

Fitness

Next Generation Yoga

Owner: Jodi Komitor

212-595-9306

www.nextgenerationyoga.com

On a recent weekday, a group of Upper East Side residents gathered at a Madison Avenue spa for a quiet yoga session. But before long, a few clients were whining and crying for “mommy.” This is Next Generation Yoga.

Started in 1998 by Jodi Komitor, Next Generation Yoga (NGY) was founded on the philosophy that kids could benefit from the yoga teachings of well-being and balance. Unlike traditional yoga, which promotes serenity, kids’ yoga is all about making animal noises and crawling around on the floor. At special “hip-hop yoga” sessions, breathing exercises are done to Shaggy songs. Similarly, Mariah Carey’s “Shake It Off” is an invitation to shake your legs and wiggle your toes.

Komitor first started running classes out of her Upper West Side apartment, giving a dozen classes a week, with a handful

Popular Classes

Offered by Next Generation Yoga

3-4 yr. olds

Mon. 12:30-1:30 at Levitate Yoga?

Thur. 3:30-4:15 at Exhale?Spa

5-7 yr. olds

Wed. 3:30-4:15 at Exhale Spa?

Wed. 3:45-4:30 at JCC?

Wed. 5:00-5:40 at Greenpoint YMCA

8-10 yr. olds

Wed. 4:35-5:20 at Jewish Community Center (JCC)

Wed. 5:45-6:25 at Greenpoint YMCA??

11-13 yr. olds

Wed. 5:45-6:25 at Greenpoint YMCA ?

Fri. 4:00-5:00 at Exhale Spa

(Check www.nextgenerationyoga.com for details and location information)

of kids attending each time. Two years later, she saved enough money to open up a studio on West 72nd Street. Komitor said it was the first kids’ yoga studio in the world.

Business took off by word-of-mouth and clients soon numbered in the thousands. But Komitor found it difficult to afford the Manhattan rent. Instead of raising prices or moving to a cheaper locale, Komitor made the decision to shut down the studio and take her classes on the road.

“Closing the studio felt like a loss,” Komitor said, “but I realized the business didn’t need brick and mortar.” She ended up saving \$6,000 a month on rent and decreased overhead costs by taking her classes to clients instead of having them come to her. Komitor has also established partnerships with local spas to offer classes in their studio space. The spas are responsible for all marketing and promotions, leaving Komitor free to do what she does best — teach.

Komitor has trained a team of eight teachers to expand NGY throughout the city. She also trains yoga instructors from around the world.

In December, Komitor is



headed west to start an NGY branch in San Diego. She’s also developing a line of instructional books and videos, in addition to the merchandise already being sold on the NGY Web site. Komitor said the training sessions and online boutique actually bring in more rev-

enue than the yoga classes. It’s helpful, she said, to have other avenues of income.

Komitor’s formula for success is simple: “Listen to your heart,” she said. “It didn’t take a lot of money to start this business, but I did have to learn to trust my intuition.”

The American Yoga Industry

According to a 2005 study commissioned by Yoga Journal magazine, Americans spend \$2.95 billion a year on yoga classes and products, including equipment, clothing, vacations and media (DVDs, videos, books and magazines).

Other findings:

- 75% of U.S. adults of 16.5 million people now practice yoga
- the fastest growing segment is the 18-24 age group, which increased by 46% in one year
- 77.1% of yoga practitioners are women and 22.9% are men.