

Naples Park Elementary students use yoga to reduce stress during school

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News

Naples Park Elementary School students get the opportunity to take part in breathing and stretching during and before school.

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COLLIER COUNTY, Fla. - A Collier County school added an extra lesson aimed to reduce stress and can't be taught from a textbook.

Naples Park Elementary School students get the opportunity to take part in breathing and stretching during and before school. Julie Frizzi, the school's counselor, started going into classrooms to practice these exercises with students as a way to reduce stress and keep them focused.

This year, she was able to turn a whole classroom into the Breathe and Stretch Room.

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The room is filled with calming scents, music and soothing lights.

Motivational posters and streams of lights cover some of the walls inside, making it the perfect place to let go of your worries.

"When I really took on yoga myself and I noticed the difference in myself and practiced it myself, I saw how magical it was," said Frizzi.

During the 20 minute class, Frizzi practices yoga poses with students, while reminding them of their breathing. She also gives them words of encouragement throughout the practice and reminds them to be kind to one another.

"Really practicing it with the kids is important. We can all say to just breathe and that trendy little word can be up everywhere until we practice it ourselves and take the time by practicing it do we really understand it," said Frizzi.

Teachers like Kara Weigle said it works, not just for the students, but for them as well. Weigle and other teachers also join in the practice.

“The kids when they get fired up we just tell them what do you have to do? You gotta breathe. So they’ll use their skills and what she’s taught them,” said Weigle.

Frizzi believes this practice helps not only in the classroom but also outside of it too.

“I know that it helps improve test scores, I know it helps improve on the playground. It helps families,” said Frizzi.

Naples Park Elementary is part of the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida. The project was started in 2014 by the Naples Community Hospital (NCH) to support the well-being in all of Southwest Florida.

Joe Stoner, with Blue Zones Project, said what Frizzi has done with the students has been fantastic.

“It’s beyond what we had in mind actually,” said Stoner. “I think it fits in well with what the Collier County public schools are trying to do, which is to increase social-emotional learning with students.”

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