

Health & Fitness

SHAPE UP, EMPORIA!

'YOGA MAMA'

You are as young as your spine is supple

By PATTY JO THOMPSON
Special to The Gazette

Four years ago, I was asked to teach yoga in the afterschool Quest Program at Logan Avenue School. The next year, I was invited to share yoga at Timmerman and Walnut schools in their Quest Programs.

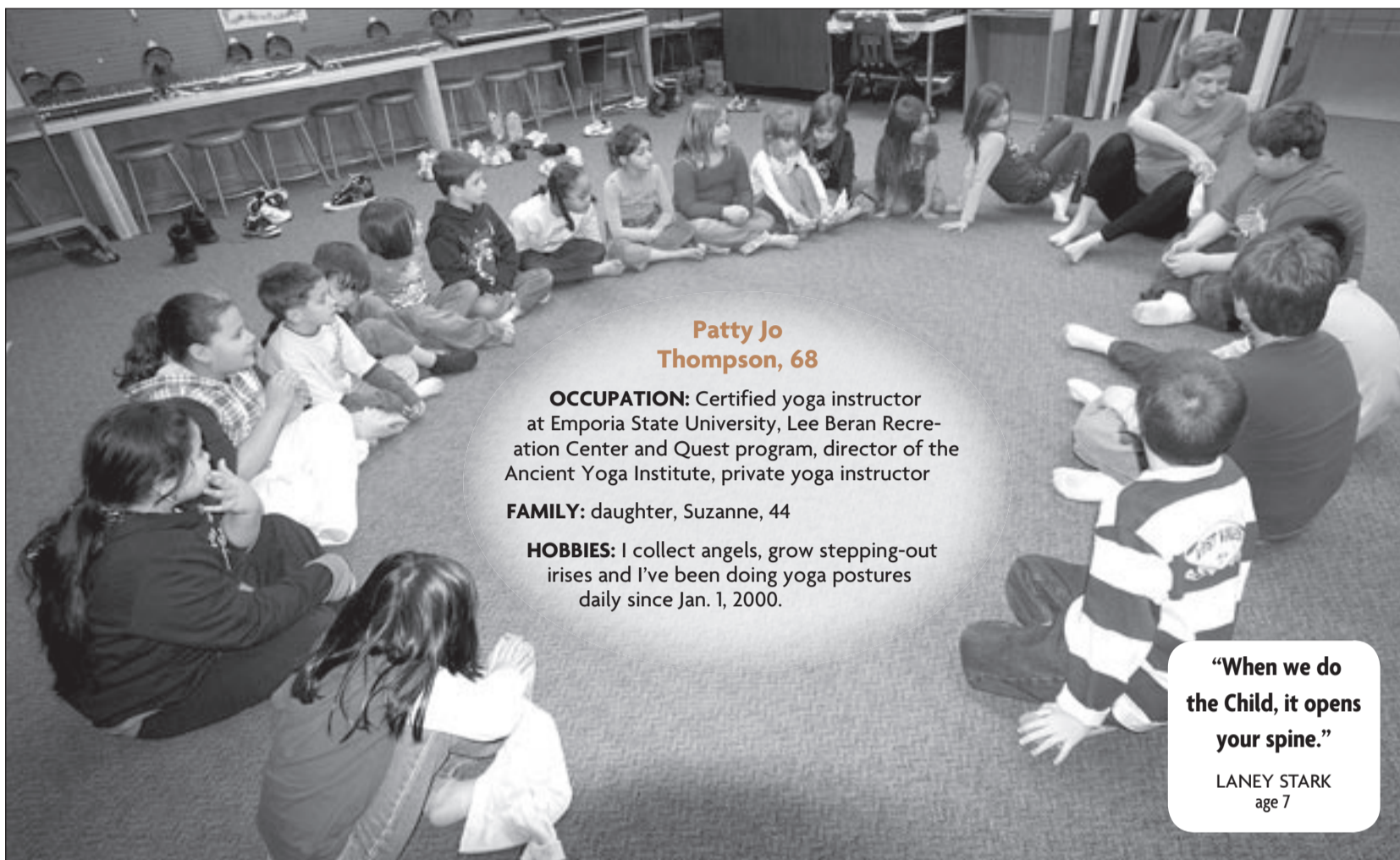
I love to share and teach yoga with this age group of 6 to 10 years old so they will learn to have a supple spine before their spine gets stiff at the age of 12. It also helps them be flexible, coordinated and strong, using all 650 muscles in their body. This is my gift to share with them.

The students call me "Yoga Mama." They are awesome and a joy to be with for an hour of every week. I am having the joy of sharing with them what I wish someone would have shared with me before I was 12.

When they continue to do yoga moves for their whole lifetime they will be able to remain supple their whole life. By age 9, I notice some of their spines starting to get stiff. They can do some postures that I can't do, and I can do some that they can't do.

We do the 5,000-year-old yoga stretches that mimic animals, trees and flowers. We even enjoy making the animal sounds with the postures. For instance, we howl and bark like a dog, meow like a cat, hiss like a cobra, roar like a lion and cluck like a chicken. We are quiet turtles and a dead bug, and we blow wind in the palm trees.

We sing rock-a-bye baby and the spider song as we do these postures.



Patty Jo Thompson, 68

OCCUPATION: Certified yoga instructor at Emporia State University, Lee Beran Recreation Center and Quest program, director of the Ancient Yoga Institute, private yoga instructor

FAMILY: daughter, Suzanne, 44

HOBBIES: I collect angels, grow stepping-out irises and I've been doing yoga postures daily since Jan. 1, 2000.

"When we do the Child, it opens your spine."

LANEY STARK
age 7

Students at the Quest Program gather around teacher Patty Jo Thompson.



Keanna Douglas



Left, Cheyenne Ewing, Angie Corral, Rylie Gardner and Thompson. Above, Rylie Gardner, Thompson and Sydney Baldwin. Right, Gabe Trujillo. Below, Zoe Dyer, Cheyenne Ewing, Angie Corral.

"It keeps bones healthy"

GABE TRUJILLO
age 7



Rylie Gardner, Thompson, Sydney Baldwin and Trenton Gardner.



Trenton Gardner

"It makes you healthy and you actually get some time to relax and get some exercise."

DANIEL DAVIS
age 9

"It helps you better to exercise."

TANIA SANDOVAL
age 6

"It brings peace."

TRENTON GARDNER
age 9

