

# McCALL

\$3.95 Winter 2011

SNOWMOBILES,  
BURGERS &  
HOT SPRINGS

Art in Snow

Shanti Yoga School

Power Play!

**19** *Ways to  
Enjoy the Holidays*



0 74470 05841 0

# Shanti Yoga School

written by Carissa Sindon



**S**ince yoga entered mainstream American

culture, it has become ubiquitous, from offerings at gyms to features on television commercials. While many are aware of its physical benefits of increased strength, flexibility and balance, yoga's benefits stretch far beyond the physical. It is yoga's ability to help people improve themselves that Debbi Murphy, founder of Shanti Yoga School in McCall, hopes to impart to her students.

"I don't think there's anything that people can do to enhance themselves more than getting involved with yoga," Murphy says. "It's the one clear thing that they can do to make themselves kinder, and in turn that makes the world a better place."

Yoga helps people become more aware of how their actions affect their relationships with everything in the world, including their bodies, their work and other people, Murphy explains.

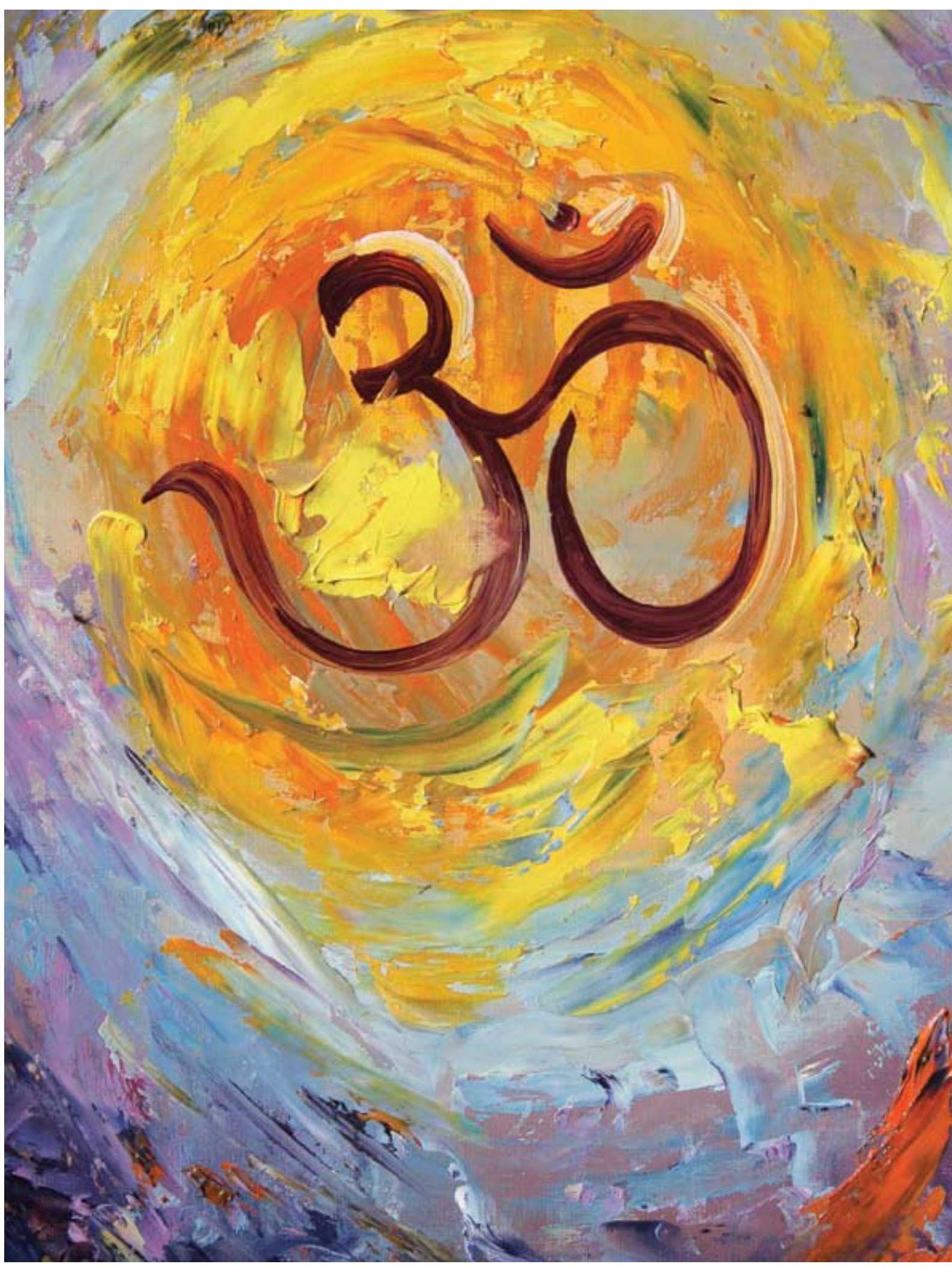
"I've seen firsthand how really getting into yoga—it just changes the way people look at the world, it takes off some of the filters and some of the blinders that we have," she continues. "A lot of what we're trying to do is peel off these outer layers, these conditioned responses and habits and ways of looking at the world. Get rid

