

cycle
mindfulness[®]
club


ANNUAL REPORT

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 Natural
Womanhood

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INTRODUCTION

When Erin Dewey attended the very first Cycle Mindfulness® Club Leader's training in August 2022, she was taking a big chance. She was an upcoming senior at Texas A&M University, a practicing Catholic and prolife, and she was interested in learning more about her cycle health. But she had no idea what these clubs really were when she signed up for the first leader's workshop in August 2022. It was a brand-new idea and a program with no history.

The training was challenging, including a meeting format that felt uncomfortable at first. Not everyone in the first group liked it, and some dropped out. But Erin realized that there was something powerful happening there. So she stuck with it, and during a short amount of time, she experienced profound changes in herself and the young women around her, and they began to form a community unlike any she'd ever found before.

Erin became the first Cycle Mindfulness Club leader at A&M and led a very successful group of 12 students for an entire academic year. After she graduated, she joined the Natural Womanhood team to help start other clubs and assist their leaders.

Erin doesn't hesitate to call the Cycle Mindfulness Club program one of the most impactful experiences of her life.

Two years later, Cycle Mindfulness Clubs continue to impact many young women who, like Erin, find the experience life-changing. We envision at least 100 clubs on US campuses by 2030, empowering thousands of young women to know and love their own natural womanhood.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Dewey', with a long, sweeping underline.

CEO and CO-Founder

What is Natural Womanhood?



Natural Womanhood exists to defend women's dignity and the truth about marriage by teaching girls and women the science and meaning of their natural fertility, and by empowering couples to practice Natural Family Planning. While our message is scientific and secular, it is rooted in the principles of St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body and natural law.

Natural Womanhood's website, with its 800 plus articles, videos, and podcasts, is the online Magazine of Fertility Awareness and Women's Health. On our website, women can find extensive, scientifically accurate information on the health risks of contraception, the different methods of NFP and their benefits, applications of fertility awareness to women's health, and more. Since our launch we've reached nearly 4 million readers from all over the world. Natural Womanhood directs readers to NFP teaching organizations, where they can find qualified teachers, and to Restorative Reproductive Health practitioners: medical professionals who are trained in NaproTECHNOLOGY or FEMM and work with women's fertility charts and in related protocols that address root causes of dysfunction and infertility instead of resorting to contraceptives to mask symptoms. We're a leading voice on this message in the media and at conferences, reaching wider audiences than we ever could have dreamed.

Natural Womanhood's vision is a bold one, but it's one we believe we can achieve through our four core values of friendship, truth, passion, and beauty: That someday, all women will claim their natural fertility as beautiful, powerful, and healthy.

Natural Womanhood is a non-profit, Texas-based, 501c3 corporation.

WHAT IS A CYCLE MINDFULNESS CLUB?

Natural Womanhood's Cycle Mindfulness® Clubs are peer-led university groups designed to create a supportive community for young women to learn the science and truth of their God-given fertility and womanhood. These groups are a powerful defense of women amidst an aggressive contraceptive culture, particularly on college campuses.

Cycle Mindfulness Clubs were created because Natural Womanhood made the following observations:

- Through no fault of their own, young women are often ill-informed about the basic science of their cycles and fertility.
- They rarely have positive and fruitful discussions with their peers about this topic; continued stigma prevents them from sharing their experiences with one another, making them feel isolated and alone.
- Many are uninformed about common cycle issues and how those issues can impact their overall health and fertility. As a result, many do not practice good cycle health management.
- Those who eschew birth control, even in the face of painful or irregular cycles, are left feeling abandoned by medicine and resentful of their femininity. Even those with healthy cycles who eschew birth control to practice abstinence feel isolated, unsupported, and unacknowledged.

At the first Cycle Mindfulness leadership training session, one student remarked that young women today seemingly have two options: go along the contraceptive culture and its destructive ways, or adopt a reclusive and often painful position that ignores their bodies and personal struggles.

But we know there's a better, third option—and it's why we created these Clubs: When young women have a chance to learn about their cycles and to practice charting—and even better, have the opportunity to share this experience with other young women—they gain confidence in themselves, they are more likely to understand their dignity as women, and they realize they are not alone.

