

Kanta's free yoga help earns award

Trainer, 64, teaches the elderly

By ANDREW MCGILL

A WOMAN who travelled to India to learn how to teach yoga has been rewarded for her work with older people.

Kanta Kotecha, from Bishop's Cleeve, offers free weekly sessions for people aged up to 85.

The 64-year-old travels the country teaching the discipline, donating the petrol money she is paid by institutions to charity.

To mark her efforts, she was awarded the sport category of Village and Community Agents' 'Celebrating the Achievements of Older People' awards which recognises the contribution of Gloucestershire's over 50s.

Kanta said: "Yoga is beneficial for people in so many ways — it can help any health problem you could imagine.

"I was surprised and delighted to be nominated for the award. It came out of the blue.

"I think because I am helping people for free from every race, religion, age and gender is why I was put forward."

Along with her husband Shantilal, 67, Mrs Kotecha ran Hewlett Road post office from

1971 until it closed in the summer. The outlet is still a shop.

She took up yoga two years ago in a bid to overcome health problems and avoid medication.

Mrs Kotecha says that an hour of yoga every day will change peoples' lives for the better.

She said: "Two years' ago I was suffering from health problems and was struggling to walk so I turned to yoga and it changed my life.

"Breathing exercises are at the heart of it all and it is something everyone can do, with a little practice and dedication."

Mrs Kotecha travelled to India to learn yoga from a master practitioner — and brought the discipline back to Gloucestershire.

She has offered free advice sessions for hundreds of people in Cheltenham over the past two years.

Rob Rees, non-executive director of Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, said: "Kanta is an inspiration to every resident of this county, old and young.

"Without such determination, innovation, passion and commitment, our society would be so much poorer."

Anyone wanting to take up free yoga sessions can attend Cheltenham Hindu Community Centre from 5.30pm to 7.30pm, on Thursdays from next week.

People attending the session should avoid food for at least five hours beforehand because of the complex breathing exercises.

“ I am helping people for free from every race, religion, age and gender. ”

Kanta Kotecha



Picture: James Douglas 830904

AWARDED: Kanta Kotecha is valued for teaching yoga to elderly people

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