

In the Business of Caring



Three women who founded companies to help others

Axios Life Coaching

Jara Rios counsels on work, life and love

BY CANDICE WAGENER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY HILLARY SCHAVE

In her native Puerto Rico, Jara Rios was at the helm of an afterschool program that she had created for high school students. Her main goal: to motivate the students to study the humanities in order to get a more well-rounded education. When her family relocated to the mainland in 2005, she wanted to continue promoting the humanities but figured she'd need to reevaluate how she was doing so.

"I needed to find a new way to do what I wanted to do but in a new scenario that probably didn't have the same needs," Rios says.

She earned her Ph.D. in Portuguese literature from UW-Madison and continued on to study grief counseling, trauma and positive psychology. It was all on the way to pursuing a career as a life coach so she could unite all the facets of her background: arts, philosophy, humanities, social work and psychology.

She founded Axios Life Coaching in 2016 and has expanded its offerings to include career-related and relationship-based coaching, as well as grief counseling. One of the ways Rios says she sets herself and her services apart in the somewhat crowded life coaching field in Madison is by drawing on her profound knowledge of the humanities and utilizing them in her coaching practice. Sometimes she will give clients exercises that include reading a book or short story and analyzing the characters or themes, so that they connect the dots in their own lives. "I use everything that I can use to make the person think or brainstorm around issues that are related to them," Rios says.

Rios also brings a multicultural perspective to her work, and speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese fluently, allowing her to serve a greater diversity of clients. Despite the range of clients and needs she serves, Rios feels they are all related.

"I believe ultimately all our issues as human beings are grounded in traumas that we are grieving, or fears that we have or different conceptions of love," Rios says. "Although it appears like I serve very different aspects or niches, I believe all of them are tied together into those concepts of grief and love."

Rios places high priority on making her

clients feel comfortable. She is willing to meet at any physical space, over Skype, on the phone—whatever works best for her clients. "There is a lot of personal stuff that is shared in my coaching sessions; it's a process of dancing together."

Jinelsa Bonilla, a client who lives in Tampa, Florida, has been working with Rios over the phone on a weekly to bi-weekly basis for about a year on some career coaching. Bonilla recently transitioned into a role in the real estate business. She appreciates the fresh perspective that Rios brings.

"She asks the right stuff. You can tell that she is genuinely interested, genuinely wants to help and really wants to figure this out with you," says Bonilla, adding that Rios is willing to go over the allotted time if necessary to dig deeper into the heart of a matter.

Rios also takes on a unique perspective of success. While she believes that much of her job is helping clients find the way through whatever transition they may be going through, she also believes that a big part of her role is just being there.

"I am not always going to walk into the life of a person that is ready...I believe as a coach you walk side by side with someone to help them succeed or discover or reach different aspects of their life."

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A woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a red lace dress, standing in a green field. The image is the background for the text on the right.

“At the end of the day, what we can say is we’re helping people and we’re making a difference for that person’s life. That’s what keeps me going.”

–Juliet Nowak

Angels Loving Care

Juliet Nowak offers home-based care with a heart

BY CANDICE WAGENER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY HILLARY SCHAVE

Juliet Nowak epitomizes the definition of a people-person: very open and talkative, she instantly befriends whoever she meets. It was only natural that she delved into the caregiving profession when she moved to the United States from her native Philippines and needed work.

After earning her master's degree in health administration, Nowak launched her own caregiving business, Angels Loving Care, in 2014, and has seen the enterprise grow like wildfire.

The company provides individualized caregiving, mostly for the aged but also for anyone in need of specialized care. And it's all done in the comfort of the client's home.

Nowak says her years spent working on the front lines in assisted living facilities and in memory care units left her disappointed with how little one-on-one time she actually had to devote to each resident.

"You have eight-hour shifts, [but] you hardly have time to get to know residents. In that eight hours you have a lot to do...

sometimes there are 20 residents and only two of us. It's hard," comments Nowak. "I love to talk. I love to spend quality time with my patients...Sometimes I would go out of my way for the family, [but] you can only do so much."

Nowak says those experiences of wanting to provide more for her patients and their families prompted her to launch her business. She works with the client and their family to tailor a custom schedule, whether they only need a few hours of care each month or require 24-hour assistance.

