

Bauman Wellness: Cultivating Community

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“Good ideas are a dime a dozen,” said the CEO in a speech he gave to middle managers of his large company. “What’s rare is an individual who can bring those ideas to life in the real world.” Dr. Ed Bauman is one of those rare individuals.



His foundational idea was that together we can build a community based on wellness around the world if we become educated in growing and eating healing foods, become practiced in the healing arts, and connected through strong supportive communities.

To achieve this, he joined and became board president of the non-profit Institute for Educational Therapy (IET) in Berkeley in 1989. This organization has promoted wellness since its onset by training professionals in eastern and western healing arts. “I brought in the integration of mind, body, and food to IET,” Bauman says. In 2004, the IET program rebranded as Bauman College, a non-profit that focused on teaching its students holistic nutrition, culinary arts and based on value of *Eating for Health*, the Bauman model of S.O.U.L. (seasonal, organic, unrefined, and local) food eating and living to promote and restore the health of our people and ecosystem, damaged by chemical agriculture and de-natured commercial food.

IET made a shift in priority in 2020, with the pandemic upon us to sell its renown nutrition and culinary curriculum to the National Holistic Institute (NHI) to continue vocational training, wherein students could receive financial assistance and receive job placement support. NHI was delighted to add nutrition and culinary arts training to their comprehensive massage therapy program, now has ten campuses up and down California, including a massage school in Santa Rosa, and with its headquarters in Emeryville. Bauman remains an advisor to this group.

At this point, IET changed its brand to Bauman Wellness and emphasis to bring integrative self-health wellness skills to directly to individuals, companies, and communities, locally in the towns of Sonoma County, but also through virtual workshops, events, and trainings to communities around the world.



“Wellness is about establishing a dynamic balance between, vitality, resilience, and recovery among members of a community,” he says. This balance activates when a community becomes aligned and engaged in five interrelated wellness skills areas:

1. Eating whole natural food, as much locally grown and organic as possible.
2. Joyful movement on a daily basis to support fitness and flexibility.
3. Mindfulness to focus the mind for calmness, insight, and clear understanding.
4. Healthy relationships to enable honest communication, active listening and collaborative problem solving.
5. Service to build sustainable, restorative personal and ecological community.

To complement their legacy of Healing Food programs, Bauman has added Wellness Arts to their offerings to awaken creativity, social learning, family, and community team building. Innovative programs include: The Artist Within that engages the participants in creative play; Move Your Art Out that uses creative movement and dance to relieve stress and experience joy, and Soulful Cinema, a film series of movies that reinforce core values for positive inner development.

There is also a Wellness Arts program for youngsters aged six to nine that includes multidisciplinary workshops in creative expression, sessions on creative movement and dance to develop sensory awareness and body control, and a film series to examine the character and leadership skills of the main characters in the stories.



As of this writing, 280 members in the Bauman Wellness community, including seventy folks in Sonoma County. Membership is free to encourage a diverse cross section of professional and families, youth and elders, newcomers and seasoned health and forward-thinking community advocates.

“Our aim is to create a community of learning, where we facilitate discussions and share diverse points of view in our classes and workshops,” Bauman says, noting that “my position is not a sage on the stage, but rather a guide on the side, role modeling living well, and enjoying creating a space for independent thought and collective growth. We learn with and from one another in a wellness community.”

On-site classes and workshops have mostly been done at **Bauman Wellness’ Berkeley facility at 1007 University Avenue**, typically drawing eight to fifteen people to a class. “But the new normal is hybrid workshops where 10 folks may gather in person and 20 or more may join via Zoom,” Bauman explains.

“The biggest audience is for on-demand (streaming) workshops and programs that can be viewed any time. People in Sonoma County and around the globe can join the Bauman Wellness program for free, then meet in groups for wellness professionals, for the workplace, for families, and for individuals. This allows people to connect with others with similar interests and goals, share resources, and gain new wellness skills and training on how to ‘weather the storm of change’ we are going through individually and collectively right now.”

As you can see, at the heart of Bauman Wellness is the community, whether in the North Bay or anywhere around the world, working together to create a society that supports health.

Dr. Bauman (his Ph.D. is in Community Health Promotion from the University of New Mexico) emphasizes the community aspect of his work by recalling Ernest Callenbach, the Berkeley author who wrote *Ecotopia*, the 1975 novel about a society devoted to the wellness of its citizens instead of the wealth of its corporations and plutocrats.

“When Ernest Callenbach died in 2012,” Bauman told me, “he left behind a farewell letter. It discusses the many challenges and other difficulties facing humanity. In it, he asks the question, ‘Although we may not be capable of changing history, how can we equip ourselves to survive it?’ His answers include mutual support, teamwork, altruism, working on behalf of the common good, and the ‘enormously creative’ power of collaborative thinking. But the number one survival quality on his list is hope. Hope makes all the other things possible by opening us up to them.”



As he has since he started his journey toward community wellness by growing organic vegetables on a 160-acre farm in western Massachusetts 50 years ago, Dr Ed Bauman stands at the nexus of many threads that lead toward an ecotopian-type social order. It is an idea that thrilled the counterculture over half a century ago. He is one of the rare individuals who has tried and succeeded in bringing that idea to actual life in the real world in Northern California and beyond in the Bauman community of learning, practice, and service.



For more information about Bauman Wellness, visit www.BaumanWellness.com, email info@baumanwellness.co, or phone (707) 795-1284.