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July 21, 2007

## Therapist may take your pain away

**Kelly Morgan**

March 4, 2007

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To some, Maria Foster's business plan may seem counterintuitive.

As the sole PUSH therapist at Foster Muscle Therapy in Greeley, she offers a type of specialized muscle therapy but rejects the goal of pain management that other bodywork systems strive for. Instead, she would like to get rid of her clients' pain. And that means she won't see them very often.

"I liken it to seeing your dental hygienist twice a year," Foster said. "In the short term, (seeing clients infrequently) can crunch my cash flow, but in the long term, customers will appreciate it."

PUSH -- power under soft hands -- is a system of therapy that focuses on the "chronic passive tension" that Foster said is at the root of countless health problems, including headaches, back pain, joint pain and stiffness. PUSH therapy increases muscle movement and blood flow, she said, so it can be beneficial to diabetics and athletes, as well.

Doug Bell, a competitive runner and owner of Bells Running in Greeley, said he has received treatments from Foster every other week for the past two years.

"I'm looking for the best physical therapy and massage therapy I can get, because if I can get a second better, it makes a difference," said Bell, 56, who most recently competed in the USA Cross Country Championships in Boulder, where he placed first in his age group.

Bell said he recommends Foster to some of his customers, but he knows not all of them could handle her deep and "thorough" style.

"It's like buying a pair of running shoes," Bell said. "We have a most popular shoe in the store, but it's not gonna work for everybody."

Foster is the only certified PUSH therapist in the Greeley area. She opened her Greeley office in December 2004 and last year added a satellite office in Denver because of demand in the area. Foster became interested in PUSH because of her own chronic knee, heel and low back pain, and she said the system has changed her life because it is easy on her body as well as on her clients.

"I believe I'm a stand-alone service," she said. "I get results through my therapy alone."

Foster has found, however, that getting results doesn't mean very much if you don't have any clients.

"I've had to learn a lot about marketing," she said. "I struggled at first ... It's hard to put it in simple terms but stay true and accurate to the system."

Foster said she hopes to continue building brand-name recognition of the PUSH system.

"I'm striving for, 'Oh yeah, I've heard of PUSH,'" she said.

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Until then, Foster will stay busy helping her body and her clients' bodies stay healthy.

"(PUSH has) changed my life forever," she said. "I have a plan for the rest of my life. I don't plan on feeling worse as I get older."

Foster Muscle Therapy

\$90 for first appointment, \$70 for subsequent

Main Office:

Chase Tower

822 7th St., Suite 520-B

Greeley, CO 80631

Satellite Office: (Tuesdays)

1633 Fillmore St., Suite 412

Denver, CO

(970) 590 2856

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