"When we are working with your loved one, we are working with them and they are our priority," says Nowak, adding that families often don't realize how little one-on-one care is given at outside facilities. Plus, clients are usually happier being at home.

Nowak helped one family whose mother was in hospice and had been told she needed to be treated in a facility, but the mother's wish was to die in her home. Nowak's therapists worked with the mother in her home for 18 months until she passed away. The family was so appreciative of the quality of care their mother received and the ability to honor her wish to stay in her home.

"Many people don't realize how vital in-home care services are for our aging population, nor what talents and compassion it takes to provide these

services," the daughter commented in a letter, thanking Nowak and her team.

Nowak's business is timely, with the aging population growing nationwide. The number of Americans age 65 and over jumped from 35 million in 2000 to more than 49 million in 2016—a 7 percent increase, according to U.S. Census data.

On the local level, the need is reflected in Nowak's rapid business expansion. In less than five years, Angels Loving Care has grown to 80 employees, serving over 100 clients at any given time, and offering care within seven Wisconsin counties.

In May this year, Nowak was one of 17 women who received the Governor's Trailblazer Award for Women in Business, recognizing women leaders who are helping the state's economy thrive by creating employment opportunities.

Nowak is also extremely proud of the team she employs, many of whom have been with her since she started Angels Loving Care. Nowak sees them all as leaders in their own right and says she makes a conscious effort not to micromanage.

"I can only soar if I have the right people...we're winning because we are working as a team," says Nowak. "The field, the profession is very challenging. At the end of the day, what we can say is we're helping people and we're making a difference for that person's life. That's what keeps me going."

Indigo Trails

Stacey Bean offers healing with a horse sense

BY EMILY LEAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY KAIA CALHOUN

Dark red barns ramble across the property at Indigo Trails, set against a backdrop of rolling hills. A gentle breeze carries the sound of a horse neighing from a nearby pasture, while Kabuki, an English retriever, lounges in the sun on the cool concrete. Stacey Bean settles in to share the story of founding Indigo Trails, a holistic wellness center, and of her own journey of grief and self-discovery.

Bean knows she's always been a healer. Even before she went to medical school to become an emergency medicine doctor, she loved educating and inspiring others to lead their best lives through health and wellness. In her first year of med school at the University of Vermont, she met her match in Darren Bean. They married and moved to Madison to start their careers in the emergency room—he at UW Hospital and she at St. Mary's Hospital.

“Through medical school and beyond, we were known as Dr. He Bean and Dr. She Bean,” she remembers, smiling. “People would call and ask for Dr. Bean

and we'd say which one...the He Bean or the She Bean. Then there'd be a silence and then laughter.”

But through their 10 years in medicine, Bean recalls a sense of something missing—something about Western medicine that just didn't make her feel complete. And then on Mother's Day of 2008, Bean got the call that changed her journey.

“I didn't realize that my last day of medicine was the day before” the call, she says.

Darren's Med Flight helicopter went down near La Crosse, leaving Bean with two small children and a lifetime ahead of her without her soulmate.

“Life stopped for me...The idea of going back to emergency medicine without him...it had always been Dr. He Bean and Dr. She Bean,” she says with tears in her eyes.

She decided that when the time felt right, she would go back. But that time never came. She went on her own healing journey over the next five years, peeling back the layers of grief through meditation, exploring Eastern medicine techniques that had always interested her, and, as she says, getting back into her own truth.

“Some people say that I reinvented myself. No, I found myself,” she says with a hand to her heart.

As part of that healing journey, horses re-entered Bean's life. Having grown up with them, Bean thought at the time in 2012 that horses would be entertainment

for her young family. The horses let her know that wasn't going to be the case. She explains that they solidified for her how to be in the present, how to be vulnerable. She found that her grief and pain didn't bother them, it didn't scare them, they didn't try to fix it.

As Abbie Franke, one of Bean's closest friends, explains, “Her philosophy is about living each day to the fullest and that each day is a choice. Not to live in the past, not to live in the future, but to live awake, alert and aware in the present.”

