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# Nature Center offers summer yoga program

By Brenda Wilder

The Clinton Community Nature Center (CCNC) has added vinyasa style yoga classes, held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. in Price Hall, as a part of a ten-week summer series. The classes started in May and will end July 25. Beginning in August, classes will be offered on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. Classes are free for CCNC members and \$5 for non-members.

The instructor for the yoga classes is Melissa Wood, a nurse practitioner at Baptist Medical Clinic in Clinton. Wood says her goal is to bring more access and knowledge about yoga to the Clinton community.

"I love introducing people to yoga and helping them see all the wonderful benefits."

Wood is married with two children, ages four and six. When they moved to Clinton four years ago, as someone who had been practicing yoga regularly, she quickly realized the need for more access to yoga in the community.

"Eventually, I decided I would get my certification as a yoga instructor, which I completed in January of this year," said Wood.

Participants can expect to move fluidly through a series of poses that both

strengthen and stretch muscles. The strengthening portion of class is followed by a relaxing, restorative series of poses, creating a balance between strength and flexibility. Yoga can be beneficial for all ages and all body types. Many athletes can benefit from yoga by increasing flexibility and range of motion to reduce the risk of injury. Some people use yoga as a way to stay toned and flexible as they age. Others even incorporate it as a form of regular exercise to aid in weight loss or weight management.

Beyond physical benefits, yoga can be a stress reliever and can serve as a form of self-care, both physically and mentally. People who practice yoga regularly often feel more relaxed and more energized after practice, ready to take on the rest of their hectic day or week.

Wood says many people are surprised at their first yoga class. They often think they are walking in to a stretching class and leave with a new perspective.

"I had one student say, 'I did not expect to sweat!'"

All skill levels are welcome to attend, and participants can bring their own mat or use one at the center. Remaining summer dates include July 2, 9, 16, 18, 23 and 25.

For more information about the Nature Center programs, call 601-926-1104. The CCNC is located at 617 Duntun Road.

