, the quiet joy sings, the spirit is fed. 

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