When we started, we suspected that even in Catholic circles, young women tended to feel isolated and underinformed about their cycles and fertility.. Charting was something that they generally knew about but didn't practice, thinking it was only for marriage, or relying on period-tracking apps that give them very little information about their bodies. Since starting the Clubs, we've had these suspicions confirmed, further underscoring the real need for these Clubs on all college campuses, religious or not.

Practically, clubs meet weekly, and include three components: instruction, personal reflection, and sharing. The meeting's structure is inspired by the

AI-Anon model, which creates a safe space for conversations about these intimate topics and a sense of mutual respect and trust among the members.

The program covers the following eight major topics over the course of a school year: Charting your Cycle, Hormones and Emotions, Common Cycle Problems, Ovulation, Anatomy, Common Medical Approaches, Sexual Desire and Self-Control, and Good Cycle Health Practices.

Importantly, Cycle Mindfulness Clubs are also a gateway to further resources for members who need extra support, whether it's referrals to qualified FAM/NFP instructors or Restorative Reproductive Medicine (RRM) practitioners.

After piloting these Clubs for two academic years, Natural Womanhood has seen that participation leads to something much more profound than can be attained from a simple course or class. Club participants experience something life-changing: a true transformation in the way they see themselves, how they understand themselves as women, and how they care for their bodies.



