

The SENTINEL

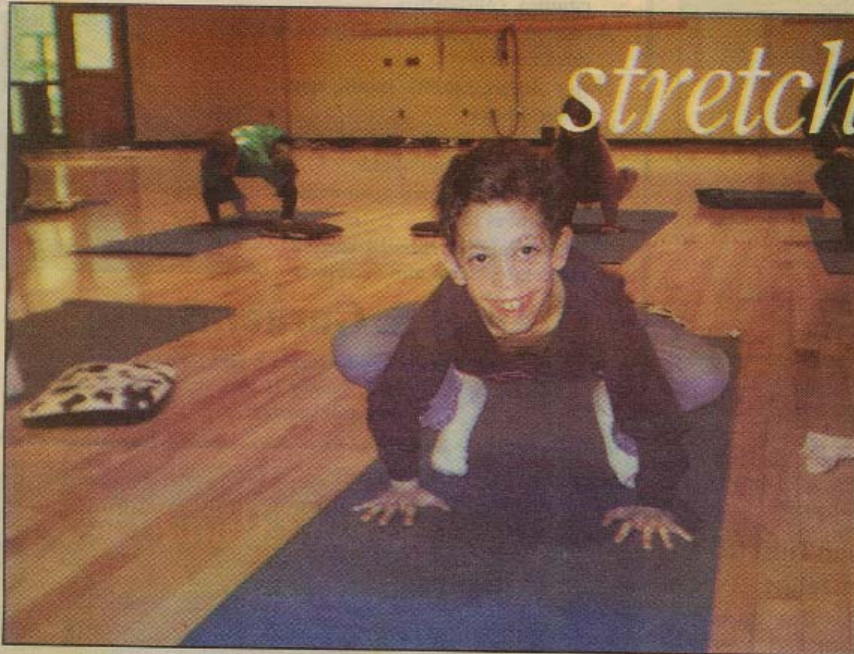
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Breathing,

stretching,

posing



Staff photos/Chris Reagle

Balancing act — Above, James Francis, 8; a third-grader at Sippican school, is content after executing The Crow, which requires balancing ones entire body weight on ones hands. Right, Becky Koerner, 9, a third-grader at Sippican school, strikes a pose during weekly yoga classes at the school.

The Zen of kids doing yoga

By Chris Reagle
MPG Newspapers

MARION — The hazy hue of dimmed light spreads across the shiny wood floor of the Sippican School auditorium, creating a feeling of tranquility and reverence. Only the hum of the school's ventilation system disturbs the quiet.

The momentary silence is savored by a visitor to the school who believes that within minutes 18 third-graders will burst through the doors, abuzz with conversation, disturbing the auditorium's transformation into a peaceful inner sanctum.

Instead, Diane Cook's third-grade class enters silently. Pupils take blue mats and as-

sume their places in two rows. With little talk, the students and their teacher sit, backs straight, legs crossed, trying to clear their minds, meditate and prepare to do yoga.

In a clear, calm voice, yoga instructor Tim Donohue centers the children on their breathing, reminding them to breath down from their bellies and challenging them to test their own bodies.

"See if you can breathe so that your chest doesn't even move," Donohue coaxes. Most follow his cue with varying degrees of success.

The young yoga students then stretch using a series of poses that sound more like a B-grade action movie than exercises. There on the floor of the school auditorium, Peace-

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