



HERB CENTER OF JACKSONVILLE  
Pestle  
&  
Potions

Dawn Stewart  
Founder-Owner

2026 Jax Chamber Overall Small Business Leader of the Year Application



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The End?

# Page 3 - History & Philosophy

Once Upon a Time, **Pestle and Potions, LLC**, a woman-owned, small business was founded by Clinical Herbalist and Licensed Massage Therapist Dawn Stewart in 2022. There had been a prior version of this business, under the name of Simply Natural Herbs and Potions that existed for about 22 years until Covid hit.

Pestle and Potions offers an integrated approach to whole-person health, education, and community enrichment—uniting multiple modalities under one welcoming roof.

At the heart of our mission is the understanding that wellness takes many forms. Beyond our own offerings, Pestle and Potions provides rental space for aligned practitioners and entrepreneurs.

That's why Pestle and Potions offers a well-rounded selection of services to support the diverse needs of our clients that include:

- Clinical herbalism consultations grounded in evidence- informed botanical medicine as well as lifestyle considerations
- Herbal education and hands-on classes that



empower individuals to craft their own wellness

- Massage therapy and assisted stretching for structural balance and pain relief
- Yoga and movement practices designed to restore strength, mobility, and presence
- A retail apothecary featuring handcrafted herbal formulas, teas, body care, and wellness products
- Hypnotherapy and psychotherapy to support mental, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing
- Multifunction cardiogram testing offers insight into cardiovascular and autonomic function
- A rotating art gallery showcasing local talent and fostering creative expression, which can be soothing to the soul

This collaborative model cultivates a vibrant network of healers, educators, and makers from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to conscious, holistic care.

More than a clinic, shop, or studio, Pestle and Potions is a living community where artistry and education intersect and where individuals are supported in reclaiming their health, agency, and understanding of natural options.

# Page 5 - Management

Pestle and Potions is steadily growing into a well-organized, highly functional operation. Our space now hosts regular gallery events, a full suite of practitioners renting treatment rooms, and a steady rhythm of daily responsibilities that our team manages smoothly and collaboratively. As a leader, I focus on creating clear systems, open communication, and a supportive environment where everyone can do their best work.

We've seen tremendous interest from individuals wanting

mentorship in herbalism and product creation, and we are currently developing a formal **internship program for 2026**. My goal is to build structured pathways for education, hands-on training, and professional development so we can share our knowledge with the wider community.

Our team is strong, compassionate, and dedicated—not only to their own clients but also to one another. I prioritize cultivating a culture of collaboration, where programs and workshops grow naturally from shared strengths and aligned missions.

## Our Community of Independent Practitioners



- **Cheryl Herring**, owner of Cherring Health and Wellness, brings her expertise as a yoga instructor, stretch coach and personal trainer. Together, we've developed workshops and are launching a new program in 2026 designed to help our community improve mobility, strength, and overall wellness.



- **Amy Spahic**, founder and CEO of CardioVision Care, is a valued partner. Amy has certified me in the use of the multifunction cardiogram, a unique and powerful tool that can enable early prevention of cardiac issues so that she can expand her reach in the professional community.



- **Tracy Riley Counseling**, Dr. Tracy Riley is a licensed clinical social worker, forensic evaluator, and hypnotherapist dedicated to helping individuals, families, and professionals overcome life's most complex challenges. Dr. Riley blends compassion, humor, and evidence-based practice to create a space for growth, healing, and empowerment.

## Page 6 - Innovativeness & Response to Adversity

Overcoming has been the theme of my life. As an Army brat, I moved more than a hundred times growing up. Constant change shaped me—taught me to adapt quickly, make friends easily, and let go graciously when I needed to. What could have been instability became resilience, flexibility, and an openness to new beginnings.

Life took me to the path of becoming a massage therapist. I married a wonderful chiropractor and together we built a successful practice in the Atlanta area where we welcomed two beautiful daughters, both born at home. When the girls were just two and five years old, my husband and I moved from Georgia to Rhode Island to help my mother care for my stepfather and my brother-in-law who unfortunately, were both stricken with debilitating illnesses. Six months later, my husband passed suddenly and unexpectedly. Overnight, I went from working part-time as a massage therapist to being the sole provider for my family.

For the past eighteen years, my focus has been twofold: show up for my daughters Gianna and Francesca; and teach them—through my own actions—that dreams are worth pursuing, even when the path is hard.

