

NEW JERSEY LIFE

BEAUTY // Profile

WHETHER THROUGH DANCING OR DOING DOWNWARD DOG, ELISABETH HALFPAPP FINDS A WAY TO HELP THOSE IN NEED.

by Margie Goldsmith



Halfpapp encourages a mind-body connection through her wellness studio, Exhale.



Elisabeth Halfpapp

When Elisabeth Halfpapp was growing up in Hamilton and Lawrenceville, her parents taught her to always be kind to those less fortunate. So it was a natural progression for the former ballet dancer to use her talents as a way to develop her philanthropic conscience.

In 1980, Halfpapp and her husband, Fred, helped develop a barre and exercise program called the Lotte Berke Method. For more than 20 years, Halfpapp continued her work with Lotte Berke until 2002 when she, her husband, and two co-founders created Exhale, a wellness studio that now has 14 locations nationwide. Exhale moved away from the traditional spa by blending therapeutic treatments with mind-body activities such as yoga. Halfpapp and her husband volunteered to teach Core Fusion, one of the classes she co-developed, to parents at the Ronald McDonald House, a facility for ill and injured children and their families. "I knew movement could help people change their bodies and minds and feel good about themselves," she says.

The studio soon gained a celebrity following, frequented by the likes of Charlize Theron, Cameron Diaz, Kate Hudson, Ivanka Trump, and Mariska Hargitay. In 2004, Hargitay started the Joyful Heart Foundation to help survivors of sexual assault reclaim their lives. After learning about the foundation, Halfpapp was shocked by how many women had been abused or sexually assaulted and began teaching gratis classes to survivors twice a month. "Working with these women amazed me. You could see the terrible trauma that they'd been through, and they were still smiling," she says. "By the end of the class, there was a very positive energy. In spite of everything, we still have joy in our hearts." *

Core Fusion DVD workouts taught by Halfpapp are available at exhalespa.com.