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PERINI  NAVI



# HEALING WIND

THE FACES OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE IN WIND THERAPY CAMP SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AND DEPRESSION CAN BE FACED AND FOUGHT WITH NATURE, SPORTS AND COMPANIONSHIP.

BY COSTANZA ROMAGNOLI

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The idea was born from the first-hand experience of Georgia Gay. In 2014, during a difficult period of her life, she fought back in order to survive. She was lost and decided to go on a two-month journey to find herself. It was during this important period of purification that she discovered kite surfing. “It was a revelation,” says Georgia, “I felt the physical and psychological benefits immediately. Kite surfing helped me rebuild myself. It was such a surprise that I couldn’t help but want to investigate the reasons why. I had a sense that it could have therapeutic benefits on many people who, like me, were in need of a sort of emotional shock that could act as a release from harmful emotional numbness.”

This marked the beginning of a period of in-depth study that led her to Dr. Amedeo Bezzetto, head of supportive care at the Villa Santa Giuliana Hospital in Verona, the only hospital in Italy that has a department dedicated to adolescents. After thorough analysis, Georgia Gay founded Flying Hearts NPO in 2015, a non-profit organization to raise the funds needed to set up the Wind Therapy Camp.

“The Villa Santa Giuliana Hospital has been dealing with patients with mental disorders for decades now. It has a specialist unit that has been exclusively helping younger patients for the past fifteen years. They are teenagers from eleven to twenty years old who are struggling during their adolescent years. They’re not able to cope with life. This specialized unit has created a sort of mental space that proposes a rehabilitation path and therapy that can help them to resume their lives. Among the innovative tools and projects that we are trying to use and develop, the latest that has come to life is perhaps the most significant in terms of the realization of an effective practice. It’s called Wind Therapy, supported by Flying Hearts NPO. It’s a project integrating a high emotional intensity experience and a clinic. With Georgia Gay, we feel that we can create an innovative working model to help these kids,” says Dr. Bezzetto.

This adventure was also made possible thanks to Gabriele Ghione. With his dream of opening his own kite surfing center, he became the owner of FH Academy in Porto Pollo.

“This is the fourth year that we have been able to organize 5 days of camp with groups of 5 kids who are always overseen by doctors. The intense sea life between waves and salt, playing a sport that is exhausting and engaging, being surrounded by a windy and sparkling nature, as well as the group activities, offer to these teens, who are used to living in a closed and segregated reality, the possibility to live extreme and stimulating experiences. They walk barefoot on the sand, breathe in the salty air and admire the incredible colors of sunsets and sunrises. It’s as if the strong adrenaline boost wakes them up and helps them out of their lethal inactivity,” says Georgia.

The benefits are clear to all involved and while talking about the project is useful, it is no longer sufficient. That is why the Università Cattolica of Milan and Brescia, which have always been interested in the beneficial influence that sports have on the psyche, have decided to participate in this experience and gather the evidence needed to study the project and prove its curative effectiveness.

“Starting this year, Wind Therapy is being studied by the psychology department of Università Cattolica with the aim not only of collecting data on the improvement found in the adolescents through a test created specially for both the young people involved in the project and the team that supervises them, but also to further understand and study this innovative therapy to support adolescents with psycho-behavioral disorders. It’s a big accomplishment for us to be able to talk about and present the project around and above all to be met with interest and curiosity. It’s important to realize that exercise is not enough. Besides accumulating energy, the teens must be able to unwind so we have relaxing and calming group activities too,” says Georgia.



**THESE ADOLESCENTS NEED CUSTOMIZED RECOVERY PROGRAMS, STUDIED BY EXPERT GROUPS, TO ACCOMPANY THEM ALONG THEIR PATH TO RECOVERY.**

“The day begins very early with sun salutations and stretching,” Georgia shares, “relaxing music and sacred instruments help calm the kids down during the day and the evening is dedicated to cooking. We prepare vegetarian dishes alongside a chef.”

The group activities, usually carried out at the beginning of camp in order to get to know each other, immediately create affinities between the teens. Team games, in which the teens have to help each other out, are organized and supervised by specific instructors. They find themselves taking three fundamental steps in a short time: rediscovering their potential, experiencing a psychological change and reactivating their life projects.