

January 29, 2014

By Morgan Modjeski

<http://metronews.ca/news/saskatoon/925784/saskatoon-yoga-youth-benefit-from-ancient-practice/>

Saskatoon yoga: youth benefit from ancient practice



Saskatoon is experiencing a youth yoga movement as school officials and parents across the city are embracing the form of spiritual meditation.

Samantha Benesh, coordinator of the Vinyasa Yoga for Youth program out of One Yoga of Saskatoon, says the exercise can be extremely beneficial for young children as it can help with self-awareness and self-regulation.

“Yoga can help any student of any age,” Benesh said on Wednesday, noting they’ve had children as young as three-years-old participate in the program.

“Especially for younger kids, I think it’s the kind of self-awareness that yoga brings to them can really lead them into not only moving their bodies, but being more connected with their body and what they can do.”

The Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) has also put its support behind students practicing poses as part of the Health Promoting Schools program.

Through its Yoga 4 Classrooms incentive, the SHR has enabled 200 students to try the ancient practice and expect to have 200 more participate by the end of March.

Candace Bloomquist, an in motion consultant with the health region, said practicing yoga has been a positive for students, as it’s helped them with everything from communication to problem solving.

“What we’ve heard back from one of the schools is that students were able to communicate their feelings a little bit more after having done the breathing exercises and focused on what they’re feeling and how they’re feeling,” said Bloomquist.

“(This) provides a great opportunity for teachers to understand students and where they’re at.”

Melissa Poundmaker, who teaches a grade one two split at King George School, one of four schools involved in the program, said she uses the practices learned through yoga on a day-to-day basis.

“Sometimes during our story time or our carpet time, I notice they can get a little bit antsy,” she said. “So we stop and we do a little bit of stretching, breathing and all of that helps.”

In March, the health region will start compiling data to find out the effectiveness of the Yoga 4 Classrooms incentive.