

Publication: The Virginian-Pilot; Date: Oct 27, 2006; Section: Daily Break; Page: 49



Program works to help teens get active at the local library

FOR YOUR HEALTH

Yoga is a great way for kids and teens to strengthen their cardiovascular systems, tone and stretch muscles, and improve mental fitness.

Source: www.kidshhealth.org

BY LINDSAY POWELL
TEEN CORRESPONDENT

CHESAPEAKE — It's not every day you get the opportunity to take a yoga class ... at the local library.

More than a dozen eager teenagers got to do just that last week at the Chesapeake Central Library. Clad in everything from sweatpants to sleeveless T-shirts, the teens shuffled excitedly into the introductory class, part of Teen Read Week, an annual literacy initiative that targets

teens. It was launched in 1998 and is sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services, a division of the American Library Association that focuses on young readers.

The central library hosted the class sponsored by the YMCA in connection with this year's theme, "Get active @ your library."

During the yoga class, soft music played in the background as each student executed moves and positions demonstrated by instructor Mary Perretta, a regis-

Please see Yoga, Page E4



STEVE EARLEY/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

From left to right, Jennifer Miller, 13, Jessica Kloc, 13, and Gina Lukas, 14, give yoga a try Oct. 18 at the Chesapeake Central Library.

Publication: The Virginian-Pilot; Date: Oct 27, 2006; Section: Daily Break; Page: 50

Yoga: Program gets teens moving

Continued from Page E3

tered yoga teacher for the Y. Participants were instructed to "inhale and exhale" as they bent and twisted into a variety of yoga poses. Some moves called for participants to stretch their arms vertically or horizontally, lunge forward and stretch into positions appropriately named the "downward dog" and the "warrior pose."

"Teens are one of the most underserved populations in the library," said Sasha Matthews, the young-adult librarian at Chesapeake Central Library.

"We encourage them ... to get up and make the community their own," Matthews said. "That's my goal."

It is important to create more programs that attract

teens to the library, Matthews said. In addition to Teen Read Week activities, the library hosts a variety of other attractions, such as game night, to entertain younger readers during the year.

Matthews explained that hosting a yoga class at the library is a great way to motivate teens to get active physically. "Today, more kids are in front of the TV" ... and are "more sedentary."

Fifteen-year-old Apurva Chengappa, a junior at Great Bridge High School in Chesapeake, agrees that teens should be motivated to become more active. "Teens do need to be encouraged."

But why yoga?

"It's something that is popular with adults, is stress-relieving and is cost-effective

for teens," Matthews said.

Some teens registered for the class to try something new.

"It sounded like a good way to relax and have fun," said Colleen Leathrum, 13, an eighth-grader at Hickory Middle School in Chesapeake.

Jessica Kloc, 13, also a Hickory Middle eighth-grader, said that she registered for the yoga class because she "thought of it as something that she wanted to try."

According to www.kidshhealth.org, yoga is a great way for kids and teens to strengthen their cardiovascular systems, tone and stretch muscles, and improve mental fitness.

"There are so many benefits for teens that yoga offers," said instructor Per-

retta. "It is stress-relieving for them."

Perretta, of Chesapeake, began to practice yoga after she was diagnosed with lupus about six years ago. Her doctor recommended she try yoga to help her through her illness. "Yoga has helped me so much."

Yoga also was an effective way to gain the attention of teens at last week's introductory class.

MacKenzie Masterson, 13, of Chesapeake enjoyed the class. "Yoga was something that I've never done before," the Hickory Middle eighth-grader said enthusiastically. "It was fun."

■ *Lindsay Powell is a senior who is home-schooled in Virginia Beach. Reach her at lbp2121@aol.com.*