of those and you'll be able to choose wisely and with full awareness how you want to live your life."

Murphy started Shanti Yoga School six years ago after realizing that she would like to train some of the teachers at her studio. The training progressed, but Murphy wanted it to be more formal, and ended up inviting others to join. In 2008 the first class officially graduated with 10 students.

The school has since grown to 60 students and offers both a 200- and 500 hour-certification with class offerings in McCall and Boise. Murphy has a Ph.D. in exercise science and a Master's degree in psychology, and her love of higher education and learning has influenced the structure of the courses.

The 200-hour certification is interdisciplinary and gives





participants a strong foundation for further study with exposure to many different teachers and styles. Students learn the fundamentals of the yoga postures and study philosophy, history and ethics.

"We're an interdisciplinary school because we recognize that each of us is different," Murphy points out. "We each learn differently, we each develop differently, and that's the point of the school."

The 500-hour certification reflects Murphy's experience working on her dissertation, and requires students to complete a project on a topic of their choosing. They also assist and observe Murphy's classes, mentor 200-hour students and complete special readings.

The school offers flexible programs that include week-long modules, weekend workshops and weekly meetings.

"People tell me all the time that this is a way they can study and be involved with a group, but they can do it more at their convenience so that they can still work," Murphy says.

Murphy explains that many who go through the certification process do not necessarily want to teach, but are seeking more information about yoga and themselves. Some decide to teach later, while others realize that they

are teaching in the way they treat people in their daily interactions.

"You don't have to be in front of a classroom by any means," she continues. "Yoga recognizes the fact that at heart everybody is a good person. If you stop and allow people to look at the situation and tap into where they really are, they're going to do the right thing to others."

There is no doubt that Murphy's students have put what they have learned to good use in the community and beyond. One student developed a yoga workshop series for the National Alliance on Mental Illness that helps individuals find relief from depression, anxiety and the general stresses of life. Another teaches yoga at juvenile detention facilities in the Boise area. She gives the youths tools that can help them heal and be more aware of their thought processes before they act, allowing them to make better decisions.

Jodie Lea is a counseling psychologist in McCall who completed the 200-hour certification program in 2008. She uses her training to assist people with cancer recovery and to overcome trauma, depression and anxiety.

"I have seen yoga transform many people's lives," Lea says. "Because yoga addresses mind, body, and spirit



*With Murphy's dedication to helping her students improve themselves and expanding the availability of yoga in the community, there is no doubt that more people will be touched by its transformative power.*

---


holistically, it offers people real and lasting solutions. People who practice all aspects of yoga not only get stronger and more fit physically, they also experience less emotional stress and a great sense of well-being."

For her 500-hour project, Debra Staup of McCall integrated the yoga teaching of *ahimsa*, which means non-violence in word, thought and deed, into her lessons during her last year of teaching at Payette Lakes Middle School.

"These kids came to me with a lot of kindness and compassion, but to watch them deepen their kindness and compassion was amazing," Staup explains. "They really treated one another with a heartfelt respect. I felt like the classroom environment became a very safe place for them to share their stories and experiences, work with one another, and not be afraid of being put down."

While the school has already grown substantially from its first class of 10 students, Murphy hopes to see it expand in the future and to reach more people via the internet.

"I would just love to grow the yoga community here so that it's more accessible to everybody," Murphy says. "The more people teaching and practicing yoga, the better."

With Murphy's dedication to helping her students improve themselves and expanding the availability of yoga in the community, there is no doubt that more people will be touched by its transformative power. This will indeed make the world a little kinder, just as Murphy intends. 

*To learn more about Shanti Yoga School, go to [www.shantiyogastudio.org](http://www.shantiyogastudio.org) or call 208.634.9711.*