Ten years ago, I sold everything we owned and the three of us spent a year backpacking across Europe. I wanted my daughters to see that the world was far bigger than the quaint, but small town where we lived. When we returned, all we had were our backpacks, some very worn-out shoes, and a determination to start fresh. We moved to Florida to help my sister, Bridget Edkin-Farrar open her chiropractic practice in Jackson-

ville Beach.

My first shop in Jacksonville opened in 2020, and like many small businesses at that time, it didn't last long. I spent the next two years managing a medical practice while not so quietly, planning my return. I talked about my dream to anyone who would listen. I sketched it out on napkins. I held onto it because I needed my daughters to see what it looks like to keep going, even after setbacks.

My dream was to create a space where herbalists could share their work, where the community could learn natural approaches to health, and where local practitioners could find a safe, affordable place to build their own practices. That dream became **Pestle and Potions**.

Since opening, we've faced our share of challenges. Earlier this year, I needed major emergency surgery and couldn't work for two months. I feared it would be the end of Pestle and Potions. But the community showed up! Jason Kropridowski organized a fundraiser through a hypnosis show. Snowden McFall started a GoFundMe. Our landlord, Joe Perry of J.P. Perry Insurance, gave us grace on rent when it mattered most. Their generosity—and the support of so many others—helped carry us through.

With gratitude, perseverance, and a lot of hard work, **we are still here**.

Pestle and Potions isn't just a business. It is the dream I held for years. It is the place I created for my daughters and my community—a home for healing, learning, and the belief that we can overcome anything.

# Page 7 - Leadership & Community Engagement

Over the past three years, Pestle and Potions has become a gathering place for creativity, learning, wellness, and connection. We are proud to share our space with a wide range of community partners, including:

- **First Coast Paint Slingers**, a collective of local painters whose artwork fills our gallery and brings vibrant energy to the space.
- **Ms. Kat Dance Studio**, whose youngest dancers light up the gallery each week with joy and movement.
- **Scottish Dancers** who bring culture, tradition, and lively rhythm to our Thursday evenings.
- **Ask the Herbalist** is a free weekly community group held every Tuesday to support those seeking natural wellness education.
- **Jax Collaborative**, a networking group founded at Pestle and Potions by Tangee Huger, Wendy Hughes, and Dawn Stewart to uplift local professionals and small businesses.

- **Tea & Sympathy**, free support group for those who are grieving, is hosted by Pestle and Potions, alongside a wonderful team of counselors who volunteer their time

Our space has also hosted **yoga classes, sound baths, tea parties, stretching workshops, massage education**, and countless other offerings that support community well-being.

One of our most meaningful annual events is our **Community Thanksgiving**. In 2024, we set a table for 70 and invited anyone who needed a place to belong. Guests brought dishes to share, and every leftover was packaged and delivered to individuals experiencing hunger. That year we fed 25 people; in 2025, we served 37. Our goal for 2026 is to reach 70 meals delivered—matching the number of seats we set at our table.

**Pestle and Potions** exists to bring people together, to share knowledge generously, and to support the community we love. Our partnerships and programs reflect those values every day.



# Page 8 - Biography

An herbalist you say?

**Dawn Stewart** was raised in a family of chiropractors who were natural healers. There are over a dozen chiropractors in her family, and she married yet another one, Mike. Dawn herself started out in chiropractic school, however, with just a year remaining, she realized massage therapy held her heart, and she went on to get certified as a Massage Therapist. Nearly 30 years later, she still loves it!

When their first daughter, Gianna, was born, she couldn't imagine anything touching her perfect little being that wasn't as pure as she was. Dawn started making all her own baby balms, cleaning products, even baby wipes, which expanded into a greater, wider field of products. Dawn's formal herbal education started with her mentor, Susan Clements, one of the greatest herbalists in the Northeast. Dawn learned about foraging and making teas and tinctures. Since then Dawn has expanded her learning through available courses, and attending conferences in this very specialized field. Now, as a Clinical Herbalist, she's delighted to teach others how and why to make all kinds of things.

While Dawn started out as a chiropractic student, having her first child changed the way she viewed life. It positioned her to learn about herbs and health, and a less invasive way to view healing. As her knowledge grew so did her family as she and Mike welcomed their second daughter, Francesca. Unfortunately, tragedy struck and Mike passed suddenly just two years after Francesca was born. This unexpected heartbreak certainly influenced Dawn's decisions, but it never altered her vision for herbal, natural health options.

