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Stressed out? There's a lab for that

TOPICS: IHS Athletics Meditation Lab



Ms. Monness leads phys. ed. class in yoga meditation session

POSTED BY: LAILA ZUKERMAN NOVEMBER 12, 2019

by Laila Zukerman

The Meditation Lab, founded by Irvington parent Jennifer Monness, is a program that has been implemented into IHS gym classes and sports practices. This program has skyrocketed since its debut in November 2016. It's mission is to help students manage stress and anxiety.

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Incorporated in gym classes as a meditation unit before midterms and finals, the lab has also been used by every sports team throughout their season. Due to its success in these programs, IHS students have taken the initiative to work with Ms. Monness by creating a Meditation Lab Club as well as incorporating the practice into peer leadership.

The program has received a large quantity of positive feedback from students and teachers.

Physical Education teacher Mr. Resendiz said, “I think it is a phenomenal opportunity we bring to our students in the high school to show them alternative ways to de-stress, get mentally prepared, and improve the overall well-being of all of the students.”

The meditation lab has increased in popularity due to the positive responses of faculty.

Senior Julia Lenz said, “Meditation Lab in gym class is a great way to relieve some stress and take a moment to forget about all of the work and just relax.”

Following the idea of a meditation lab in gym, a grant was given to have Ms. Monness visit each varsity sport at least once.

Coaches and teammates all had positive feedback in terms of the implementation of the program.

Varsity Girls Volleyball coach Joel Stanford said, “Meditation Lab helps the team to relax and look inward. It helps them to be more aware of their own body, which is what every athlete needs.”

As the program has soared in the Irvington community over the past six years, the school decided to further apply it into freshman peer leadership. Ms. Monness has even met with the senior peer leaders at their retreat to instruct them to guide meditations. The goal is to use the first four minutes of the peer leadership period to meditate with the freshman to further familiarize the students with the practice.

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Ms. Monness states, “It will be incredible to see how students will feel as they move through the rest of their day after meditating in class. I am so excited the peer leaders were so open to the idea! The feedback has been amazing. We are so grateful to IASK for funding the program. This could not have happened without their support.”

The Meditation Lab Club also made a debut at the club fair on September 4th 2019 with club leaders Bronwyn Owen, Fiona Goldman, and Sadie Carelli. The club was created to incorporate more opportunities of mindfulness within the school community.

Ms. Monness said, “I felt like the student body as a whole needed more opportunities to meditate within the school day. That’s where the idea of the Meditation Lab club originated. Rather than waiting for the next time I was teaching in gym, students would get an opportunity to experiment with the practice in a familiar setting twice a month. It’s hard to get started on your own, but if you know that all your peers are there too, you are more likely to find the time to make it happen.”

The club turned out to be a huge success as there were 86 people who signed up.

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