

Yoga for kids offered in Novi

BY KELLY MURAD • STAFF WRITER • AUGUST 15, 2008

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Monday afternoon, Meghan, 7, and Ryan, 5, Rotole spent 45-minutes taking bunny breaths, standing in down dog and practicing rainbows in the reflection space at the Assarian Cancer Center.

Four other children joined the Rotoles for the second session of Yoga for Kids with instructor Karen Lutz. The class, for kindergarten through sixth grade, is 4:45-5:30 p.m. Mondays through Aug. 25.

"This seems like a great environment for it, they seem to be very centered on children here," said Meghan and Ryan's mother Cheryl Rotole of Plymouth. "She (Lutz) seems to have a really good repertoire with my kids. She got more out of

them in five minutes than I got out of them in an hour."

Rotole, who practices yoga at Life Time Fitness in Canton, saw an advertisement for Yoga for Kids while at the play area in Twelve Oaks Mall.

"It (yoga) just seemed like a good place to start to get them aware of their bodies and their posture," she said. "See Ryan, he's the youngest kid in the class and he seems to be keeping up."

The four-week session is the first kids yoga program offered through the Providence Center for the Healing Arts.

"It's so beneficial for anybody, and the earlier you get started with yoga, the better you are," said Gigi Geraghty, adult yoga instructor and physicians assistant of radiation and oncology at the cancer center. "It can help children to focus better, to concentrate better and they learn good habits such as posture."

Lutz, who is new to the Providence Center for the Healing Arts, has been practicing yoga for more than six years, teaching adults and children for about a year and is certified in Yoga Ed.

"Yoga Ed was established in 1999 by Tara Guber. She was in the education field in southern L.A. and she is the one person who implemented and developed the program," Lutz said. "Since then, it has snowballed all over the country. The purpose is to bring yoga into the classroom, to allow children to be more focused and improve their behavior."

Until local schools have the means to implement this program, Lutz continues teaching and practicing yoga.

"The format is different (for children) than the adult classes. I base a lot of my teaching on my training from Yoga Ed," she said. "We use different names for postures for the children, like rock, star, rainbow, flying dragon.

"We break up the class in segments, it's not just a flow of postures, because their attention span is pretty shallow. I try and allow the students to have some interaction."

Geraghty said Lutz's use of games and stories makes yoga more enjoyable for the kids.

"There's a variety of ways to teach the kids the different postures as well as breathing techniques," she said. "The kids actually love to do yoga, they think it's kind of cool. It gives them confidence."

Geraghty, who has been practicing yoga for 10 years and teaching it about nine, said all five of her kids, 5-25, practice yoga.

"They learn respect, and kindness, not only to others but to themselves," Lutz said.

Although located inside the Assarian Cancer Center, classes are open to anyone in the community, as with all of the programs offered through the Providence Center for the Healing Arts.

For more information about the next Yoga for Kids session, which will be 4:45-5:30 p.m. Mondays, beginning Sept. 8, contact Gigi Geraghty at (248) 465-5478 or call Providence Southfield at (248) 849-8538.

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All the kids gather in a circle before the class begins. (moving clockwise) Instructor Karen Lutz, Ryan Rotole, 5, Meghan Rotole, 7, from Plymouth, Tatiana Ray, 10, from Northville, Allison Lang, 9, from Northville, Alexandra Collins, 7, from Novi, and Samantha Cantie, 9, from Northville. (Photo by Thomas Hibbeln)



Yoga instructor Karen Lutz teaches the children in the beautiful atrium at the center, which has an abundance of natural light. (Photo by Thomas Hibbeln)



Meghan Rotole, 7, and her brother, Ryan, 5, from Plymouth, stay focused at their yoga class. (photo by Thomas Hibbeln)

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