Young Adult Club, San Antonio TX, March 2024

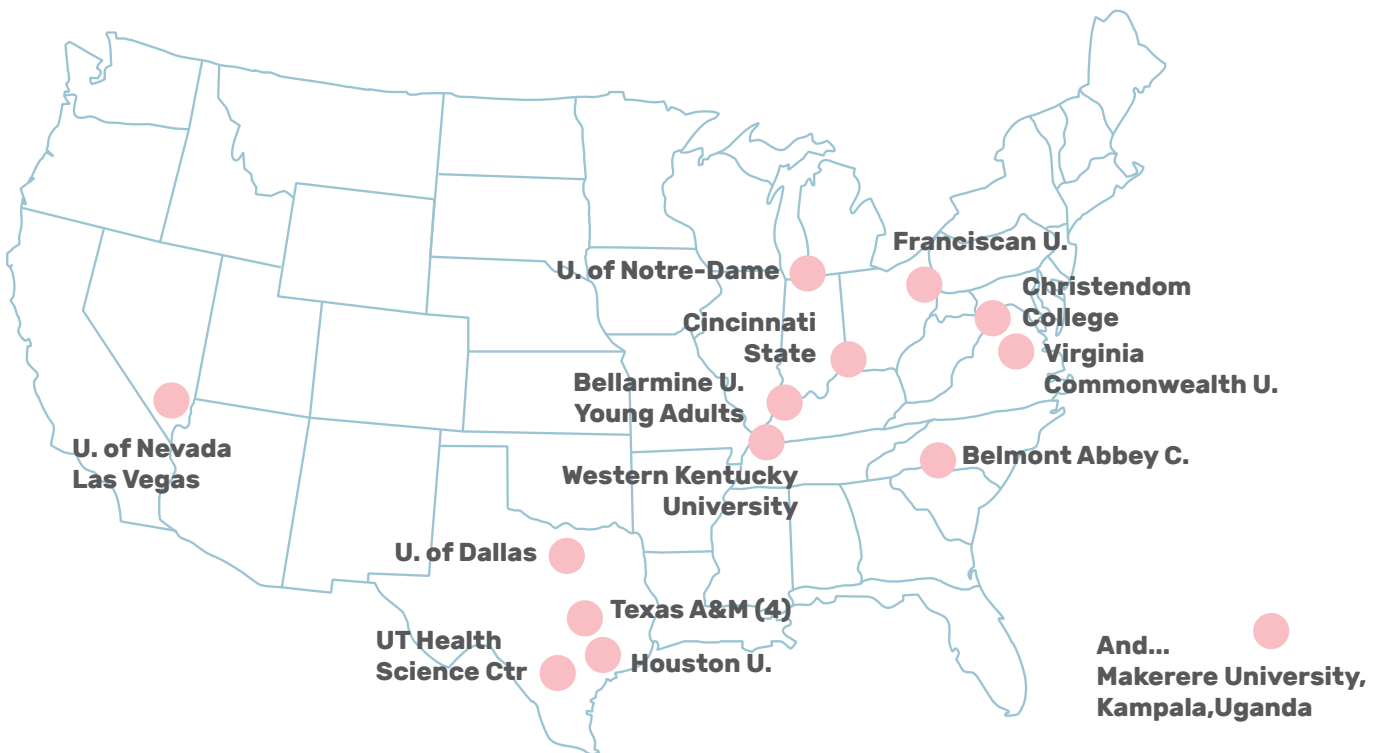
THE FIRST TWO YEARS

For the Cycle Mindfulness Clubs' pilot year (2022-2023), we started with three clubs. The most successful club was undoubtedly at Texas A&M University. We had another club at the University of Texas at San Antonio, a commuter school, which struggled with consistent attendance and a fixed meeting location. The third club took place at Michigan Tech University, which functioned well for one semester.

In planning the second year, we invested significant time towards recruiting and carefully selecting students from all over the US. We also expanded the in-person training from a one day session, to a three-day retreat (see below for the formation). Our hard work paid off: we were able to start 10 clubs in the fall of 2023. Eight of the clubs were on US college campuses, one was for young adults in San Antonio, and one took place in Kampala, Uganda!

Overall, 144 students attended at least one meeting. Of these, 60 students attended more consistently (i.e., at least 40% of the meetings). The average attendance of all the US clubs was 5.3 students per club (based on the attendance records we collected at every meeting).

This year we recruited 16 leaders and this is the map of the 2024-2025 Clubs





Cycle Mindfulness Leaders Workshop
Houston TX, June 2023

THE TRAINING

Rigorous leadership training is key to the success of each club. The goals of the leadership training are three-fold:

- Give leaders an experience of authentic women’s community during their retreat;
- Equip leaders to use the CMC tools to recreate this community in their own clubs;
- Create a bond with our leaders so they know they can rely on our support.

Over three days, the future leaders are trained in presenting the content of the curriculum, leading small group sessions using our content, recruiting and managing club members, and reporting on their results. They also deepen their knowledge in three key areas: 1) the practice of listening to others, 2) the Theology of the Body, and 3) the science of the cycle and restorative reproductive medicine. They also receive a full training in the FEMM method so they can understand cycle charting better. Finally, they are invited to attend daily Mass, spend time in prayer, and to learn about a plan of life for daily prayer. At the end-survey, the students’ overall satisfaction rating was 9/10. Here is what some of our leaders had to say after completing their 3-day leadership retreat:

“I felt that this workshop was so powerful and helpful in building my confidence to carry out the needs of the club this year.”

“It was so beautiful, authentic and lovely! Every woman needs to be a part of CMC!”

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

To measure the impact of the clubs, we conducted a survey at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. The survey included three main parts:

1. A quiz to test their knowledge about the cycle
2. A survey that measured their understanding of and comfort with their own fertility
3. Open-ended questions about their overall experience.

Knowledge impact

While the students learned key facts about fertility, the clubs were not a science class. Still, we saw a 25-point increase in the rate of correct answers to the quiz between the beginning- and end- of the year survey. Most significant were the answers to the following questions:

- How long is an egg (or ovum) alive? Participants went, on average, from 48% to 70% correct answers
- Why is a period late if you are not pregnant? From 48% to 87% correct answers
- What is the consistency of very fertile cervical fluid? From 55% to 85% correct answers.

Personal experience

One of the key goals of club participation (and evidence of its impact) is compliance with charting—daily, if possible. Not all the students engaged at the same level, but the growth in this area was striking. At the beginning, 15% of participants reported charting their cycle daily. By the end, 67% were charting daily, and another 30% were charting “sometimes.” Most significant: 82% started charting as a direct result of being a member of the club.

We also asked students to rate their level of difficulty with their cycle from 0 to 100, with 100 being “very difficult.” The average result was 46. By the end of the year, that number was 41. While that change may seem small, we found something even more significant: How participants’ attitudes toward these difficulties changed. At the beginning of the year, 48% had a pessimistic attitude about cycle difficulties (e.g., “It’s just the way I am, and I will have to live with it,” or “There may be some solutions, but it’s very unlikely”). At the end, only 13% still professed these negative attitudes, while 54% were hopeful and better informed about solutions (e.g., “There are solutions and I know them, but I haven’t found it in me to seek them out yet,” and “There are solutions, and I am in the process of getting help.”).

