

Finding Peace with Yoga



With the underlying message of peace and mindfulness, Tuesday Night Yoga took place on the second floor of the Brookdale Recreation Center on Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. The session was put on by Brookdale's Wellness Center to encourage both students and community members to practice basic postures, flexibility, and mindful breathing.

The yoga instructor for the event Liz Lawrence shares how this event came to be. "I've been teaching here at Brookdale for almost 20 years. I teach credit classes and so they asked me if I would be willing to teach in the wellness center and I jumped in with both feet because I think everybody needs yoga and everybody needs meditation. We call it balance and you need balance in your life. You can run run run, but then you need the balance."

The room had hardwood flooring that would be seen in a gym and two of the four walls are floor-to-ceiling mirrors. The lights were dim making for the perfect tranquil atmosphere for the night's yoga session.

The Wellness Center expected 15-20 people to show up that night and the turnout was 17 guests in the room mostly students and middle-aged women. Before the practice, some gathered in the closet grabbing free mats and yoga blocks that the school provided. Each of them unrolled their yoga mats and mingled with each other catching up since the last session the previous week.

The Instructor herself, Lawrence wiped down the hardwood floor so it was clean for everyone's convenience and played the peaceful yoga music to the speaker setting the ideal ambiance. She sat on her mat and greeted everyone with a welcoming smile as she began the practice.

"I'd like to incorporate the mantra during our class this evening, the one that was being shared by all my teachers and all my gurus during the pandemic- it is 'peace be still. Peace be still. Peace be still. Peace, still, peace, still.'"

Lawrence explains, "[i]t is important for us to create peace in our bodies but it's scientifically proven that our energy fields expand way beyond this physical body. Some will tell you three feet, from the center of your core and out. Some of you know as soon as you are in somebody else's energy you can feel it. And gurus will tell you it can be up to nine feet from the center of your core. So by expanding this vibration it then catches onto other people's vibrations and expands out", said Lawrence.

During the practice, Lawrence told everyone the significance of the poses and movements they were in as many of the participants were beginner yogis. "The back of the body is where our past is. It's no wonder that as we get older we have so many issues with our back as we are holding onto all those past things." Each pose with a different correlation to energies. "Masculine relationships are stuck in the right hip."

When the practice concluded Nicholas Grogan, a Brookdale student shared his admiration for the instructor and the class. "I have taken her class before. I've been taking it with Liz for probably around a year and loved doing yoga with her specifically. Plus the time was just convenient for me. I always feel so much calmer afterward."

Another Brookdale student, Katie Liskowitz shares her excitement for finding a new hobby that night. "I came to this event to try something new. I wanted to find new ways to feel more relaxed." When asked if she liked the class Liskowitz shared "I liked the teacher guiding us through the entire experience. It was nice that all I had to do at any given moment was just listen to her instructions. I got the feeling of being more relaxed and after the session, I felt more energized and lighter."

The yoga class was beneficial not just for students but for any community member like Kristen Petersen who shared “I saw an advertisement in the Brookdale bulletin and it was the perfect time. It was something I had been wanting to try for a long time.” She described the class as “wonderful” and added “I notice now that I feel more energetic, lighter, and more at peace. It's a mental reset. I hope these classes are always this slow because this pace today was perfect.”