

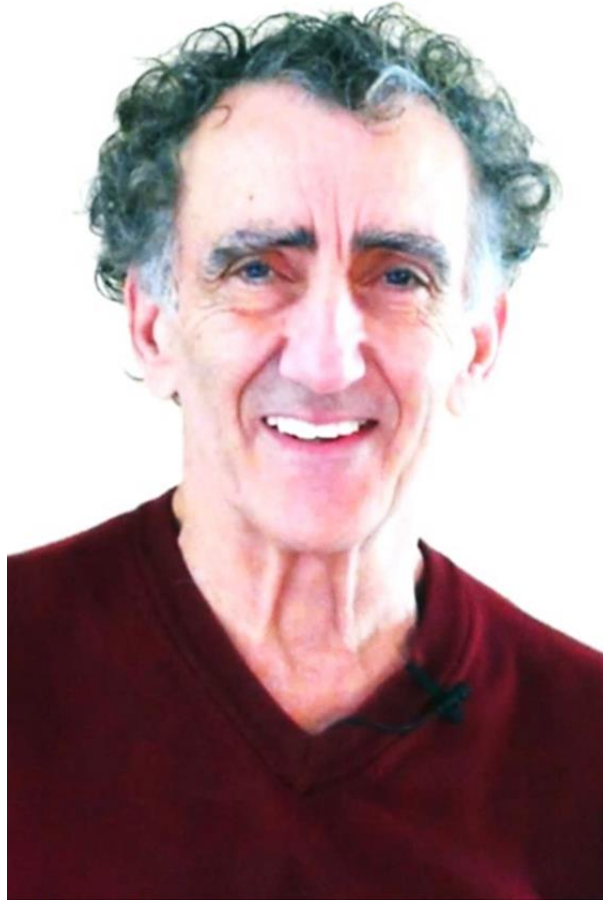
Health Educator Teaches King Philip Students to Move, Breathe, Smile

Health educator Michael Dauria visited King Philip Middle School to teach students skills they need to relieve stress.

By MICHAEL WALSH HARTFORD COURANT FEB 04, 2019 | 10:40 AM | WEST HARTFORD (EDITED EXTRACT)

Health educator Michael Dauria visited King Philip Middle School, on Jan. 29, to teach students the skills they need to alleviate stress and remind the entire eighth grade to “move, breathe, and smile.”

Dauria, who founded Farmington-based Health Education Services, LLC, has decades of experience, and uses that to work thousands of years of traditional methods into delightful ProactiveHealth® skills sessions



Michael Dauria Teaching ProactiveHealth® Skills Program

“I have challenged myself to teach you in 30 minutes what has been passed down over thousands of years,” Dauria said at the beginning of one of his several sessions that day. “I want to give you the best and most effective active ingredients so you don’t have to spend 2,000 hours studying or getting certified.” Dauria’s visit was made possible through a grant from the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools. Science teacher Robert Felekey wanted Dauria to provide students with tools that might help them alleviate stress at middle school, in high school, and beyond.

The sessions were held in the school’s own hearts and minds classroom, a dedicated space to this kind of practice. “We are very much focused on social and emotional learning here,” Felekey said. “Students come to us from all sorts of backgrounds. Many of them have trauma. When your brain is focused on the emotion of rushing to school or whatever it is, you no longer have the capacity to learn, at least temporarily.”

Dauria has worked with people between the ages of nine and 94, using all kinds of different techniques. At King Philip, he was focusing on Move.Breathe.Smile® as skills for stress relief and proactive health. First came movement. He had the students engage in slow turning movements and floating arm moves. “It’s the first thing you can learn to help you develop the skills and tools to change the pattern of your autonomic nervous system,” Dauria said. “It starts with slow turning and flowing wave-like movements.” He followed that with a belly breathing exercise, but first explained why it was the most important skill. “When we were born we all breathed with our bellies,” Dauria said. “Why? That is the natural way to breathe most effectively. Now, when we grow up... we are huffing and puffing... the reason is that is what our culture regards as appropriate. We have to relearn the same breathing we did when we started life”



Michael Dauria Teaching - Move-Breathe-Smile®

Dauria follows that up with the smile, but it doesn’t necessarily have to be that. It can be a smirk or a sneer. “The smile part is awareness,” Dauria said. “Awareness is important for a lot of reasons. We want to be aware of the stress sensations going on in our body and to develop our skills for situational awareness” Dauria told the students this is an exercise they can quickly utilize to alleviate stress that might be caused by an upcoming exam, or some other situation they are facing in in their personal or professional life. “With slow movement and deep belly breathing, you slow down the resting heart rate,” Dauria said. “Your heart will last longer. It heightens your awareness. It helps your ears hear better and your eyes see better.” Dauria left with advice of “move slowly, breathe with your belly, and start contemplating your inner smile.” ‘Movement-based embodied contemplation is proving to be more effective than stillness-based meditation’. “What I am really doing is teaching movement, breath and awareness, active ingredients of thousands of years of mind-body practices. I am presenting the key elements of Yoga, Tai Chi, and Qigong as delightful proactive health skills that can be experienced, enjoyed and learned in as little as 30 minutes,” Dauria said.