The next series of questions addressed the participants' sense of knowledge, comfort, and confidence about their own cycles and fertility. That's where the changes were the most surprising. We saw participants' confidence triple or quadruple in this area, from a range of 18%-25% to a range of 56%-83%.

	GOOD OR VERY GOOD	
	BEFORE	AFTER
Q16. How would you rate your understanding of what is going on with your own cycle?	25.92%	76.09%
Q17. How would you rate your knowledge about the relationship between your lifestyle (such as stress, eating, sleeping, exercising and other habits) and your cycle health?	18.52%	71.74%
Q18. How would you rate your knowledge about the relationship between your cycle and how you feel at certain times of the month?	22.22%	82.61%
Q19. When thinking of your period and your cycle, how much peace and control do you feel?	18.52%	78.26%
Q20. When thinking of your fertility, how much peace and control do you feel?	22.22%	56.52%
Q21. Deep down, how confident are you in the goodness of who you are as a woman?	59.26%	80.44%

THEIR COMMENTS

In the year-end survey, we asked club participants to reflect on the personal impact of the clubs. Their unaltered answers, reproduced below and organized by theme, show the various ways Natural Womanhood's Cycle Mindfulness Clubs led to a profound change in the lives of participants.

It gave them a positive outlook on their womanhood



"It deepened my knowledge of myself and women around it. It made me proud of my body and my [fertility] and able to discuss feminine health issues with much greater openness. It was a very positive, empowering year!"

"I'm very thankful and love to continuously learn and grow about being a woman"

"Such a helpful introduction to the female body and all of the wonderful things it's capable of."

"Helped me learn more about how beautiful I am as a woman because my body can create human life"

"It taught me more of who I am as a woman"

"It was AMAZING! I learned so much and felt so supported. More importantly it definitely made me feel a shift in how I thought, way more empowered and actually excited to chart!"

CMC positively impacted their lifestyle

"I learned more about things in my life that may have an effect, either positive or negative, on my cycle and overall health. I also met some incredible women to grow with in creating healthy habits and lifestyles."

"Erin is an amazing instructor and this club has made me make changes in my lifestyle and track my cycle"

"I learned significantly about my cycle and to consider what phase I am in more into the things I do and what I expect about myself. To not be afraid to speak up about my health towards medical providers with regards to what kind of treatment I want."

"Great support group and a lot of great resources to inspire me to chart and learn more!"

CMC helped them with some aspect of their health



"It's been a great experience to further understand the "why's" behind my cycle. And to learn safe / healthy remedies for symptoms"

"It taught me a lot about NaPro and that there are options when dealing with cycle difficulties outside of hormonal measures"

"It inspired me to seek help with irregularities in ovulation and period cramps"



"This has been an extremely helpful club! I never understood that my overall daily symptoms were affected so greatly by my cycle. I have loved Cycle Mindfulness and have learned so much!"

CMC participants enjoyed being part of a community of women

"Cycle Mindfulness Club has been nothing short of my favorite group on campus! The sisterhood that has developed is so rich and I am extremely grateful that I got to walk with this group of women as we learned more about how our bodies were designed!"

"Loved it! It was so great to share in community and learn about my cycle."



"I really enjoyed it, felt like I learn a lot and felt so welcome"

CMC gave them knowledge, and taught them the truth a lot

"It made me feel like I was finally being told the truth about my body and how to take care of it."

"It opened my eyes to want to know more!"

"I have been able to learn a lot about women's health and its importance."

"Led to sooooo much knowledge and growth!!!!"

"Significantly!! I loved learning and feel so empowered!"

CMC gave them the freedom to speak about their cycles

"I used to get squirmy talking about periods and cycles and now it's something I'm becoming more confident in"

"I loved getting to learn and talk with women about something we all wanted to learn about but isn't really taught"

CMC helped them give themselves grace

"I work with myself and my body a lot more now and I am able to be more gentle with myself."

"It helped me with my understanding of myself as a woman and that it's ok if your period is late."

