



*Resident feature*

# KEANA FAIRFAX

## *Healing Hearts in Cherry Hill*

By Alice Riehl

Photos by Nicole Shilliday, Nicole Shilliday Photography

When you meet Keana Fairfax, your first impression is that she is a warm, empathetic woman with a big heart and a love for others. So, it comes as no surprise when you learn that she has devoted herself to a profession that helps people in trouble.

Keana is a clinical social worker, with a master's in social work from Rutgers University and a doctorate in social work from Barry University in Miami, FL. When she moved to Cherry Hill in 2021, she opened her own practice called "A Space for Us."

There is nothing "clinical" about the way she helps people. She gets to know her clients well, their needs, their fears, their hopes and designs a program for them that addresses all the issues in their lives, and she lets her clients know her as well, so they can establish a real rapport.

Keana has been a "Jersey Girl" for all of her life. She was born in Trenton and raised in Willingboro, NJ, until her 11th grade year, when she moved with her family to Trenton, where she graduated high school. In Trenton, her father was a corrections officer, and her mother worked for the state government.

Armed with her degree in social work, Keana originally was employed by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, where she specialized in policy development and strategic planning. At one point she supervised over 100 organizations who had received grants from that department, but she longed for something that more directly affected people's lives.

Then she saw a notice calling for people to interview for the position of clinical social worker. She interviewed, got the job, and there and then she found her calling.





She had been living in the Princeton area for a while before she and her husband, Blair Fairfax, made the decision to move their family to Cherry Hill, looking for an area that where they could purchase a home. She had a little apprehension that this community might not be as diverse as she was accustomed to but after a while she discovered that Cherry Hill is welcoming to all races, creeds and ethnic groups.

The diverse community is important to Keana because she specializes in troubles that affect African Americans and other people of color, including cultural and systematic oppression. She also focuses on women's issues such as adjustment to motherhood and repressed childhood trauma. Among these groups, there can often be concerns that have not yet been dealt with. There can be issues of anxiety and depression, a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem that can lead to relationship problems. Grief, abandonment issues, PTSD and life transitions are also areas of concentration for Keana.

Because the problems she encounters can affect all aspects of her clients' lives, she treats the entire person, often recommending techniques like mindfulness-based stress reduction, yoga, meditation, acupuncture and nutrition counseling. She has also suggested creative activities like painting and drawing, which can also help the client express their fears. This is in addition to the usual forms of treatment that are available, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and trauma-focused therapy. She doesn't approach the client as a "condition" but rather finds out who they are, what they need and begins from there.

As a therapist, Keana is ready to devote herself to her clients. She says that "I recognize the importance of the therapeutic use of self. I bring my authentic self to the therapeutic relationship, and I strive to be

empathetic, genuine, and transparent with my clients." Still, she knows that setting boundaries is also important in her clinical practice. "I believe that by using the therapeutic use of self skillfully and intentionally," she says, "I can help my clients achieve meaningful and lasting change."

Perhaps because she gives so much of herself to her clients, in her personal life, Keana is very private and is not on social media. Instead, she likes to get out in nature and finds peace by spending time with her very supportive family, including Blair, who after a successful career in the Army, now works for the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) designing solar energy installations for businesses like Wawa.

Keana and Blair have a blended family. He brought two girls to the marriage: Kaiya, who is 19 and attending Montgomery County Community College, and Maiya, who is a student at Cherry Hill West High School. Keana brought her little daughter, Olivia, who is 7 and attends St. Peter's Catholic school.

The whole family is happy to be settled in Cherry Hill and is looking forward to becoming even more involved in the community.



## FIVE QUESTIONS

### What is your favorite local restaurant?

Keana: Eddie V's and Hong Kong Fusion  
Blair: Eddie V's

### What is your favorite beach town?

Keana: Tamarindo, Costa Rica  
Blair: Rivera Maya, Mexico  
(Both also like Wildwood.)

### What is your favorite sports team?

Both: 76ers

### What is your favorite leisure activity?

Keana: being in nature  
Blair: swimming, relaxing in the pool.

### What is your favorite TV show?

Keana: Insecure  
Blair: Abbott Elementary