This philosophy propelled Bean through the next part of her journey. After purchasing two horses, she found the Verona property and knew that the serenity of the place could help awaken and heal others. She also knew from her journey following Darren's accident that while her decade practicing medicine gave her expertise in the physical body, healing needed to focus on the emotional, spiritual and nutritional aspects as well—the whole body.

So, she spent the next four years gaining expertise in these other pillars and began building Indigo Trails, which offers mindfulness retreats, wellness nights, personal coaching and yoga (in a barn!)

Bean received her Equine Gestalt Coaching Method certification through the Touched by a Horse program in 2016. Equine coaching is a method of coaching that uses horses to tap into our own awareness and instincts.

*“When a person creates
their own prescription
and when they find their
own answers, that’s when
transformation happens.”*

–Stacey Bean





Cassie Johnson, one of Bean's one-on-one coaching clients, had no expectations of how Bean would use the horses during their sessions when she started last year.

"I choose my words very carefully and always have," Johnson explains. "In my sessions if I wasn't being very open or as communicative, the horse would sometimes come and almost hit me on the top of the head with his head. [Bean] would say, 'What does that mean to you?' Well, he's telling me to say it how it is, or be more authentic, at least that's how I took it."

Through this introspection, Bean weaves in lessons on gratitude and the uniqueness of each of our journeys. Lois Feiner, a teacher with Verona Area Schools, attended one of Bean's recent mindfulness workshops and came away with this lesson as a springboard for her own work.

"For me as a teacher, one of the most valuable pieces was how I can take what I've learned and continue to practice those ideas...How I can approach my students in a healthier, more accepting, non-judgmental way," she says. "I'm deeply in debt to Stacey for that. She's a truly unique woman who has gifts that are vast, varied and deep."

Feiner recalls the lessons Bean shared about horses as prey animals, grazing peacefully until they are attacked by a predator. They run. They do what they need to and once the danger is gone, they go back to grazing and being calm and relaxed.

"Humans don't do that very well. Being in a prolonged state of stress is very detrimental both physically and emotionally. Stacey talked about that from her medical background, from her mindfulness back-

ground and from her equestrian background. It makes perfect sense now," says Feiner.

As part of her personal coaching, Bean also plays the role of cheerleader.

"There were times when I was missing running because I had two hip surgeries," says Johnson. "So, when I put running on my calendar she remembered that and sent me a text to encourage me."

Bean still struggles with the fact that in her decade working as a physician she would hand patients discharge instructions and a prescription, but not provide a path to accountability and healing.

"When a person creates their own prescription and when they find their own answers, that's when transformation happens," she says. "The whole time I was in Western medicine, I can't say I transformed any of my patients. I helped them, absolutely. But as a coach, I've seen them transform themselves with my guidance. That's what's powerful."

Bean built Indigo Trails on a foundation of helping women transform themselves, but through the years as she trained with Touched by a Horse and the Institute for Integrated Nutrition, she felt a tug to help healthcare workers and address the rising suicide rates among medical students and residents in her former field. And she knows exactly where that push is coming from: Darren, she says.

So she started down the path of creating a course for medical students called Medicine and Horsemanship.

"It's kind of a barnyard to bedside thing," she says. "Horses are really good at teaching emotional intelligence. You have a 1,000-pound patient that does not care

that you're wearing a white coat or that your title says doctor. They're going to tell you the body language that's coming across from you."

Using her array of expertise, she submitted a proposal to the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine in late 2016. In early 2018, Medicine and Horsemanship was approved as a course for second-year medical students. She explains that there is still funding to secure, but her vision is becoming real.

Bean remembers being asked after Darren's death if she knew what she knows now, would she live this life again?

"Without any hesitation, I said absolutely," she recalls. "I lived a lifetime with Darren. Thirteen years. I am the person I am today because of being with him, because of the experiences we had and the person he was."

That gratitude is what drives her to help others find their own gratitude and most authentic selves.

"Seeing my clients be able to drop some of that unfinished business...I love seeing that. I love the impact. It's freeing. You see a radiance to them. And people start realizing that their life is precious. That they are precious. When they start to see that, it's truly rewarding. That's why I do what I do."

Bean says she doesn't have the whole picture of what Indigo Trails will become, but she is open to the journey that she has started and will continue to find gratitude in helping others create their own trail. 🌟