"It impacted me by allowing me to be gentle with myself and not get frustrated if I feel less social during different parts of my cycle."

CMC prepared them for marriage

"I feel much more confident about NFP as I am preparing for marriage, and I love the relationships I have made with the other club members!"

And so much more!

"It gave me motivation to track my cycle each day, taught me about the different phases and what I should be observing regarding cervical mucus and energy levels, provided an opportunity to meet other girls who care about taking care of themselves and supporting each other in our femininity, and helped me realize I have an abnormally short cycle and there are things I can do to help myself"

"Cycle Mindfulness impacted me by giving me a community of women and a distinct space to discuss our cycles. I loved how open it was and knowing that my periods affect every part of my life. Some days, I just don't feel well because it's natural. That truth has allowed me to give myself grace."



“It gave me more confidence in myself and helped me to mentally prepare for different parts of my cycle. I also really enjoyed the sessions, especially the community of women whom I heard from and shared with.”

“After being in this club for only one academic year, I feel like I already learned so much about my cycle, fertility, and unique qualities as a woman. I really hope that this club continues for years to come because I think so many more women need to know about our fertility.”

A LASTING IMPACT

The first year of Cycle Mindfulness Clubs ended in May 2023. About six months later, we sent out a survey to the Texas A&M club alumni to measure whether the impact they had reported in May was lasting.

Out of the 11 students who responded, 9 were still charting daily, and 2 were charting “sometimes.” Three were actively engaged in getting help for their cycle issues. Nine were regularly speaking to other students about charting, each reaching an estimated 4-15 other students so far. Here is what they had to say:

“I still chart to this day and I try incorporating some of the things I learned into my life. I try to be conscious of what I’m doing to my body and what I’m putting in it. I also feel a lot more confident in being a woman and all that entails.”

“It really helped me grow in self-awareness, which has changed my life all round in every aspect. Additionally, I am not so hesitant anymore to share with others about some of my struggles....and most of the time, it has sparked a conversation where I have been able to share things I have learned and hear from other women and I’ve gotten some other girls to start charting too just by being open about my health with them!!”

“Being a part of a Cycle Mindfulness Club helped me recognize that there were reasons behind what I was feeling that I was not stuck, and that it is possible to find the method to the seeming madness.”

OUR TEAM

The CMC program was designed with the help of a team of advisors with expertise in healthcare and education. Natural Womanhood runs the CMC program with the help of Jackie Aguilar, FCP, our Director of Education, and Leilani Garza, our newly hired Education Coordinator (and former leader of the Cycle Mindfulness Club at the University of Texas at Austin). Silvia Coto, Natural Womanhood's Development Manager, and Gerard Migeon, CEO, assist with CMC management and leadership. Both Jackie and Leilani are part time (8-12 hours a week), and in the future, we hope to expand the time and resources dedicated to this promising program—but we need help to do so.



Cycle Mindfulness Leaders Workshop
Houston TX, June 2024

WHAT'S NEXT?

We've learned so much from our club leaders, and they've helped us determine what adjustments to make to the program. For example, we're creating an infographic of the cycle so participants can see what each phase can mean in terms of their lifestyle (e.g., how to exercise, and what to eat) and mental health (e.g., when to socialize, and when to rest and recharge). Each participant will receive her own copy. We're also going to build systems to better support participants in their efforts to chart during school breaks.

Between January and March 2024, we campaigned to recruit new leaders for the third year of the clubs (2024-2025). Four of the former leaders are continuing this year, and we recruited 13 new ones. The group was trained early June at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, TX.

