Glad-I-Yoga Opens New Studio

Heidi Rosvold-Brenholtz

What a pleasure it is to find a business relocated in Poolesville and not gone for good. Patrons of Glad-I-Yoga can be reassured that proprietor and instructor, Maria Briançon, offers the same welcoming and stress-reducing yoga classes for all age groups in her new location on Fisher Avenue (next to Poolesville Hardware). Previously located at MUDO USA, a martial arts studio near Selby’s that closed its doors after five years in late summer, Glad-I-Yoga celebrated its grand opening in mid-October with a reception for old and new friends alike.

Glad-I-Yoga offers vinyasa flow-style yoga classes (a fitness type of yoga) that combine breath with movement to maximize students’ ability to build their strength, increase their endurance, improve their flexibility, and reduce their stress levels.

Like so many practitioners of holistic health disciplines, Ms. Briançon’s business is a reflection of her own passion for yoga and its benefits for a twisted pelvis injury she sustained years ago and continues to feel today. As a serious student of yoga, she became certified in 2004 after her mentor and instructor encouraged her to put her passion to practice. “She told me I’d be an excellent instructor. Who doesn’t get excited to hear these words from a mentor?” recalled Ms. Briançon. “I knew I loved what I was doing.” She first offered free classes at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Poolesville and marvels that some of the first people she taught there followed her from one location to another over the years, including her kitchen and a friend’s basement—wherever there was space.

Her new studio is like a dream come true. “I love this place. It is calming. It is soothing. Any stress that I am feeling from the outside completely melts away when I walk inside.” It’s not hard to see why: The studio is fresh and bright with new fixtures and polished floors.

Poolesville resident and Glad-I-Yoga student April Leese-Thompson agrees. “A Monday class can completely wipe away the stress you bring with you.”

Currently, the studio averages about twenty students per week. Ms. Briançon offers affordable classes across a variety of levels for students at any age or life stage. It’s important to her that her studio becomes a safe and comfortable place for her students to meet their own challenges. “I wanted to share with them what I have gained from my experience,” Ms. Briançon explained.

Glad-I-Yoga is not is a body twisting, overwhelmingly-complicated workout that leaves its students perplexed and sore. Rather, it embraces the eight limbs of hatha yoga based in health and breath with movement. It is not holding poses for a long time, though with practice and repetition, a student will get better at holding posture correctly, said Ms. Briançon.

Ms. Briançon suggested that the best thing about yoga is that it gives students time between positions to take a moment alone with their breaths and reflect about how the position makes them feel. “It’s about what feels good, what doesn’t, and you don’t have to push harder if you’re not feeling benefit. It’s not like aerobics, where it’s go, go, go all the time. Yoga is all about getting in touch with you.”

That’s not to say that yoga isn’t adaptable to your energy level. If you have a lot of nervous energy, fast music and a lot of poses may help you to work through it. On the other hand, if you’re an athlete or have a job where slow stretching is important, yoga can also provide that approach.

If you’ve never done yoga before, Ms. Briançon suggests talking to her first, so she can help assess your needs and goals, which she bases somewhat on age and ability, then she can recommend a class level. If your knees can’t handle the pressure, for example, she may direct you to a slow-flow class.

She also offers an abridged Pilates class and yoga classes for children: Glad-I-Play.

“The people who come to me work toward a goal and find over time that they can do things they never thought they could. Stiffness they’ve had over time goes away, or stress from a day job can be pushed away to help you reenergize. Yoga is really great for everybody. It teaches you to go inside yourself. It doesn’t matter how you look on the outside if you don’t feel good on the inside,” Ms. Briançon explained.

Glad-I-Yoga offers classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at a variety of times. Beginning in January, Tuesday classes also will be available. For more information, check out the website: www.Glad-I-Yoga.com.