Three years ago when Pestle and Potions opened its doors, a space where people with limited knowledge of herbs and natural healing could ask questions without embarrassment. The space is open to everyone to come and learn.

Twenty-three years later, she still makes all her own—they just keep getting better. With the help of her two perfect daughters, Pestle and Potions was born.



# Page 9 - Client Reviews

I am pleased to share some of the social media reviews I have received.



**Michael Barnett**  
Local Guide · 8 reviews

★★★★★ 3 weeks ago **NEW**

Dawn is a great source for natural cures for various ailments. I had a lingering cough, and the tea she prescribed stopped it. The anti-stress tea worked well also. Dawn is great to deal with, and an excellent source for your health potion needs.



**Natalie Wells**  
1 review

★★★★★ 3 months ago

I had the WORST bug bites from a camping trip in Canada over the summer. They were still there after two weeks! I used calamine, which was my go-to growing up, but it really wasn't working. A friend suggested "The Magic Stick" and the irritation around my bug bites cleared up LITERALLY overnight. I still see the red, but it is so much better! I really wish I had before, after pictures! It's almost worth getting bit up again just to prove it 😊



**Zachary Collins**  
Local Guide · 117 reviews · 14 photos

★★★★★ 2 months ago

If you are looking to feel better but do it naturally... this is the stop for you! Absolutely awesome! Dawn Stewart is the owner and she cares about making you feel your best!



**Cait Davis**  
6 reviews

★★★★★ 10 months ago

I can confidently say that Dawn is one of the best in the field. She is not only incredibly skilled at her craft but also one of the most genuine people you will ever meet. She takes the time to understand your individual needs, and will completely fix whatever is ailing you! This is not just a business to Dawn- this is truly her passion and calling. Her warm demeanor and attentive listening make it easy to open up about any specific concerns or areas of tension.



**Natalie Smith**  
9 reviews

★★★★★ 3 months ago

I attended their back to school health seminar... was so fun and engaging! Brought my 10 yr old son and he enjoyed the hands on activities as well.



**Rosbelith F**  
Local Guide · 39 reviews · 51 photos

★★★★★ 10 months ago

What a sweet place for the community! Lots of areas for workshops, chats, events, and one-on-one sessions. Dawn is a treat! So sweet and supportive.



**Julie Farhat**  
Local Guide · 13 reviews

★★★★★ 9 months ago

Pestle and Potions is a hidden gem with a shop, event space, and the amazing Dawn! Dawn Stewart, proprietor of Pestle & Potions, is authentic, knowledgeable, caring, and fun. The amount of research and experience she shares is remarkable. And if you haven't had a massage, her bodywork is amazing.



**Phyllis Appleby**  
Local Guide · 16 reviews

★★★★★ a year ago

Dawn is wonderful. She ya real interest in helping people. The magic stick worked great on a rash. I use one of the creams for the pain in my hands. My husband had a bad scrap on his arm and she gave us something to put on it. I really didn't think it would help but it was awesome. It is almost healed. A must to keep in your first aid kit. Lastly, she gives the best massage I have ever had. Can't say enough good about her.



**Nicolas Garcia Pita**  
3 reviews

★★★★★ 2 months ago

I have used their Magic Stick and was blown away on how well it works for many skin problems I had. Could not recommend enough



**Lisa Bergin Bcfnp** recommends Pestle and Potions.  
November 6, 2023 ·

Dawns place is amazing. I have held two workshops there now and have sent many clients to experience herbs first hand. Dawn has a lovely place. Go check it out.



**Michelle Parson** recommends Pestle and Potions.  
September 3, 2023 ·

I came to visit family I'm not from this area. I needed some specific things. After a Google search for an apothecary type of health food and supplement store, I came across their listing. I was greeted with a smile and a feeling of happiness by the owner. I wish I had a place like this local to me.



**Gretchen A Kornutik** recommends Pestle and Potions.  
June 21, 2022 ·

Dawn is magical. I believe in all types of healing. Dawn makes amazing lotions and salves and teas etc that really help. Trying this first before chemicals. And prescriptions may surprise you I love it

A wide-angle photograph of a vast field of purple flowers, likely lavender, stretching towards a horizon. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow, with a bright sun setting or rising in the center, creating a lens flare effect. The overall mood is serene and hopeful.

And That  
Is Just  
The Beginning!