

Cat Yoga Classes for kids, adults at Dutchess County SPCA



By Anna Barton

“Let’s do something new,” thought Jenny Fox, a local children’s yoga instructor, while brainstorming with a board member of the Dutchess County SPCA. “Nobody in this area is doing it!”

Thus began the idea for cat yoga, offered once a month through August, with classes for adults and children taught by certified yoga instructors.

The classes are held at the DCSPCA Adoption Center, and several of the most sociable and outgoing cats are free to wander around the yoga participants during the class.

The feedback was quite positive after the first class in April, Fox noted. Yoga participants were divided between wanting to get their pose right – and petting the cat at their side!

“One cat just took over the mat!” Fox laughed.

“The long term goal for me is to raise awareness about the SPCA,” Fox said. All of the proceeds raised from the yoga classes will be directed back to the DCSPCA.

Director of Development for the DCSPCA John North says the first yoga class held in April was very successful in terms



Yoga with adoptable cats at the Dutchess County SPCA will be offered throughout the summer as a method of promoting health, community and cat adoption.

At left, kids pose with a DCSPCA kitty during the April 10 children’s yoga class, in partnership with Jenny Fox of FoxYoga.

-Courtesy photos

of adoption rates. Many participants returned to the shelter looking for specific cats they had done stretches with, North noted.

Fox will be teaching the children’s yoga program for the monthly classes. She received her Yoga certification in 2012 and teaches “Yo Yogi!” - a children’s yoga program - at Poughkidsie.

Adult classes will be offered by Darrigan DeMattos, a professional dancer with Awaken Dance Theater, and a teacher at Ayo Fitness in Middletown and Athleta Studio in NYC. Alternating the instruction for the adult class will be Christi Botello of Hopewell Junction, whose specialty is yoga’s vinyasa flow technique.

Children and adult classes are held in the same time slot, but in different locations in the Adoption Center. This allows parents to have 45 minutes of peaceful solitude while still making one trip and creating a “family outing” together.

North added that cats are social, soothing and calming, which makes them great yoga partners to have.

He remembered that George Balanchine, co-founder of the New York City Ballet, would often study felines and incorporate their sleek and gentle movements into his choreography.

“Cats are naturally very centered in yoga,” Fox said. “They embody what the essence of yoga is.”

The classes will be offered on May 14, June 11, July 9 and August 13. Each class will run from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. and fees per class are \$20 for adults, \$10 for DCSPCA members and \$5 for seniors and children.

The classes are open to those beginning or experienced with yoga. Spaces are limited, and pre-registration is required. To register, visit www.dcsPCA.org or call (845) 452-7722. The DCSPCA Adoption Center is located at 636 Violet Avenue in Hyde Park.