

Jamila Owens-Todd

Position/Where: Naturopathic Doctor/The Meridian Institute for Naturopathic Therapies (MINT) & Holistic Nutrition Instructor/The Healing Arts Center

Career Highlights: Educating people on reversing major illnesses as well as being involved in an integrative community of health practitioners, in order to increase health and healing in the St. Louis area (St. Louis Institute for Integrative Medicine and the Urban Health Initiative).



**Jamila
Owens-Todd**

Awards: During my education, I was awarded multiple bursaries for innovative ideas in alternative medicine and advanced studies of Naturopathic Medicine.

Education: 2007, graduate of the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto, Ontario; 2000 graduate from the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) with bachelor degrees in Chemistry and French

Personal: I have a supportive husband and we have a beautiful 4-year-old daughter.

St. Louis Connection: University City Graduate, born and raised in St. Louis, with many opportunities to travel and leave the city. Those opportunities all allowed me to place more value in being active and committed to this city.

Journey to success: I always knew that I wanted to be involved in health and healing but I never knew to what extent. As a child I wanted to be a dentist. As I progressed into adolescence, I figured being a medical doctor would be the smart thing to do, but later realized that I wanted to do something different. I was always involved in science education and throughout high school was a Bridge Program participant at UMSL and grew more and more excited about Chemistry and its possibilities. The Bridge Program afforded me the opportunity to go to college on an academic scholarship. While studying chemistry, I realized how nutrition and plants were so integral in medicine today. I made herbs and natural healing my hobby. I then had the opportunity to travel to different countries and saw how natural medicine was so integrated into traditional medicine, with doctors and pharmacies. Upon graduating with chemistry and French degrees, I worked as a pharmaceutical chemist for a number of years, which gave me a great deal of insight into the science of plants and herbs and how they are used in many common pharmaceuticals. I knew that I would have to pursue a graduate degree and I was considering medical research or organic chemistry. I was never completely enthused about the two choices, but knew that I would need intense studies to be comfortable with the ins and outs of natural medicine. You hear about how great one herb works to heal the body and then there are reports on television of how bad this same herb can be. I needed to know the truth and naturopathic medicine provided the answers. I was able (and still am able) to pursue pure scientific research and apply this to everyday health concerns. The journey was not an easy one, as I worked all throughout my undergraduate education and doctorate studies. There were a lot of sacrifices that had to be made with leaving a career as a chemist, in order to follow my dreams of being a naturopathic doctor. Moving to another country and studying vigorously for a degree that many people are still not sure about, can make you think twice. There are growing concerns of critics of alternative medicine and if this actually works. I would not have put my life on hold and given up so many conveniences, for something that I didn't believe in – especially something that can provide such great healing to others.