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Just let your mind go



Meg McLaughlin / mmclaughlin@qconline.com

More than a dozen people participate in group meditation during a Transcendental Meditation meeting on Dec. 13 at the Butterworth Center in Moline. A Transcendental Meditation introductory meeting will be held Wednesday night. For more information, email QuadCities@tm.org.

Transcendental Meditation could improve your life

▶ This is the first in a series of stories exploring Transcendental Meditation. **Coming Monday:** Soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder say TM gave them their lives back.

BY JACKIE CHESSER

jchesserqc@gmail.com

Sitting quietly for 20 minutes twice a day could change your life.

Transcendental Meditation is not a religion. It's practiced by more than 6 million people worldwide, people of every faith, age and profession, from doctors, scientists, academics and bluecollar workers to soldiers suffering posttraumatic stress disorder and children.

To practice TM, you sit quietly with your eyes closed in any comfortable position for 20 minutes twice a day. You don't have to focus on breathing, and although you have a mantra, you don't concentrate on it. Just let your mind go.

"This natural tendency of the mind to be quiet is all that we use in meditation and nothing else," said Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918-2008), who introduced the TM technique in India in the mid-1950s.

See TM, page A7

GET MORE INFORMATION

The next local Transcendental Meditation introductory meeting will take place Wednesday, and classes for those who sign up will run Thursday through May 24. For more information, email QuadCities@tm.org.

Cost of the lifetime program ranges from \$360 to \$960; it's a one-time fee that can be paid over time. Scholarships are available for those who can't afford the entire cost. For more information, visit tm.org/learn-tm and tm.org/quadcities.

TM: Endorsed by Mayo Clinic

From page A1

"In a very innocent manner, we think the thought, and every time we think it, it becomes finer and finer and finer. We experience its finer state, and then it dies out," he said in talks and writings. "The mind is left wide awake by itself, without any sound to experience."

Scientific studies show TM reduces stress, depression, insomnia, high blood pressure and heart disease; improves focus and mental and physical health; and reportedly relieves symptoms of autism, ADHD and HIV.

TM is endorsed by the American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic, National Institutes of Health, doctors, scientists and other medical groups. A June 2013 study by the AHA concluded TM is the only meditation technique that has been significantly shown to lower blood pressure.

An article published in November 2012 in the Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes journal of the AHA reported that a five-year randomized controlled study of patients with coronary heart disease showed a 48 percent reduction in death, heart attacks and strokes in people who practiced

TM compared to those not doing TM."

A study published in the October 2013 issue of the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that practicing TM "significantly" reduced anxiety.

The January 2016 issue of Chicago Medicine reported plans to add TM as an elective course for students at The Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University Chicago.

Titled Physician Wellness through Transcendental Meditation (TM), the course would be the first of its kind to be offered at a major U.S. medical school, according to the article.

"Physicians who practice self-care, especially stress reduction, are likely to perform better as professionals and inspire their patients to adopt healthy behaviors," Dr. Linda Brubaker, dean of the school, said in the article.

Film director David Lynch created the David Lynch Foundation (davidlynchfoundation.org) in 2005 to teach meditation to challenged children and adults around the world and to military members and veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder.

Mr. Lynch will deliver the June 18 commencement address at the Maharishi University of Man-

Well-known people who practice TM

- ▶ Director/author David Lynch
- ► Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr
- Clint Eastwood
- ► Jerry Seinfeld
- ► Jennifer Anniston
- ▶ Jim Carrey
- ► Stevie Wonder
- Oprah Winfrey
- Kurt Vonnegut
- ▶ Sting
- ► George Stephanopoulos
- Rupert Murdoch
- ► George Lucas
- David Letterman
- ► Mick Jagger
- ► Hugh Jackman
- ► Ellen DeGeneres
- California Gov. Jerry Brown
- ► Russell Brand
- ► Katy Perry
- ► Bill O'Reilly
- Dr. Mehmet Oz
- ► Director Martin Scorsese
- ▶ Jeff Bridges
- Cameron Diaz
- ► Sheryl Crow

agement in Fairfield, Iowa, where he is a member of the board of trustees.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Dr. Yukio Hatoyama, a TM meditator, was commencement speaker last year.

