



Located in a former art gallery in Uptown, founder Carolyn Heines says that The Yoga Studio presents a deep and classical approach to Hatha yoga.

A student of yoga for 35 years and a teacher for 33 of those, Carolyn says that she “teaches yoga with a lot of attentiveness.”

“We pay attention to alignment and give individualized instruction so that each student can have the best experience in the pose,” said Carolyn.

While in her 40s, Carolyn first became interested in the spiritual aspect of yoga before the physical practice of it became the cornerstone of her later-in-life career.

“A spiritual teacher encouraged me to study Hatha yoga, which really wasn’t anything I would have done otherwise. I was not at all inclined to move my body unnecessarily,” Carolyn laughs.

She decided to attend Iyengar Yoga Institute of San Francisco, where she studied for three months in 1978.

“I had no background when I went and I was studying with these very advanced people. It was kind of a shock for my body,” she said. “After the course, I felt stronger and really energized. It was the best thing I ever did for myself.”

After returning to Grand Rapids, she began teaching yoga to friends and people she knew. Knowing that yoga was going to be a lifelong pursuit, she returned to the school in 1979 and took another three-month course to hone her skills.

Thirty years later, Carolyn and The Yoga Studio teach more than 200 students each week.

“Our instructors are well-trained and just great teachers,” says Carolyn about fellow instructors Chris Smith, Kat McKinney, Deb Weiss-Gelmi and Sarah Weber.

Currently teaching five classes a week, Carolyn says that she used to teach upwards of ten to 12 classes a week.

“I will continue to teach as long as I am able. As for retirement, I have no immediate plans to retire, but intend to back off some in the coming years. I always said that when I can’t stand on my hands anymore, I wouldn’t teach,” she joked.

A long-time resident of Grand Rapids, Carolyn expressed gratitude to the community for supporting her all throughout the years.

“I can’t imagine anything else I’d rather do,” she said. “Yoga

can enhance our lives in so many different ways - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual - and anything I can do to expose people to its many benefits is so rewarding. Doing something I love and to be able to share it with these fabulous folks is a real blessing.”

The Yoga Studio, 955 Cherry St., Grand Rapids. 616- 776-0836. Info@gryoga.com. See ad page 16.

A married mother of two young children, Julie Hurley is a freelance writer with a strong interest in natural living and is the co-founder of M2 Quality Solutions: m2qualitysolutions.blogspot.com. Visit her blog at: ourlunch.blogspot.com.

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