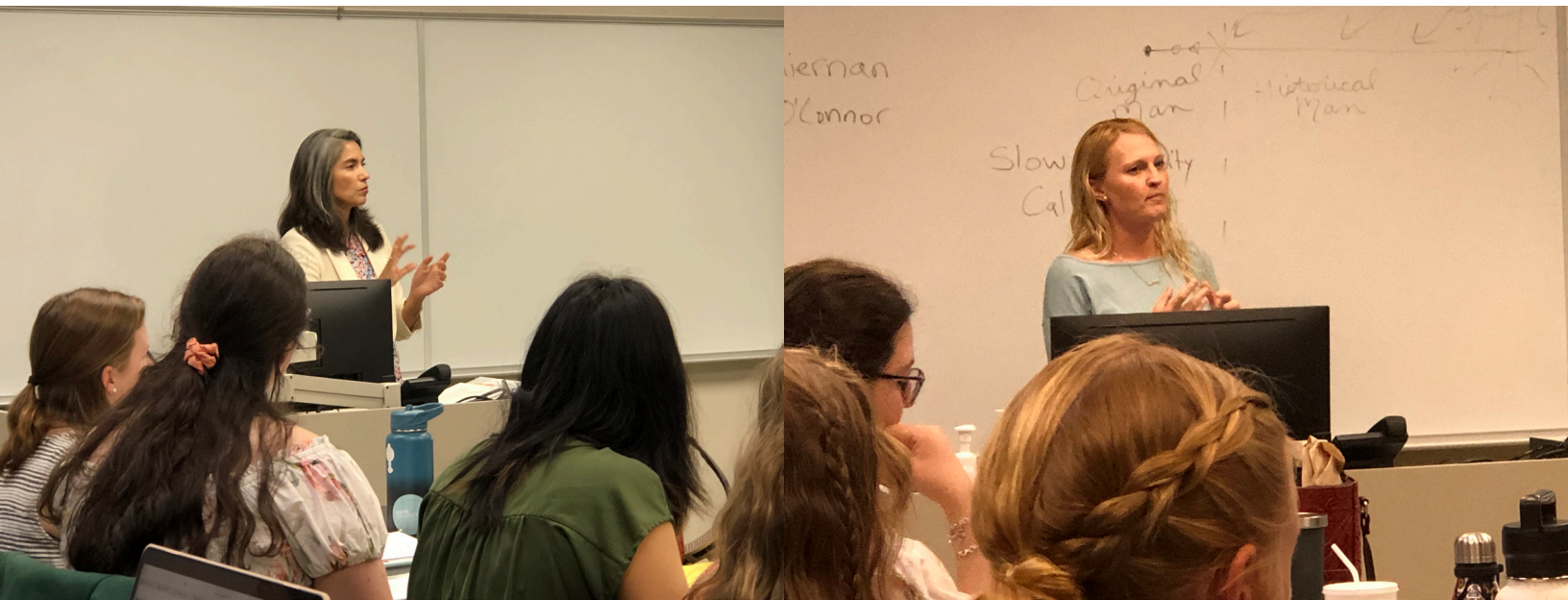
As a result, we will have 17 Cycle Mindfulness Clubs this upcoming academic year, 15 on US college and university campuses, one for young adults in Elizabethtown, KY, and one in Kampala, Uganda.

This year will be a good test of how we can maintain strong integrity of the program with a larger group of leaders and participants than ever before. Thankfully, the leadership training is robust and experiential, and we are confident it will prepare these young women very well.

Leaders will also receive continued support in the form of monthly group meetings (via Zoom), and our Education Assistant will also connect with each of them individually on a monthly basis. Over the course of these group meetings, the leaders will also participate in a book study of Alexander Havarad's, *Coached by Joan of Arc*. In other words, CMC leadership is an excellent formation for these young women, helping them build up their faith as they prepare to go out into the world and face new challenges.



Cycle Mindfulness Leaders Workshop
Houston TX, June 2024



As a reader of this report, we would like to ask you two things. First, please pray for these leaders. They're wonderful young women, passionate about their calling as women, and eager to give of themselves to help others. But, as you might imagine, they will face serious challenges and need our prayers.

Second, please consider supporting this program with your financial help. Based on the number of clubs for 2024-2025, we estimate that the cost for this year will be around \$4,000 per club. ***Both the leadership training and participation in the clubs are completely FREE of cost to students.*** As the program grows, the cost per club will decrease, but our staffing and training costs will necessarily increase. However, based on previous attendance, we can estimate that the cost for each student impacted by it is under \$600; a relatively small cost considering the powerful, life-changing impact of this program. Thank you for your interest and support of Natural Womanhood and the Cycle Mindfulness Clubs program, which is an important component of our vision that one day, all women will claim their natural fertility as beautiful, powerful, and healthy.