TM's U.S. headquarters are in Fairfield, while the world headquarters are in Vlodrop, Holland. The world leader is Tony Nader, a Lebanese neuroscientist, researcher, university president and author.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TM AND HEALTH STUDIES, VISIT:

- ► TM: tm.org and globalcountry.org
- Meditation techniques: tm.org/meditation-techniques
- ► American Heart Association: heart.org/ HEARTORG/Conditions/More/MyHeartand-StrokeNews/Meditation-and-Heart-Disease-Stroke_UCM_452930_Article.jsp#.Vyn5rNIrJdg
- Maharishi University in Fairfield: mum.edu
- ➤ **Studies and evidence:** tm.org/researchon-meditation
- ► Chicago Medicine: cmsdocs.org/news-publications/chicago-medicine-magazine/2016-issues/January2016.pdf
- ► Cardiologist endorsement: Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, tmforwomenshearthealth.org, youtube.com/watch?v=796-PJdsTY

Transcendental Meditation can be lifesaver for veterans with PTSD

- ▶ This is the second in a series of stories exploring Transcendental Meditation. **Coming Tuesday:** Improved grades, creativity and morale are some of the benefits being attributed to students practicing TM in classrooms.
- ► TM is a passion for couple who teach it in the Q-C. A2

BY JACKIE CHESSER

jchesserqc@gmail.com

Matt Smith had never heard of Transcendental Meditation a few months ago, but now it's giving him his life back.

When he was discharged from the Army last summer, after more than 10 years of active-duty service and deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Smith — a local veteran who asked that his real name not be used — sought help for post-traumatic stress disorder at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs clinic in Iowa City.

He said they gave him medications, which he'd rather not take. Then one VA counselor suggested he try TM. "I had never heard of it before," he said

Mr. Smith said he researched it online and learned how to do it in Davenport in mid-March.



Jackie Chesser / jchessergc@gmail.com

Jerry Yellin, 92, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder for 30 years after World War II, until he learned Transcendental Meditation in 1975. Now, he travels the country to give talks on how TM can help people suffering from PTSD.

He said he saw a big improvement within a few days. "I know it's going to get better. I just want to become me again."

Veteran Jerry Yellin, 92, also said he saw an improvement in his PTSD within a few days of learning TM. He now lives in Florida, but he lived in Fairfield, Iowa — the U.S. headquarters for TM — for 26 years.

He said TM finally gave him the "relief" he had been seeking for 30 years, ever since he was discharged from the Army Air Corps in 1945, after the end of World War II.

Mr. Yellin said he joined the Air Corps (now the Air Force) when he was 18, two months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ psychcentral.com/ news/2011/06/02/transcendental-meditation-helpsvets-with-ptsd/26627.html
- medicalnewstoday.com/ articles/232362.php
- tm.org/blog/research/ our-veterans-are-lacking-acrucial-tool
- ► fortgordonglobe.com/ news/2014-12-12/Front_ Page/Soldiers_meditate_as_ alternative_therapy.html

After training, he began flying missions in the Pacific, and on Aug. 14, 1945, Capt. Yellin flew the last combat mission of the war over the Japanese island of Honshu. He was discharged in December of that year.

"One day a fighter pilot, the next a civilian," he wrote on his website, captainjerryyellin.com/about-jerry-yellin.

"No buddies, no airplane, nothing to hold on to and no one to talk to. Life, as it was for me from 1945 to 1975, was empty. The highs I had experienced in combat became the

See PTSD, page A2

Q-C teachers passionate about TM

BY JACKIE CHESSER jchesserqc@gmail.com

Claudia and David Magill have made a career out of sitting quietly.

They teach people how to find inner peace and calmness by meditating for 20 minutes twice per day.

For the Magills, Transcendental Meditation isn't a job, but a calling, a passion.

"TM can raise life to a higher platform," said Mr. Magill, who grew up in northern Illinois and Massachusetts, and has a math degree from Dartmouth College

Claudia Magill, who grew up in Detroit, has a math degree from the University of Michigan, where she became interested in TM in 1970 after seeing an ad for an introductory talk in the college newspaper.

in the college newspaper. She met her husband when she applied for a job at a computer company where he worked in Ann Arbor, Mich. Mr. Magill became interested in TM, and two years later, they decided to become full-time TM instructors.

They did months of training that included time in Spain and Switzerland, working with TM founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in groups, with a few one-on-one sessions with the Maharishi.

They've taught TM in Virginia, California, New

BEG YOUR PARDON



Mea McLauchlin / mmclauchlin@aconline.com

Claudia and David Magill are Transcendental Meditation teachers in the Quad-Cities area. They also host monthly meetings at the Butterworth Center in Moline for people who have learned TM.

York and other places, and their students have included probationers, parolees, the homeless and victims of domestic violence.

