

Portland Oregonian

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Favorite Things: Kathi McCoy 'Attitude of gratitude'

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I'm an experiential learner," says physical therapist Kathi McCoy, who further explains that hands-on experience and a voracious reading habit continue to fuel her personal and professional beliefs and well-being. With the same breath, she also recognizes the great fortune of being embraced by good friends, colleagues and her children. "They are the infrastructure of my DNA."

McCoy is a partner in West Portland Physical Therapy Clinic (www.wpptc.com) and Sports Lab Physical Therapy Clinic, where she dedicates herself to the rehabilitative needs of her patients. And when she isn't working? McCoy may be rafting on rivers around the world, tasting stir-fry from a food stall in Vietnam or helping to rebuild the lives (and homes) of others. McCoy does not take this good life for granted.

"It is by the grace of God I live here. Other people around the world are paying the price for our nation's comfort, and as one insignificant person, I feel it's important to educate my kids --Michael (19) and Madison (14) --to be better world citizens and to help those who have been marginalized."

Here McCoy shares some of the places, things, beliefs and experiences that nourish her soul and her zest for life. Questions and answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

Family mission: Understanding the impact of our personal choices and lifestyle on the remainder of the world so we might be better citizens. Our credo? "Attitude of gratitude."

Quote: "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Gandhi.

Adventure: Exploring Inferno Canyon in Patagonia; trekking to monasteries only reached by foot (or unfortunately B52 bombers) in Tibet; and floating on a few planks from Burma to Vietnam while holding fiercely to my kids. Would vigilantly avoiding snacks of grilled Laotian rat on a stick count, too?

Service: Habitat for Humanity and Medical Teams International (formerly Northwest Medical Teams). Every year my kids and I take part in some program, and these two organizations are well-run. This summer we're going to Uganda to help in an orphanage and then to Mexico City to work in the garbage dumps.

Object: The prayer beads I wear most days. They were blessed by a Tibetan monk and are a touchstone for me. They constantly remind me of the sacredness that resides within each of us if we were to have the presence to focus on uplifting others rather than ourselves.

Sport: Running Portland's Wildwood Trail with my friends; windsurfing in Rowena, outside of Hood

River; and distance swimming in any open water.

Sculptor: Lee Kelly. In fact, he's created a phenomenal piece that will hang on the outside of our West Portland clinic. It represents the clinic's --and my --mission to restore dynamic functional movement within each of us.

Food: Street food anywhere.

Wine: Ken Wright's 2005 Abbott Claim Pinot Noir.

Music: Marc Cohn's "Let Me Be Your Witness"; Nanci Griffith's "Heart of Indochine"; Barber's "Adagio for Strings"; and the second movement of Mozart's "Oboe Concerto."

Biggest fear: I think Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "Most of us go to our grave with our music still in us." I do not want that to be my deathbed reflection.

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