



Name: Jennifer Baccellieri

Year of Graduation: 2000

All Degrees received: B.A. from Long Island University, FWP
Certified Herbalist from the Southwest School of Botanical Medicine,
Certified Holistic Health Counselor from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition in NYC.

All Awards/ Honors received: Mickey Leland Hunger Fellows Program, Top class of
Institute for Integrative Nutrition, serving in the Immersion Team.

Why did you decide to attend the Friends World Program? How was the program different than others?

Joining FW was the first step in my life that I did according to intuition and gut knowing. I was at one of those college fairs with my parents when I was a sophomore in high school, and I was very disillusioned with the prospects. I just wasn't excited about any of them. I didn't want to grow up and be an engineer or a doctor or a computer tech. I wanted to help the world to be a better place, a saner place, a more aware place. We were about to leave, and I stopped and told my parents that I just had to go the last aisle. I would be right back. Sure enough, there was the FW table, and all my dreams about a college came true in that moment. I ran back excitedly to my parents. "I found a school for global social change, that is their whole focus! And they have a healing program! This is perfect!" I didn't have to think about FW. Everything in my whole being let me know this was the school for me. It was the first time I just didn't think I just followed that feeling, and that feeling brought me right into the heart of a whole new discovery of myself and the world.

What was your area of focus while in the program?

I decided to focus on the healing arts, because that was my passion and the way I saw I would contribute to global social change - working with the individual healing and letting that create fertile ground for the other changes to come. My first internship was with a clinical herbalist and green witch. I did a comparative analysis of the two approaches while living and working with them intimately and learning all about healing plants. I helped Brigitte write her book and helped Ann put on shamanic gatherings. It was amazing. Then the second year I did an internship with a grassroots organization that focused on revitalizing local health traditions. I lived in a remote village in Rajasthan and documented interviews with tribal healers and botanists alike. I attended festivals to educate people about the herbal knowledge of their ancestors as an alternative to expensive (and ineffective) western medications. I wrote articles on what I saw and documented traditional healing knowledge about plants from the tribals. It was like living in a National Geographic magazine. I couldn't believe what I was seeing and experiencing. It was a dream. Lastly, I spent my year for my thesis in Central and South America. I continued to study holistic healing from an indigenous focus. I lived in

Ecuador and worked for an indigenous political organization, which took me out into the field and introduced me to "shamans". Again, I was educated about not only the medical knowledge of shamans, but the political battle they were in to maintain their traditions and continue healing people in the manner their ancestors had - legally. I also attended ritual and ceremonies to attune to the healing tradition of South American shamans. It was beautiful to share with them all the stories of the other healers I had lived and studied with throughout the world.

What are you currently doing (professionally)?

Well after I graduated FW, I went on to develop my healing skills and became a certified herbalist and nutrition counselor. I have been running a wellness center for the past 4 years, where I meet with people either in person or by phone and help them gain more awareness around their health concerns and make gradual diet and lifestyle changes. It is powerful work, because at its essence it's about transformation, and I get to witness and support my clients through that process. It moves me and inspires me every time. Recently, I've also taken on a position as co-director of a non-profit called Dreamtime. Its aim is to educate, inspire, and empower people to create positive change in the world through a dynamic blend of arts, education, and celebration. Dreamtime encourages people to envision new possibilities and create them. Once a year it puts on a music and arts festival in Paonia, Colorado where we gather thousands of people around this intention and create the space for transformation and personal growth - in a festival setting. It is cutting edge and what the world is calling forth right now. Between those two, I am kept pretty darn busy.

How have you been able to apply what you learned at Friends World to what you currently do?

My studies brought me right into the heart of a lifestyle and world perspective that shaped the work I do now. I was raised, so to speak, in an environment of social awareness and responsibility, concern that led to action, and empowerment around just going and doing it in the world. FW world taught me that positive social change was possible, and it was my responsibility as a student to act. We all at FW had important work to do in the world with the awareness and education that was shared with us. I never took that for granted. I still consider it the purpose of my life.