

Nia offers health through the joy of music and movement

Gerard Croces

signal-star staff

Using motion as a means of expression and exercise, Nia instructor Ruth Percy is hoping to offer the same life-changing experiences she's had to young and old alike at the Goderich YMCA.

Nia is a way of movement to music that allows participants to work out their body and mind through the expression of dance and movement set to music.

"It is the joy of movement," she said. "Through movement, we find health."

Percy said there are three foci to Nia: dance, healing and martial arts, which are combined with music to create not only a workout for participants, but performance routines as well.

There are no strict guidelines to Nia, though Percy said there are 52 basic positions which provide the basis of the workout. The important thing for participants is enjoying the sensation. If it doesn't feel good, she said, don't do it.

"If you find a movement hurting you," she added. "Tweak it so it feels good."

Percy said since she began doing Nia five years ago, she has lost weight, become more fit, feels younger and has met many interesting people. She said she hopes to help others do the same with her classes at the YMCA.

On September 14, Percy will be holding a free Nia class for youth 10-14 years old. She said the free-form movement is much more appealing to kids who "wouldn't normally sign up for dance."

She said there are many positives young people can take from Nia.

"It gets them to appreciate their bodies," she said. "They are all special and all different."

Sandy Connell, one of Percy's pupils, said Nia allows her "the freedom to bring out your inner child."

"There's something about it that is very energizing."

Any kids looking to try Nia out can drop by the YMCA Monday, Sept. 14 at 7 p.m.