Referring to studies on prisoners who learned TM, Mr. Magill said a five-year follow-up study showed a 33 percent reduction in recidivism rates, and a 15-year follow-up study showed a 43.5 percent reduction.

The Magills now live in Fairfield, Iowa, where they plan their teaching activities and volunteer for local projects and community programs on and off the campus of Maharishi University of Management.

Mr. Magill also works with an Internet company.

In 2010, the Magills began teaching TM in the Quad-Cities area, and now they also teach it in Dubuque, Iowa, and Princeton, Ill.

TM is very natural and has lifelong benefits, Ms. Magill said. "Man was meant to have a much better life."

She said that when she became interested in TM in 1970, there was no scientific research on it, other than one published doctoral dissertation just coming out. She said she didn't

She said she didn't mind the lack of research, although she's a skeptical person, because "I sensed from the beginning that there was a truth unfolding in me, the truth that life is not meant to be lived in suffering."

PTSD: Study demonstrates benefits of TM

From page A1

lows of daily living.

"Thad absolutely no connection to my parents, my sister, my relatives or my friends. I listened to some of the guys I knew talk about their experiences in combat, and I knew they had never been in a battle, let alone a war zone," he wrote. "No one that I knew who had seen their friends die could talk about it.

"The Army Air Corps had trained me and prepared me to fly combat missions, but there was no training on how to fit into society when the war was over," he wrote.

"I was depressed, unhappy and lonely, even though I was surrounded by a loving wife and four sons. That feeling of disconnect, lack of emotions, restlessness, empty feeling of hopelessness lasted until 1975" — the year he learned TM.

Mr. Smith joined the Army in 2004 and was a member of the military police for the first three years. He was sent to Iraq for 15 months in 2006 and 2007, where he was involved in many mortar attacks and firefights.

He signed on for another stint and was sent to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011.

Mr. Smith, 31, now works as a civilian for the Army at the Rock Island Arsenal.

He said his post-traumatic stress started when he saw a fellow soldier shot in the head by a sniper in Iraq. He was the truck commander, but he "froze" and couldn't direct his men's response, although all did their jobs properly, he said.

Another time, Mr. Smith was in a convoy headed to Baghdad when the lead truck hit an explosively formed projectile, or penetrator (EFP). He said although no one was killed, he froze again when he saw the devastating injuries some of the men suffered.

On top of incidents like those, he said, soldiers often were sleep-deprived because of recurring rocket and mortar attacks.

The Army and Department of Veterans Affairs are studying how TM can help active military members and veterans with PTSD.

Mr. Smith said they are teaching TM to some soldiers so they can deal with the stress of war as it occurs, rather than after they are released. It should be taught to all soldiers, he said, and those with PTSD shouldn't be afraid or embarrassed to discuss it.

Mr. Yellin said TM, not drugs, is the answer for PTSD. Millions are spent on antidepressants for those with PTSD, but treating the problem with drugs just creates drug addicts, he said. "TM is a natural process. It's quick. It's easy, and it works."
Mr. Yellin — who was

Mr. Yellin — who was inducted into the U.S. Air Force Hall of Fame in 2014 and will be honored at the World War II Museum in New Orleans in June — now gives 20 to 25 talks around the country each year on treating PTSD with TM.

The David Lynch Foundation (davidlynchfoundation.org) helps military and ex-military members and their families get access to TM classes through its Operation Warrior Wellness program (operationwarriorwellness.org).

The foundation estimates that more than 500,000 troops deployed since 2001 suffer from PTSD.

A study titled "Impact of Transcendental Meditation on Psychotropic Medication Use Among Active Duty Military Service Members With Anxiety and PTSD" was published in the January issue of the journal Military Medicine.

The study included 74 active-duty service members with PTSD or anxiety disorder. Many had experienced multiple deployments and were seeking treatment for PTSD at Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center's Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic at Fort Gordon, Ga.

For the study, half the service members practiced TM in addition to their other therapy, while the other half did not. After a month, 83.7 percent of the meditators had stabilized and reduced or stopped their use of psychotropic drugs to treat their PTSD.

In the group that did not meditate, 59.4 percent had stabilized and reduced or stopped taking psychotropic drugs for PTSD, while 40.5 percent had begun taking higher dosages of medication. Similar percentages were found in a six-month follow-up.

"Regular practice of Transcendental Meditation provides a habit of calming down and healing the brain," the study's lead author, Dr. Vernon A. Barnes, said in a news release. He is a physiologist at the Georgia Prevention Institute at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, and a TM practitioner.

