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Residents learn relaxation, health tips at 'Happiness Yoga'

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By Venita Jenkins
Staff writer

Yoga Master Andres Josephs guided a group of baby boomers in several yoga poses during a Happiness Yoga session at Kiwanis Recreation Center on Saturday morning.

The simple yoga movements help revitalize one's life and increase energy, Josephs told the group.

Yoga unites the body, mind and soul, he said, and the program makes people aware of the things that bring about an unbalance.

"We show them how to restore the balance so that they can have health and wellness," Josephs said. "Happiness comes when you find equal balance in body, mind and spirit."

For the past three years, Sid Gautam, a former Methodist University professor, has offered the Happiness Yoga program. The goal, he said, is to help people tap into happiness. The free program is sponsored by the Society to Educate People.

"The whole program is about exploring the happiness within you," said Gautam. "It is so easy, and it is all around you."

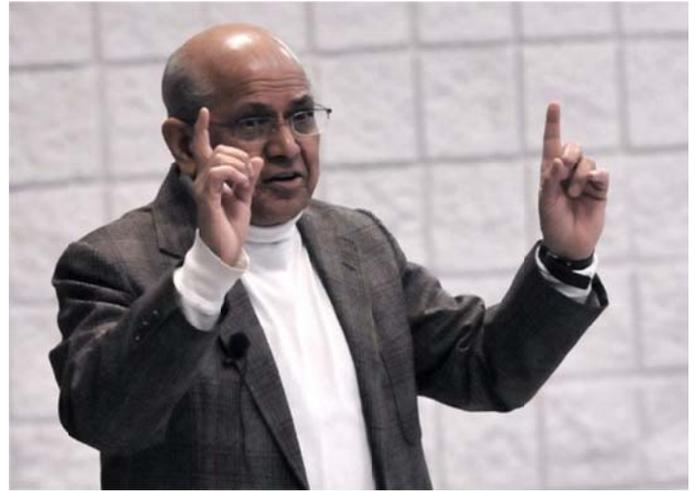
Gautam enlists the help of local physicians and experts to educate the community about various health issues, such as overeating, developing healthy habits, sinus functions and longevity. Dr. Sanjay Garg, a local rheumatologist, shared information about osteoarthritis during this month's session.

Saturday's session also focused on the "sound of silence," or setting aside two minutes each day for silence and meditation.



Staff photo by Marcus Castro

Emma Baxley, left, Chris Wickline and Jackie Dalton participate in a Happiness Yoga workshop Saturday morning at Kiwanis Recreation Center. The session is held once a month to talk about different issues and to help people live healthier lives.



Staff photo by Marcus Castro

Dr. Sid Gautam talks about medical miracles during the workshop.

"Remember, we are living in a digitally distracting world," Gautam said.

Gautam encouraged the group to follow three simple steps - find a quiet spot; set aside two minutes at the same time each day; and stick to it. During those two minutes, the mind must be blank, he said.

"By calming the mind two minutes a day, you will feel far more joyful and happier," he said.

Carolyn Decatur of Hope Mills has attended Happiness Yoga sessions for the past seven months. A friend encouraged her to take part in the program, she said. She said the program has reinforced the positive things in her life.

"I have applied a lot of things that I've learned here," she said. "The program has been a positive enforcement in my life."

A bit of discomfort in Joey Yarborough's leg didn't keep him from attending Saturday's session. Yarborough, of Fayetteville, rarely misses a session.

The program has taught him how to take charge of his health, he said.

"It is a really good program," Yarborough said. "I would recommend it to anyone."

Gautam said there are plans to expand the Happiness Yoga program to other communities in the region.

"We are getting requests from Southern Pines and Elizabethtown," he said. "Our biggest problem is we need more volunteers."

Staff writer Venita Jenkins can be reached at jenkinsv@fayobserver.com or 486-3511.