

https://www.cecildaily.com/news/labyrinth-constructed-at-community-connecting-us/article_8f852425-27ef-5baa-81c0-0d73736e04f6.html

FEATURED

TOP STORY

Labyrinth constructed at Community Connecting Us

By Jane Bellmyer jbellemyer@cecilwhig.com

Oct 4, 2022



With all the historic bricks culled from the former Bainbridge Naval Training Center in place, volunteers work on sand underneath and soil on each side of the Community Connecting Us labyrinth.

CECIL WHIG PHOTO BY JANE BELLMYER

PORT DEPOSIT — What was once a temporary meditative path on the grounds of Port Deposit's Community Connecting Us is now permanent, with the construction of a brick labyrinth by community members.

The new labyrinth is a singular spiraling pathway framed by bricks. Walking the path, one is taken from the outside of the labyrinth on a journey to its central point.

Lars Howlett came to Port Deposit from Oakland, Cal. to lead the construction of the pathway inside the wrought iron fence of the former Tome Memorial United Methodist Church.

“I used to teach at a high school where a labyrinth was built in the courtyard for the students,” Howlett said, taking a break from digging notches in the grass where bricks would be lain.

The bricks, which came from buildings at the former Bainbridge Naval Training Center in Port Deposit, were donated for the project by Richard Labhart.

Howlett said he walked that labyrinth himself, then brought his students back once the school year began.

“We walked it on the first day to set our intentions and on the last day to see their successes,” he said.

Now, Howlett teaches others how to draw and create a labyrinth of their own.

“This is different than a maze,” he said. “A maze is a puzzle. A labyrinth is one single pathway. As long as you trust the path and take the next step you’ll reach the center.”

Clare Sautter has constructed temporary labyrinths for CCU and it was she who invited Howlett to Port Deposit for the permanent two-dimensional project.

“I took a course in creativity and one of the resources was the labyrinth,” Sautter said. She discovered Veriditas, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting labyrinths and the meditative experiences they offer, which introduced her to Howlett.

“This is a classical labyrinth,” Sautter said of the simple, circular design that goes back as much as 6,000 years.

For Howlett, time in the labyrinth is sacred. It’s a personal opportunity to pause and reflect.

“Some walk it, some run it, some dance it,” he said.

The Rev. Laura Artress, founder of Veriditas, describes the labyrinth as “.. a spiritual tool that has many applications in various settings. It reduces stress, quiets the mind and opens the heart. It is a walking meditation, a path of prayer, and a blue-print where psyche meets Spirit.”

Angela Cusack traveled to Port Deposit from Lake Mary, Fla. to be part of the construction. A friend of Sautter’s for more than 25 years, Cusack said this project is a shared dream.

“We want to bring the labyrinth and the power of the labyrinth to as many people as possible,” Cusack said. She finds connection there. “It means finding your heart and your soul; a level of equality. It symbolizes that life is OK even when we’re not OK.”

There is no right or wrong way, she said of the highly personal act of traveling through the labyrinth.

“It’s about where you are in the moment. Make the meaning, the act of the labyrinth what you want to make,” she said.

Cusack said it’s a good place to work things out, whatever your spiritual background.

“Bring it to the labyrinth. Talk to yourself about the concerns,” she said.

“Labyrinths are really good at providing a sure path for disconcerting times,” Howlett said.

The Labyrinth will be officially dedicated Saturday at noon at 99 North Main St. in Port Deposit.