"TM has given me my life back," Mr. Smith said. "I can be a better husband, a better father and a better friend."

tal-meditation-elective-course-offered-at-a-major-us-medical-school, written by Maharishi University of Management publicist Ken Chawkin. We regret the reporter's error. The Dispatch and The Rock Island Argus care about accuracy, Mistakes occur, however. Our policy is to correct errors of fact as soon as possible. If you see a mistake in the paper, please call it to the attention of Laura Yeater, newsroom administrative assistant, at 309-757-4954, or send an email to press@qconline.com.

A story on Transcendental Meditation published Sunday should have said that the

Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University Chicago began offering TM as an elec-

For more information, visit the uncarved blog com/2016/01/30/the-first-transcenden-

Meditation pays off in classroom

This is the fourth in a series of stories exploring Transcendental Meditation. **Coming Wednesday:** Quad-Citians say TM keeps them refreshed, relaxed and ready to deal with stress.

BY JACKIE CHESSER

jchesserqc@gmail.com

Declining violence, truancy and stress, along with improved grades, creativity and morale, are some of the benefits being attributed to students practicing Transcendental Meditation in classrooms around the world.

For the past 10 years, the David Lynch Foundation (davidlynchfoundation.org) has partnered with schools in the U.S. to introduce TM to at-risk youths in major cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Newark, New Haven, Washington, D.C., and Detroit.

Students constantly bombarded with stressful situations, such as those who live in an abusive household or dangerous neighborhood, suffer "toxic stress," which has been shown to cause permanent changes in brain structure and function, according to a report by the foundation and Chicago Crime Lab.

Some of the lasting impacts associated with toxic stress are impaired development of linguistic, cognitive and so-



Courtesy of David Lynch Foundation

Many schools around the world have students and teachers meditating for short periods twice a day.

cial-emotional skills; damage to memory and mood-related functions; and weakening of contextual learning abilities, leading to difficulty in distinguishing between danger and safety, according to the report.

See MEDITATION, Page A2

Meditation: 'Quiet Time' lasts at least 13 minutes at start of school day

From Page A1

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens; 25 percent of teens suffer anxiety disorders; and nearly 3 million children receive medication for attention deficit disorder, according to the David Lynch Foundation.

More than 600 scientific research studies on TM and education show that the benefits of students practicing TM include improved academic achievement, creativity, IQ, memory, learning ability, calmness and general health, and decreased anxiety, depression and alcohol and drug use, according to the foundation.

The school meditation program, called Quiet Time, calls for students and teachers to sit quietly for 13 to 18 minutes — the length of time depends on the age of the students — at the beginning and end of the school day.

One of the first school districts in the country to initiate the Quiet Time program was the San Francisco Unified School District, which has more than 100 schools and 53,000 students.

"Research is showing big effects of Quiet
Time on students' performance," San Francisco
school district superintendent Richard A. Carranza
said in an email statement.

"And our new accountability standards, which

we've developed in tandem with the other large California districts, emphasize the importance of socialemotional skills — such as Quiet Time — to improve kids' lives, not just their academics," he wrote.

Noah Schechtman, program director for the Center for Wellness & Achievement in Education (cwae.org), a San Francisco-based nonprofit that produces the Quiet Time program and other wellness and social and emotional learning programs in Bay Area schools, said TM was introduced in the school district during the 2006-07 school year.

It started at Visitation Valley Middle School and now is in five San Francisco elementary, middle and high schools.

"The Quiet Time program involves two mini-class periods per day, 13 minutes each in elementary school, 15 minutes in middle school, and 18 minutes in high school," Mr. Schechtman said by email.

According to cwae.
org, the district has seen
improved grade-point
averages, increased attendance, decreased suspensions and school violence,
reduced student anxiety
and psychological distress,
increased self-esteem,
higher standardized test
scores, decreased burnout
and stress in teachers
and administrators, and
increased emotional intelligence

The University of

Chicago Crime Lab, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Get IN Chicago and Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation recently gave the David Lynch Foundation \$300,000 to teach TM to 250 Chicago inner-city youths and work with them for a year.

For information on the Quiet Time program at New Horizons school in New Haven, Conn., visit newhavenindependent. org/index.php/archives/ entry/new_horizons_meditation/id_66381.

For more information on the David Lynch Foundation, started by director, screenwriter and longtime TM meditator David Lynch, visit davidlynchfoundation.org/ schools.html.

'It has been a 'godsend!'

Quad-Citians talk about **Transcendental Meditation**

This is the final installment in a series of stories exploring Transcendental Meditation. To read the other stories, go to QCOnline.com.

