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## Beating stress away

By Cathy Kightlinger

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Ed Gaus believes in the power of music -- specifically drumming's knack for community building and stress reduction.

So much so, that he hosts free community drum circles every Thursday evening at his music school -- Bongo Boy -- located east of Castleton Square Mall at 8481 Bash St.

"It's really to help people release stress from everyday work and personal lives," said Gaus, 39, a percussionist who lives in the Geist area and has toured with folk music singer and songwriter John Prine.

"It's wild to see people come in. They are kind of nervous. . . . They don't know what a drum circle is about. By the time it's done, they are laughing."

No need for experience. Or a drum. Gaus' school provides the instruments. Anyone who wants a lesson can get one for \$5 from 6:15 to 7 p.m. each Thursday before the drum circle pre-jam begins about 7:15 p.m. Sixty to 70 people attend weekly, Gaus said.

Ten-year-old Maggie Williams is a regular, along with her parents. "It's just really nice to forget about everything that's going on, and just be able to concentrate on the music for a while," said Maggie, who lives near Gaus. She also takes lessons. "It's surprising because somehow banging on drums for an hour makes you feel relaxed afterwards."

**Call Star reporter Cathy Kightlinger at (317) 444-5534.**

The Northside school hosts a free hour long drum circle at 7:30 p.m. every Thursday. A pre-jam session begins at 7:15 p.m.