

Salute the Sun for a Good Cause

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The 6th annual Saluting the Spirit event will bring together Boston's best yoga instructors and raise money for Pathways to Wellness' AIDS care project and yogaHOPE's programs for underserved women. Participants at the event, which will be held on Sunday, Nov. 16 at the Mind Body Studio at the Sports Club/LA, will partake in nine sets of 12 sun salutes - a series of yoga poses - led by different instructors.

"It's something you have to witness to describe," said Kristen Porter, the executive director of Pathways to Wellness. "There are many movements involved, doing 108 of them is a good stretch for people. It will take a solid four hours."

This year the event is structured differently to battle the fatigue participants may feel from four hours of yoga, said Bob Hornstein, one of the coordinators of the event.

"The instructors are working together for a better flow," Hornstein said. "By the end of the day, people are exhausted."

The instructors were handpicked by a committee because they were well-known and would promote the event. Many instructors have participated before, such as Taylor Wells from Prana Power Yoga.

Hornstein said they are also expanding their wellness room after the event, offering free shiatsu, acupuncture and foot massages. There will also be a yoga market, selling mats and other accessories, with 25 percent of the profits going to the charities.

Last year the event raised \$36,000 with 70 registered participants. This year, Hornstein said they are expecting 100 participants who would raise about \$50,000. Porter said Saluting the Spirits is the major signature event for both organizations.

"Each year it's grown quite a bit," Hornstein said. "This year we have a more aggressive goal, but we're pretty far ahead than we were last year being six weeks out."

Participants are asked to raise a minimum of \$500 and there are incentives for raising more. The top fundraiser will receive a two-night stay at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, plus all the other prizes such as a goodie bag and

Life is Good yoga mat. People are encouraged to fundraise even if they cannot make it to the event. Hornstein called these people "virtual participants."

Porter, who will be participating in the yoga during the event, said yoga is an exercise in meditative technique.

"Every individual who does the practice of yoga experiences different benefits," Porter said. "Some do it for health reasons, or peace of mind and for some it's a spiritual practice."

Porter said she thinks the benefit from participating in this event will be inspiration. "People will walk out really inspired by what they're doing for these two agencies," she said.

-- Aviva Gat