

Healing Earth offers natural pain-relief options to customers

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

Let's get something straight: Healing Earth CBD is not selling marijuana, and its products will not turn you into an on-screen McConaughy.

Rather, the new Lewiston business is offering an alternative to pain medications and pills.

Owners Brandon Rush and Heather Belviso opened last month with an intent to help those who might be at their wits' end trying to fight inflammation or fatigue.

"In 2009, I was in a car accident. ... I was on pain meds, had surgery; and then in 2017, I was strangled and badly beaten," Belviso said. "I was on all different kinds of medication: PTSD meds, antidepressants, pain meds. And then when my mom was diagnosed with cancer, I got her taking CBD for nausea. And it works.

"So, she's like, 'You need to try it.' I tried it and, within about six months to a year, I was solely off of all my medication, and strictly on CBD.

"I swear by it.

"We wanted to start a business. So, I told Brandon, I said we should do CBD. It really helps people."

Rush, who is a certified cannabidiol (CBD) consultant, explained how products work.

"It all comes from the same species of plant; it all comes from cannabis sativa," he said. "The difference is, Congress has said that marijuana has more than 0.3% THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). Hemp has less than 0.3%. Every product we sell comes from hemp. ... Nondetectable is what they call our THC. So, you don't get the high; you don't get the munchies or any of that stuff. What you do get is you get all of the benefits of medical marijuana, without that being-high feeling.

"It's been reported to help with anything - anxiety, depression, PTSD; it's a very good anti-nausea medication; it helps with inflammation. I mean, the list just goes on and on and on. There are even studies saying that they're seeing that it's helping with diabetes, high blood pressure; it helps with children with ADHD, ADD.

"It really only has been legal for three years. Research began in 2014, but actual selling the product to the general public didn't start until 2018. So, while there's a ton of research being done, it's still not a lot in terms of something that's been around for, say, 50 years.

"There's a lot of potential benefits - and we make sure to say, 'potential benefits,' because we all have in our bodies cannabinoids; and that's what CBD is - it's a cannabinoid. We have natural ones, called endocannabinoids. These are phytocannabinoids, which come from a plant. The whole endocannabinoid system relies on these being there.

"And different products do different things. There's different cannabinoids in every product, it's not just CBD. There's CBG, CBN, CBDV - and all of those different cannabinoids do different things. Some of them help with sleep; some help with anti-inflammatories. You can be here for two days talking about all the different potential benefits."

And, in fact, "Most customers, it's not a come in, buy a product and leave kind of situation; they'll be here for a half-hour just talking



The Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday for Healing Earth CBD. President Jennifer Pauly said, "We're so happy to celebrate with Heather and Brandon (shown right) and JP. ... I had met Heather, gosh, a couple months ago. I had known Heather from her story. And it's just an amazing, amazing feat. If you haven't been able to read about Heather and what she's gone through, she's an amazing, strong woman. And her friend does have everything that she's gone through (written and framed) inside. So, if you haven't had a chance, please read through it. It's an amazing, amazing feat that Heather has gone through and come through on the other side, and now she is a business owner here.

"Brandon and Heather, we're just so proud of everything that you're doing here in Lewiston. She's working with all of the businesses. She went around and introduced herself and met different business owners - and that is truly the embodiment of a small business owner. So, we couldn't be more proud of you, Heather, for that."

and asking questions," Rush said. "We do our best to steer them in the right direction to hopefully help them."

For Belviso, CBD helps her "definitely function better."

"I was never supposed to serve or waitress again. That's what I do besides this," she said. "I definitely have more energy. My body's not in pain. I do things that I couldn't before. And my mind's functioning better, and I'm not as jumpy. He'd walk up behind me; I'd jump a hundred feet.

"My PTSD, I'm not saying it's completely gone, because of the trauma; but I'm definitely not as jittery. I'm not moody. Like before, my moods would be all over the place. Now, I'm like at a level of functioning. Before, I would just wake up, you know, take a pain med, take a muscle relaxer, and I'd just be high throughout the day just doing my thing. I'd forget stuff on pain meds. This, I have better focus. ... It definitely has made my pain less, my anxiety less. I'm a happier person."

Rush said taking CBD - like any medicine or workout program - is a process.

"It is definitely something where you have to create a regimen," he said. "It's not just, 'Oh, I feel anxious today.' The gummies and the vape products are for those types of situations where you've been put in a situation where your anxiety is just through the roof. Then you can take a gummy or a vape and it will help you through that situation. But as far as overall wellness and well-being, it is definitely a you-take-it-every-day thing.

"The tinctures are the best way to get CBD into your system. That's why I always recommend the tinctures over any other product. It takes longer to go into effect, but you receive more of the actual CBD into your body, and into your bloodstream, and that's what you're looking for - that's what you need to help start feeling the benefits.

"There's a ton of products. We have localized pain products that are great if you have tennis elbow, or your knee's hurting you, or you slept wrong and your neck's bothering you; then you would use one of those topicals that you don't have to use every day. You just use it when it's bothering you.

"But as far as the actual well-

being of benefits, you want to take it every day. And it doesn't matter how you take it, whether it's gummies or tinctures or pills. You have to take it every day. You have to consider it in the same sense of a diet. A diet's not going to help you lose weight if you only diet one day a week. You have to do it on a regular basis."

Belviso said, "Before we started selling CBD, I couldn't sleep - maybe two hours. So, he heard about the CBD melatonin. I'm like, 'I've taken melatonin before; it doesn't work for me.' I took the CBD melatonin, I slept six hours straight. I didn't wake up groggy. Melatonin makes you tired in the morning. I didn't wake up exhausted; I woke up refreshed.

"And then I use the pain cream, because I have a titanium plate. When all that happened in 2017, it ripped all my muscle. So, every day I wake up my neck's stiff. I get up and I apply the cream on my neck, and then my neck's moving, and then I do tincture in the morning and a gummy. And then, if I have to work 12 hours at my other job on my feet all day, I'll take another gummy during the day. But the more I took the gummies, the less of the pain cream I had to use. It started easing my pain more throughout the day."

Healing Earth also carries pet products.

"It's the same thing," Rush said.



"Basically, any mammal has an endocannabinoid system. And that's what CBD is targeting. And your pets - dogs, cats, bunnies, horses - they all have the same system that you have. They all suffer from the same pain, nausea, headaches, stress, anxiety, that we all do. So, it's the same exact effect. It's basically just different flavoring, because it's for a dog or a cat.

"I know it helps very well with older pets that have a hard time

moving around, and we'll get them back up and moving."

Healing Earth CBD is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at 765 Cayuga St., Lewiston. Visit online at www.healingearthcbd.com.

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