

Fight for survival inspires opening of yoga studio



JENNIFER DUBOIS, OWNER OF AVANI YOGA STUDIO IN CHESTER

CHESTER ■ In 1999, Avani Yoga Studio owner Jennifer DuBois took her first hatha yoga class as part of her employer's corporate wellness program and was hooked. She soon joined a yoga studio in her neighborhood so that she could take additional classes on weekdays.

"Yoga became a big part of my life when I was working a very stressful job in south Florida," says Jennifer. "I worked out almost every day and was very fit. But exercise alone was not enough to manage my stress. Yoga allowed me to really quiet my mind and focus on my entire well-being."

In 2008, Jennifer moved to Chester, Virginia with her husband who relocated for his job. She was disappointed to find so few yoga studios in the Chester area and drove to Richmond to take classes.

"I discovered many wonderful studios in Richmond but the drive made it very inconvenient for me," she said. She tried to maintain her practice at home but missed the community feeling that a yoga studio offers. Before

she knew it, her yoga practice was virtually non-existent.

Then came her breast cancer diagnosis in 2011.

"I was 46 years old and a very healthy, active person with no family history," recalls Jennifer. "My diagnosis was a complete shock."

Jennifer underwent two surgeries, six rounds of chemotherapy and 33 sessions of radiation. Like most cancer patients, she lost her hair and was exhausted by the smallest amount of activity. "Chemobrain" set in and she had a difficult time concentrating or maintaining focus.

Jennifer believes knowledge is power and immersed herself in learning as much as she could about her diagnosis, her treatment protocol and anything she could do to improve her chances for survival. She learned the top cancer research hospitals in the world, including Memorial Sloan-Kettering and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, recommend yoga for their patients as part of an integrative approach to managing the side effects of treatment and for long term survival.

"I desperately needed to get back on the mat and re-establish my yoga practice," she said.

With no studios in her neighborhood, Jennifer knew the drive into Richmond was more than she could manage. Even though she already had a career in communications that she loved, she resolved to start a yoga studio in Chester as soon as she was well enough to take on the task.

Jennifer established Avani Yoga Studio in June 2013, a full year after she completed her cancer treatment. It has been a labor of love and something she knew she had to do.

Avani Yoga Studio is now open in

Chester Square and offers classes for all ages and abilities. With a new mix of classes offered every month, you are able to discover many different forms of yoga. From the more vigorous Flow and Glow to Gentle Yoga and everything in between, there is something for everyone at Avani Yoga Studio.

Avani Yoga Studio's goal is to "build a community of happy, healthy people who are interested in taking care of themselves and the world around them." The studio offers a variety of classes, including something new every week during Feel Good Friday. "We use our Feel Good Friday timeslot to mix things up and try new classes with our students," says Jennifer. "If students tell us they really like a particular class that was offered on Friday, we make every effort to add it to the schedule on a permanent basis."

Three certified yoga instructors offer hands on assistance and readily answer any questions you might have during "Yoga Focus" – a workshop that is offered twice a month and gives students a chance to build their skills and practice new techniques.

New clients can purchase the introductory offer – "30 Days for \$30" – which gives them the opportunity to try every class and meet the instructors. There are two class passes available – 5 classes for \$60 and 10 classes for \$100. Students can also

purchase a monthly unlimited pass for \$80 or an annual pass for \$912. Drop ins are welcome if space is available for just \$15.

"We are one of the most affordable yoga studios in metro Richmond," said Jennifer. "Our goal is to offer some donation-based classes in 2014 to make yoga even more accessible."

"I am grateful for every day I am given and grateful to be able to introduce so many people in this area to yoga," said Jennifer. "It's a true blessing."

You can visit Avani Yoga Studios website at www.avaniyogastudio.com or call 804-312-1026 for more information. The studio is located at 4617 Chester Square Rd., Chester.

OFFERED CLASSES:

- Chakra Balancing Flow
- Flow and Glow
- Gentle Yoga
- Hatha Yoga
- Hot Flow
- Restorative Yoga
- Slow Flow
- Sunrise Yoga
- Vinyasa Flow
- Yoga Focus

Yoga in Chester



GIVE IT A TRY, YOU'LL LOVE IT!

30 DAYS FOR \$30

**Introductory package for new clients only*

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Classes for all levels

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