BY JACKIE CHESSER

jchesserqc@gmail.com

Two weeks after starting Transcendental Meditation, the light, but nagging, daily headaches I'd had for more than 10 years disappeared.

Because they were centered in the middle of my face, and I'd had many sinus infections, I assumed they were sinus headaches. An MRI showed normal

Still dealing with the headaches many years later, I went to an otolaryngologist, who said my sinuses were clear and suggested I see a neurologist for tension headaches.

Although I had a hectic job as an editor at The Dispatch/Rock Island Argus, I never thought I was stressed. Still, I went to a neurologist, who agreed they

were tension headaches and gave me medication to treat them.

I hate taking medication, and this one made me moody, so my husband, who learned TM in 1973 while living in California, suggested I try TM.

After attending a free introductory session in Davenport in August 2013, I did short one-on-one sessions with an instructor for four days before beginning to meditate on my own.

Within two weeks, the headaches were completely gone. I was shocked at how my mind worked through "issues' during those two daily 20-minute meditations. Things that had bothered me before now seemed trivial.

I felt relaxed and refreshed, and very content for the first time in my life. There was no more "I'll relax and enjoy life later, but I have too much to do right now." I could get my chores done and still smell the roses.

Here are what some people in my monthly TM gatherings say about their experience with TM.

Chris Ericksen

Moline, started practicing TM in late 1971. "I read Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's book 'The Science of Being and the Art of Living'

Chris Ericksen, of

in high school. He spoke of a simple technique to help one reach their best potential, so I was interested.

"As a freshman in college, our English instructor took us to an introductory lecture on TM. ... The technique was said to be simple, and was not based on a belief system.

"For 44 years I have been sitting down with my eyes closed twice a day to meditate. Allowing the mind and body to quiet down and rest is a pleasurable experience. Beyond that, I feel refreshed and better able to pursue activity in life."

See TM, Page A2

TM: Q-C people find inner peace

From Page A1



Peter McDermott

▶ Peter Mc Dermott, of Moline, started TM after attending an introductory meeting at Blackhawk College in 1978. "I was very young and starting my own business. I was nervous and anxious. I made the decision to become a TM meditator; and it has been a godsend! It has been 37 years, and I still appreciate and enjoy meditating on a daily basis.

"Our minds never stop working, even when we're sleeping. Like Jerry Seinfeld (a TM meditator) says, 'Look at your

bed covers in the morning. Looks like you were at war.'
"Transcendental Meditation helps your entire body
and nervous system relax and lets your body function
perfectly."



Felix Reyes-Jaen

▶ Felix Reyes Jaen, of DeWitt, started practicing TM in late 2013 "because I had heard about it when I lived in Nicaragua, but it was not until years later, when I moved to the U.S., that I learned more about all of TM's physical and psychological benefits and the scientific research backing it up.

"By going within myself during mediation, I am empowered to bring a calm reaction to everyday, stressful circumstances. TM has helped me develop a quiet, yet permanent, sense

of self-power by expanding my awareness and ability to make healthier choices in life."



Connie Moran Barrett

▶ Connie Moran Barret, of Moline, who taught TM and headed the local TM center in the 1980s, learned TM while in college in St. Louis in 1970. She said she attended a TM lecture and "sensed something about the TM teacher was special, and I wanted that.

"TM has given me a centered calmness even in the most hectic times," she said. "I am able to focus better. I feel an inner contentedness and a sense of awareness of the moment, unfettered by past or future anxieties.

"The practice of Transcendental Meditation is the most simple and effortless practice, and each meditation has a variety of experiences. It could be full of thoughts and feelings, and upon gently returning, provide the most profound state of restful awareness."



Nancy Schold

Nancy Schold, who lives near Sherrard, has been practicing TM for about five years with her husband, Sam. "I had been curious about it for years, but when training and education became available in the Q-C, it seemed like the right time to give it a try. I had tried other forms of meditation, but I never felt completely comfortable with them.

"TM has given me a way to easily find the quiet centered space within myself. I find myself returning to this

space during the day for a minute or two when things seem to be getting a bit hectic or stressful. TM is a tool that I use to help me stay in balance, physically, mentally and emotionally."

▶ Martha Nieto, of Moline, learned TM in February 2011. "I wanted to incorporate it into my transition



"The investment of one's time In TM is so small compared to the huge return it gives back. It's so simple and easy to do that sometimes it just comes naturally.

Martha Nieto

"The best thing about TM is coming out of meditation with the feeling of inner peace in both our mind and body."