

tice—she met Sisk and Shutz Fort through her brother, and the trio felt a kinship instantly, Mascareñas said.

“We got really honest and open,” she said. “That’s been our journey; it’s been really synergistic, with a lot of care ... a lot of love.”

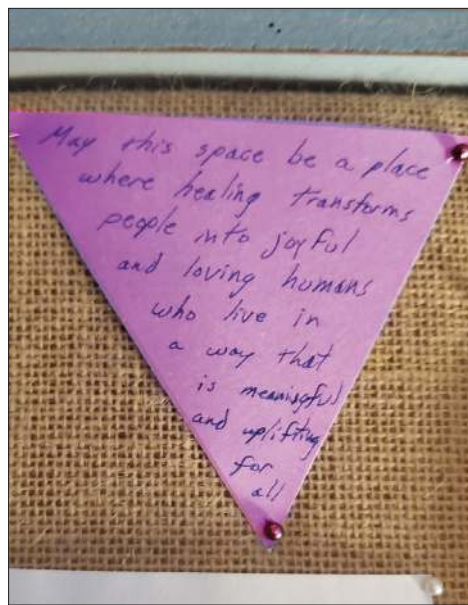
Since opening, the collective has launched several recurring events and featured classes at various price levels, including some free or donation-based and sliding-scale price points (see infobox). Each of them also offers individual sessions based on their specific specialties.

Every Thursday, Shutz Fort hosts a Mindfulness Sampler Class, sharing tools for grounding, connecting with the senses, nervous system support, and body awareness. During a recent class, she asked attendees to shake their arms and bounce. This is one way to ease the nervous system and release tension and stress, she said.

Sisk, in addition to co-facilitating the Art of Play Series with Shutz Fort, also offers Vital Chi Movement Meditation on Tuesdays. These classes combine the five-element theory of classical Chinese Medicine, somatic movement education and moving meditation practices based in qigong (an ancient Chinese healing art involving meditation, controlled breathing, and movement exercises).

Mascareñas’ offerings include tarot readings and individual sessions focused on intuition and embodiment. Later this year she plans to offer a Moon Circle class for women focused on reflective conversation and releasing shame and self-doubt; and Sensual Movement class that supports self-esteem and combats harmful objectification of women’s bodies.

A bulletin board note at the new Chico Body-Wise Collective.



Witnessing as healing

The group is working to gain nonprofit status for Chico Body-Wise and apply for grant funding to expand their offerings into more rural areas of the county. The founders also spoke of launching an equity fund to subsidize or cover costs for low-income individuals and members of marginalized communities (e.g., LGBTQ and BIPOC). They are interested in partnering with other local organizations offering different perspectives on ways of connecting with the land, one another and what is needed to be well, Sisk said.

In everything that they do, witnessing and listening to people expressing themselves, their feelings and what they have been through is a core value of Chico Body-Wise, the founders said. The community is still experiencing “extreme isolation” in the wake of the pandemic and several natural disasters, Mascareñas said. “People want to be witnessed, seen [and] understood,” she said. “They really can thrive with safe witnessing.”

Shutz Fort added that society can be oppressive and a significant contributor to the human struggle, especially for marginalized groups. Chico Body-Wise’s goal is to validate those experiences and the toll it takes on mental health.

“We don’t say we have all the answers,” she said. “[We ask], *What’s your own internal wisdom?*”

Chico Body-Wise’s community building groups, such as the Community Council talking and listening circle (held every other Thursday, 7-9 p.m.) and Trans Adjacent Group (held every other Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m. beginning March 8), aim to create a safe space for people to talk about their lives and experiences.

These gatherings help people rebuild a sense of belonging, Sisk said. There isn’t a good template for grieving within western, white supremacist culture, she said, and many feelings are considered “taboo” or “off-limits.” But grief needs to be witnessed—even grief that arises from positive changes.

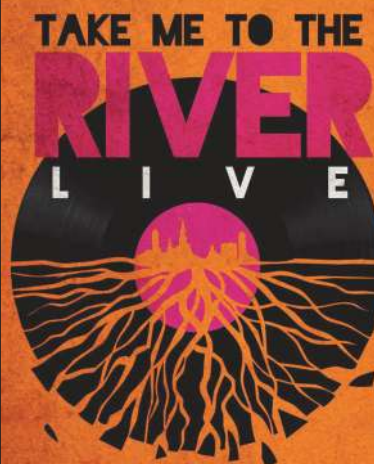
“It’s these subtleties in the complexity of human experience we’re trying to make room for,” Sisk said. “This is about filling a gap, interrupting the cycles of disconnection.”

What Chico Body-Wise is offering, Gray said, is “really exciting for Chico,” and she’s looking forward to attending more classes.

“[With the] Camp Fire, COVID [and] the murder of George Floyd, we’ve seen bodies go through things for years, and it can feel like we are at the whim of environmental factors or the human condition,” she said, “and to reclaim some of that is body wise.” □



Spring 2023 Events
Chico PERFORMANCES



DUMPSTAPHUNK
GEORGE PORTER JR.

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
JON CLEARY

Thursday, March 2 | 7:30 PM | Laxson Auditorium

Mix together funk, R&B, soul and a little bit of Jazz, and you get “Take Me to the River: Nola Live!” an evening featuring the top names in the funk-fusion movement.

Tickets Now on Sale • chicoperformances.com

LAW SCHOOL INFORMATION DAY

Join us in person or via Zoom

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023

6:30PM TO 8:00PM

Visit www.calnorthern.edu for the Zoom link

HEAR FROM *Students | Faculty | Alumni*

AFFORDABLE *1/3 the cost of traditional law schools*

ACCESSIBLE *Part time evening J.D. program*

ACCREDITED *By WSCUC & the CA State Bar*

PRACTICAL *Experience & Instruction*



60% July 2022 First Time Taker
Bar Pass Rate 2x The CA Accredited Average!

CAL NORTHERN
SCHOOL of LAW

(530) 891-6900 • calnorthern.edu
Celebrating 40 Years of Quality Legal Education!