

Goat Yoga with the Grafton-Midview Public Library

By Kari Mariner, Youth Services Librarian, Grafton-Midview Public Library, OH

There was a moment during goat yoga when the instructor, Alyssa Welch, asked everyone to pause in gratitude for the gorgeous weather and the baby goats. Considering that the sun was just starting to set, a goat had nestled his way into a teen's arms, and goat yoga was the first in-person program to be offered by the Grafton-Midview Public Library since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it was a perfect moment.



What exactly is goat yoga? The idea is pretty simple: A yoga instructor leads a class of humans while adorable baby goats nibble on clothing and hair, nuzzle faces, and climb on participants during downward dog and other opportune poses. The idea originated with entrepreneur Lainey Morse in 2016 after she was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease. You don't have to be a seasoned yogi to participate. It's not just for adults. There will probably be goat poop at some point, but participants will be more entertained by it than you could imagine. Goat yoga is about the experience: combining animals, nature, and yoga to lift the spirits.

The Grafton-Midview Public Library's goat yoga program took place on Friday, June 4, 2021 at the Old Grafton School in Grafton, Ohio. The property, an elementary school dating back to the 1930s, is currently transforming into a space for artist studios and community theater. Goat yogis had the chance to donate to the school's new community garden during the program. Welch from Grounded Yoga and Wellness in Grafton led a group of twenty adults and teens through an hour of simple yoga poses. She particularly focused on breathing and balancing the solar plexus chakra.



Gaga for Goats, located in Cuyahoga Falls, brought 9 baby Nigerian Dwarf goats ranging in ages from 7 to 9 weeks to roam amongst the participants; goat yoga was the first outing for most of the babies. The program filled within days of registration opening, including the wait list, and the comments during the program were overwhelmingly positive.

If you're interested in offering a new twist on yoga, you aren't just limited to goats. Cat yoga and pig yoga are two popular alternatives. Consider changing the location of your yoga class from the library to a nearby park or other outdoor community space. Be creative and have fun imagining all the ways you can raise mental and physical health in your community.