

# Norwalk Education Foundation Newsletter

## NEF Matters

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Issue: # 13

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### Norwalk High Students De-stress with Yoga

### GOLF for NEF!

The [Brewhouse Restaurant](#) presents its 7th Annual Charity Golf Outing to benefit NEF.



Monday, June 22nd  
Oak Hills Golf Course  
Norwalk, Conn.

\$160.00 per person  
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the Norwalk Democratic and  
Republican Town Committees](#)

[River Rowing at West Rocks  
Middle School](#)

### Our Mission

The lights are dim. Soft music is playing. The instructor gently gives instructions. "Okay, we'll be going into the Warrior Two pose." A typical yoga class? Well, hardly. This was the scene lately in Amanda Fisher's Norwalk High School 10th grade Health class. Fisher has introduced yoga this year into her curriculum as part of the Stress Management unit. She was able to do so after receiving a grant from the Norwalk Education Foundation for training to receive her yoga teaching certification.

"I thought this unit would be a perfect opportunity to teach the students about the health benefits of yoga," says Fisher. "There are so many pressures and everyday teenage stresses that these kids worry about each day. Yoga is a great way to help manage and reduce that stress."

Student Hunter Wells agrees, "The yoga definitely helped me to calm down. I think it would relieve stress for a lot of kids."

Jenny Teng also found that it helped. "I tried yoga before with my mom and I liked it. I would really like one period a day to do this and relax."

The Norwalk Education Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to quality public education for all of Norwalk's children. We effect positive change by providing programs and funds for innovative classroom instruction, teacher and technology training, and a variety of learning opportunities beyond the school day.



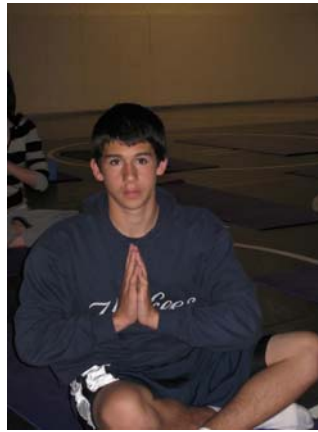
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Fisher has already begun to offer the chance for students to do just that. She has formed a yoga club at the school that is open to both teachers and students in all four grades. The club meets twice a week and she regularly has 10-12 teachers and the same amount of students. Fisher has also steered some of her students to a yoga studio in town that has classes especially designed for teens.

Fisher hopes that the introduction of yoga will spark an interest in her students, providing benefits this year and in the years to come. "This class breaks away from the traditional classroom setting of students sitting at a desk and introduces them to a valuable tool to promote their personal fitness. My hope is that when students start college and are on their own for the first time, they realize it is ultimately their responsibility to maintain their own health, and yoga is a great way to develop both physical and mental wellness."

It appears yoga is here to stay at Norwalk High School. Next year, in addition to teaching yoga as a part of her health classes, Fisher would like to offer an elective class. She thinks many of her students would not only benefit from yoga, but enjoy it as well. Natalie Monsalve would be a great candidate for the elective class. When asked how she liked this yoga unit, she replied, "I'd rather take this than any other class."

## **Photography Allows Brien McMahon Students to Make Connections**



Brien McMahon High School Best Buddies

The old Native American saying, "Do not judge your neighbor until you walk two moons in his moccasins." may now resonate better for some Brien McMahon students after this year. Ninth through twelfth grade students in Louise Flax's photography classes, as well as students in the Peace Project, were given a chance to get to know people with intellectual disabilities in a year-long project with the Best Buddies program. Best Buddies is a national nonprofit organization that pairs high school students with a "Buddy" allowing for opportunities for one-to-one friendships.

Supported in part by a grant from the Norwalk Education Foundation, more than 100 photography and Peace Project students interviewed and photographed buddies and Brien McMahon student peer buddies, creating a variety of art projects throughout the year. The year culminated in an exhibit of portraits and interviews at Brien McMahon that was open to the whole school.

Louise Flax, photography teacher at Brien McMahon, says she got the idea from her daughter. "My daughter was active in the Best Buddies program when she was at school a few years ago. I saw some old pictures of her with her buddy and thought this would not only be a great subject, but a way to allow my students to get to know other kinds of people they may otherwise never meet."

Some of the projects they did with the Buddies during the year included showing them how to use a lenseless camera made from a shoebox and working in a dark room. Flax says the Buddies enjoyed it immensely, as did her students. "If it weren't for the project, many of my students would have had no contact with intellectually disabled people. It really opened up some windows for many of them."

Flax says she likes to have students involved in special projects that gets them out of the classroom, gives them a focus and involves them with others. In the past, she

has done similar student projects, for example with elderly residents at the Marvin in Norwalk. "As a teacher, I enjoy these kinds of activities, too. It's fun for everyone."



THANK YOU for your support.

**Sincerely,**

The Norwalk Education Foundation (NEF)

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