

Active Kat Yoga

Fairdealing, Missouri

The little yoga studio that grows in the heart of a rugged town in the Show Me State

By Teri Wingender

Fairdealing, Missouri is a place full of avid outdoorsmen and women. Residents hunt and fish, some live off the land, and the school closes for a week during deer season. It's not exactly the type of place one would expect to find a yoga studio.

When yoga instructor Kat Robinson opened Active Kat Yoga in Fairdealing, she wasn't sure how well it would go. Holding steady at just four students, it became clear after a few months that the studio would have to close. When she broke the news to her students, however, they said, "No way!" and took matters into their own hands. The little yoga class that could started a homegrown publicity campaign to attract more members. Today, the studio serves more than 40 devoted students—and that number is growing daily. "Even though we are a small town of 600, we have become quite a yoga-loving people," says Kat.

Active Kat Yoga offers nine classes a week, as diverse as the students who take them. At times, mats are pretty close together so everyone can fit in. Classes range from Mommy and Me Yoga, and Yoga for Special Populations for those with special needs or health conditions, to regular classes from beginner to advanced. Active Kat Yoga also works with organizations such as Moms as Mentors, and Parents as Teachers, and is currently working in conjunction with the county health center to start a "Golden Yoga" class that is free for low-income seniors.

"I have such a cool job," says Kat. "I get to watch three-year-olds Devin and Shaun bring such wonderment to their mats. I get to witness as yoga helps a student with severe rheumatoid arthritis get some mobility back into her shoulder, or a student regain



Top: Allen Hackley, the local school bus driver along with his wife Bonnie, and their son, John, who love to practice together as a family.

Above: Members of Kat's Yoga for Athletes class doing up dog: Kat's daughter, Candi Robinson, Matt Wicklund, and Kye Short.

flexibility that he thought he had lost forever."

Gayla Gunter, the first student at Active Kat Yoga, began coming to class when she was pregnant. Now her son is a regular in the Mommy and Me class, and Gayla is a regular in the Thursday night intermediate class. "It is relaxing and rejuvenating at the same time," notes Gayle. "It is the best hour of the week."

Alice Mickey began doing yoga in pursuit of a healthier lifestyle and has witnessed first-hand the benefits of a regular yoga practice. "I enjoy my time in class, but what I really enjoy is the peaceful,

Kat Robinson:

A personal journey becomes a life's calling

A former corporate executive, Kat was unfulfilled living the high stress corporate lifestyle. She began her personal journey with yoga and realized that this was her life's calling. She is an AFPA certified yoga fitness instructor and has her certification in Yoga For Special Populations-Structural Yoga Therapy from AFPA. She holds a Level I, Advanced, and Master Instructor certification from FiTour, as well as a nutritional advisor certification and a group class certification. She is certified in infant, child, and adult CPR, AED, and blood borne pathogens.

Kat also has earned her diplomas in Meridian Psychotherapy (E.F.T.), Qigong and Acupressure from Stonebridge Associated College. She is a non traditional Usui Reiki Master. She is a member of the International Association of Integrative Medicine, the American Fitness Professionals and Associates, The Complimentary Medical Association and Namasta, North American Studio Alliance. Kat and her husband, Brett, live in the beautiful Missouri Ozark Foothills, where they are renovating a Colonial farmhouse. The couple has a son and daughter-in-law both serving in the USAF; two daughters, one in high school and one in college; and two dogs and a cat.

relaxed feeling I have when I leave the class. For the first time in a long time, I don't feel as though I have to drag my body through the day."

Alan Hackly, the town's schoolbus driver, has been a student for just a short while but has already seen how powerful yoga can be. Yoga is helping him manage his pain from a repetitive stress injury to his neck and shoulder from opening and closing the bus door over and over. He swears by yoga, and his wife and son have joined him in class, too.

"I have many students who are over the age of 60," adds Kat. "It is so much fun to see these students go from being nervous about sitting on the floor because they aren't sure if they can get up again, to popping up and down like teenagers. I hope I have the courage to take up something new like this when I get to be 60, 70, or up. I'm so proud of all my students, but to see this amazing transformation makes me realize how blessed I am to be able to share this knowledge." 🧘

To learn more about **Active Kat Yoga**, visit the website at www.activekatyoga.com.



Some of Kat's students doing their favorite poses: (l to r) Kat's daughter, Christy Robinson, who is studying to be a yoga teacher, Kat doing updog, Kathy Bowie doing Bound Angle, Kat's daughter Candi Robinson doing side plank. (In back row) Taleana Short in Half Moon, Matt Wickland and Ky Short, doing tree pose. On stability ball in Easy Pose is Drew Short.