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MAKING WAVES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

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## Group helps participants achieve their goals

By Lillian Cox

ENCINITAS — Anyone who has already given up on their New Year's resolutions will be interested in Judith Balian's Tea & Accountability group, which starts again on Jan. 25.

Since it began in the fall of 2010, Balian, who has a master's degree in counseling, reports that 90 percent of her participants are continuing to work actively on their goals. This is impressive considering that among the 62 percent of Americans who make New Year's resolutions each year, only 8 percent are actually successful, according to Opinion Corporation of Princeton, N.J.

"What happens is that people delude themselves into thinking, 'I'm going to do it, but I'm not quite ready, so I'll wait till after this or after that,'" Balian explained. "When they join Tea & Accountability, they make the commitment to



Christina Zuber, right, is a human resources professional who fulfilled a dream of becoming a chef and starting a catering business The Gourmet Girl, after studying with Judith Balian, M.S. Balian will start a new session of Tea & Accountability Jan. 25. Also pictured is Roohi Daraugar. Courtesy photo

themselves and to others that they are moving forward."

Balian says it is the group dynamic that propels participants to action.

"I light the fireplace, make tea and it's a nice, cozy setting," she said. "People leave energized with new ideas, and feel enthusiasm from other members of the group about each other's projects. It seems to be a winning combination."

If Balian's name sounds familiar, that's probably because she's been leading "The Artist's Way" groups, based on Julia Cameron's best-selling book, since 2007.

"As of last fall, I've had 130 participants," she said. "I want to build that creative community because they need support. A lot of people don't get that validation at home, from their families, that they get through 'The Artist's Way.'"

Balian explains that the two workshops are very dif-

ferent.

"The Artist's Way' fosters self-knowledge to help you overcome your psychological blocks, transform your inner critic and reawaken your creativity using expressive arts activities," she said. "Tea & Accountability is geared to helping you take constructive action toward a specific goal and keeping you motivated and on track."

Christina Zuber, a human resources professional, credits Balian with motivating her to act on a secret ambition to become a chef. After graduating from the San Diego Culinary Institute, Zuber launched a catering business, The Gourmet Girl.

"Judith believes in the potential of each person she has in her class," Zuber said. "I was so happy with my decision and knew instantly that it was the right one for

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me. I know now that I can do anything. I took a leap of faith and the net was there."

Prior to venturing out and starting her own business, Balian worked in sales, marketing, training and product development in the corporate sector, and also as a teacher in K-12 education. She holds a master's degree in psychology/counseling from

Hofstra University, and did post-graduate work at Saybrook Graduate School where she studied with Dr. Natalie Rogers, a pioneer in the expressive arts movement. Balian is a contributor to Dr. Rogers' new book, "The Creative Connection for Groups: Person-Centered Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change."

Tea & Accountability is held the last Wednesday of each month, beginning Jan. 25. Cost is \$30 a session.

Balian also works privately with individuals, in person and on the phone, to help them realize their goals.

For more information, visit [excoveries.com](http://excoveries.com) or call (760) 436-8848.