

Mobile yoga company Nicole Anne Yoga brings the Zen to clients

Georgann Yara, Special for The Republic Published 6:00 a.m. MT March 21, 2019



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Chandler yoga business brings holistic health to you



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Nicole Anne Fonovich knows that at her age, most people also born with degenerative disc disease are pretty much bedridden, must use a wheelchair or rely on prescription pain medicine to get through each day.

Fonovich remembers the times in her life when she was unable to move and depended on painkillers to deal with the agony of movement.

But the 43-year-old certified yoga instructor and owner of mobile yoga company Nicole Anne Yoga credited the craft with being responsible for her ability to remain extremely mobile on her own.

"I got on the mat as a way to rehab myself. It's the only reason I'm as agile as I am," said Fonovich, a holistic health practitioner who started her Chandler-based business in 2017.



Nicole Anne Fonovich, owner of Nicole Anne Yoga, teaches yoga classes at the Mesa Artspace Lofts. (Photo: Nick Oza/The Republic)

When she was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, Fonovich began a journey of holistic nutrition. This inspired her to earn her holistic practitioner degree from the Southwest Institute of Healing Arts. The subjects she studied in order to obtain the degree ultimately became components under the umbrella of her yoga business.

Her team includes about three dozen holistic practitioners. The independent contractors range from health-care and advanced-yoga instructors to nutritionists and life coaches. They travel Valley-wide offering classes in nearly every kind of venue, encompassing schools, corporate office buildings, studios, nursing homes and private residences.

Students run the gamut from young children to senior citizens.

Last year, Fonovich and her team served about 2,000 students, she said. Clients range from individuals to conferences and seminars to venues that request a class once a week or once a month.

Heidi Brenke has been a regular of Fonovich and her team for about a year. She's been a nurse for 26 years and carrying patients and doing other physically strenuous tasks resulted in chronic pain. Since attending the yoga classes Brenke said that pain has been greatly reduced and she is more limber and much calmer.

"I always found going to the gym stressful and something I did out of a sense of duty. But I go to Nicole's because it's a sense of joy," said Brenke, who lives in Mesa. "Nicole cares about the community and you can feel that through her yoga."

Fonovich, who has a degree in business and master's in education, had been doing what she considered her dream job as a financial-aid director for Touro University California. When her father was diagnosed with leukemia, Fonovich returned home to Illinois to help care for him.

This planted the seed for her interest in holistic health as she and her family tried juicing, vitamins and other non-traditional approaches in an attempt to extend the length and quality of her father's life. She found this rewarding.

It sparked the pursuit of her current career. Before opening Nicole Anne Yoga, Fonovich offered free events in community venues and her home in order to practice her craft. She pondered buying a studio, but those were a dime a dozen and it seemed like many were closing down left and right. Her experience writing and publishing a children's e-book series, "Luca Lashes," showed her that hard copies weren't necessary for success, so why would a brick-and-mortar facility be?

Her entrepreneurial light bulb was lit.

"Instead of saying to people, 'Come here,' why not bring the Zen to them?" Fonovich said of the reasoning that has become her company's mantra.



Nicole Anne Fonovich, owner of Nicole Anne Yoga, teaches meditation during a yoga class at the Mesa Artspace Lofts. (Photo: Nick Oza/The Republic)

Fonovich's industry has experienced a steady popularity surge nationwide. In 2012, less than 10 percent of U.S. adults practiced yoga and 4 percent practiced meditation, but in 2017, participation in each of those categories jumped to more than 14 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control. And, 34 percent of Americans say they are somewhat or very likely to practice yoga in the next 12 months, according to the Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance.

Entering her second year helming her mobile yoga company, Fonovich shared clients' feedback about how the therapies helped them. They include veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who are able to find peace for the first time in years and insomniacs who are finally able to experience a good night's sleep.

Fonovich's voice cracked as she recalled the man whose depression nearly drove him to suicide. Today, he takes the sound healing and meditation sessions and brings his mother and friends.

"We saved him. It's so beautiful," she said. "The misconception about yoga is that you must be flexible, like a pretzel, and it's all about movement. Yoga saved my life and it's my honor and privilege to be able to give this back to people."

Nicole Anne Yoga

WHERE: Chandler.

EMPLOYEES: Three.

INTERESTING STAT: Americans spend \$16 billion on yoga classes, clothing, equipment and accessories each year, according to a study by the Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance.

DETAILS: 847-840-7277, nicoleanneyoga.com

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