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HALEY FARM

Inn and Retreat Center

Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**
unless otherwise noted

For the past twenty-four years, Haley Farm has been one of Garrett County's best-kept secrets; with even locals often unaware of the farm and all that it offers. Despite its easy proximity to Deep Creek Lake, the Inn and Retreat Center has remained a tranquil respite for its guests. The farm features a rambling 65 acres, vintage dairy barns and a sturdy farmhouse hugged by a wrap-around porch. Since the Gillespie family bought the property in 1993, they've renovated the barn and carriage house to include well-appointed suites with fireplaces, jetted tubs, and kitchenettes. The inn also features a spa offering massage, sauna, facials and reflexology.

In recent years, the Gillespies have increasingly expanded the retreat side of their business by offering packages and add-ons such as cooking classes, boot camp, yoga, organic gardening, hiking and meditation. "The average vacationer in Garrett County is overworked and stressed-out. A conventional vacation of herding your group from one crowded activity to the next and over-indulging in food and drink is not going to leave you feeling refreshed upon returning home. This is why many people feel they need a vacation after their vacation," said Haley Gillespie, who

directs retreats and wellness offerings at the farm. "What we try to offer is a true reset button along with an opportunity to work at bettering one's health in a sustainable way that can be continued after you leave."

When Kam Gillespie, her late husband Wayne and daughter Haley first moved to Garrett County, Haley had just turned 10 and was intent on getting a horse. Wayne was retired from the military and looking to return to his roots of growing up on a farm. Kam is an economist and had worked for over a dozen years at the World Bank in Washington, DC, but was happy to teach at Garrett College for a bit while they got the bed and breakfast started. The family loved to travel and decorated the rooms with pieces from around the world.

"It was lovely getting away from the traffic of Washington, DC, and to be surrounded by all this natural beauty. It reminded me of a mini-Switzerland," said Kam. "I learned how to can vegetables, and Wayne planted apples and Asian pears that he had planted everywhere we lived."

Wayne loved being a gentleman farmer. He had milked the cows and worked on their farm in Floyd, VA, before he went off to West Point, but gardening and orchards were his passion. He loved to share the bounty of the farm with the guests. Sadly Wayne died in 2003, but his last two years were filled with doing the things he loved the most – fishing, golf, and tending to his orchards.

Kam had always wanted the B&B to evolve from a bed and breakfast to a Retreat Center, so when Haley returned after an absence of ten years (she had been working and studying in DC, California, Seattle and Boston), they decided to try offering health retreats.

Today Haley Farm operates as an Inn and Retreat Center. Most of the classes are led by Haley, who holds a Master's Degree in Nutrition and Health Promotion and has been a certified Personal Trainer for over a decade. She also teaches part-time at Garrett College.

Activities offered at the farm include yoga classes, boot camps, wellness coaching, personal training and Noshes and Knowledge nights (which includes a cooking class, dinner and lecture). There are also one, two and five day retreats at the farm. The retreats are designed to help busy people take some time for themselves and make a commitment to bettering their health. The “Well-cations” include private accommodations, all-inclusive healthy meals featuring the freshest seasonal foods, personal and group fitness training, yoga, cooking classes, one-on-one wellness coaching, nutrition education and a take home exercise and wellness plan. Depending on the time of year guests can also add other activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, massages, organic gardening, the obstacle course, equine therapy and more. There are no gimmicks, no fad diets. This is not the Biggest Loser. Instead the retreats are about sustainable lifestyle changes.

Both Kam and Haley are enamored with the TV show, American Ninja Warrior, and love the grit and determination



Photos top to bottom: Dining room at Haley Farm.

One of the 10 suites with Jacuzzi and fireplace at the Farm.

The barn, on location, can be used for weddings and receptions.

One of the three bedrooms at the cottage on Deep Creek Lake (less than 10 minutes away).

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of those competitors. Haley has recently built a Ninja style obstacle course at the farm to inspire people to challenge themselves. It's not just for youngsters; Kam is in her sixties and wants to practice on it too. "It's exciting to watch these games on TV and hopefully inspire others to get healthy. As far as I know we have the only obstacle course in the Deep Creek Lake area."

In her effort to promote health and wellness Kam has written a book called "Making US Healthy Again." It's available on Amazon and highlights the four main factors of healthy living. "I got interested in this issue when I heard how eating the Standard American Diet (SAD) was setting us up for chronic diseases like diabetes, Alzheimer's and even cancer. I did not want to be a burden on my daughter, on society or to live a less than optimal life, so I researched everything I could lay my hands on. It's so important that Americans take this matter seriously; health is something we take for granted until we get sick. I hope the book can inspire people to adopt healthy lifestyles. I know it's not easy when we have been given conflicting information over the years, but I go through the history to explain how we got here, and what we can do about it. And if you can't do it on your own, we can definitely help you at one of our retreats."

THE NINJA STYLE OBSTACLE COURSE —

Top photo: Susan Gray (left) and Haley balancing on beams.

2nd photo: Maria Watkins and Haley jog through tires.

Bottom left photo: Haley, Maria Watkins, and Dwayne Shillingburg alternate on the slant boards.

Bottom right photo: Haley and Dwayne complete chin up reps while Maria works with weighted ropes.



Kam and Haley also want to focus on businesses to encourage them to send their employees to these retreats once or twice a year so they can return energized and motivated. The obstacle course should also be a big attraction and can be part of corporate retreats. The Girlfriends Getaways and Bachelorette Bootcamp are also fun getaways (Haley will even teach belly-dancing at these). The Getaway packages include two nights of stress free bliss where you can laugh, play, relax and indulge with a group of your best friends. Guests can customize these retreats to include spa services, outdoor activities from hiking to carriage rides, or just simply relaxing on the porch.

Haley Farm has some lovely rooms to go with the retreats. There are 10 suites at the farm – all very spacious and most have heart-shaped Jacuzzis and fireplaces – some even have kitchens. The wrap-around porch, hammock, outdoor fire pit, and fields with horses are just what the doctor ordered for a relaxing getaway. There is also a three-bedroom cottage on the lake that is less than 10 minutes away. Haley Farm with its acres of rolling hills, orchards and vegetable garden is the perfect place to unwind, recharge and re-balance your life. Check out the website, www.haleyfarm.com, for more information on rates and availability.

Right photo: Haley completes the hanging ball grasp.

Bottom photo: An overview of the Ninja style obstacle course at Haley Farm.

