

## How to free up stressed brains

**As a guest in Tyrol, a US-American gives pupils new strength. Her methods are not completely new - but somehow they are.**

Some scenes are reminiscent of yoga, there is brief dancing, then relaxing breathing is practiced again - and in quiet moments you could call it meditation. The program is called "OmmWorks" and Kathi Donnelly has already inspired 30,000 students in her home country.

"It creates an ability to recognize and reduce stress," explains the 58-year-old at the new secondary school in Brixlegg, where class 1B is immediately carried away by the guest from the other side of the Atlantic. "What causes you stress?" Kathi asks at the beginning. And the pupils refer to exams, strict moms and soccer defeats.

Nowadays, young minds are confronted with an unprecedented flood of images and information - keyword smartphone. "Children's brains get used to the clips lasting seconds, which makes it all the more difficult for them to pay attention for longer in class," says teacher Sarah from her own experience.

Kathi is working against this with "OmmWorks" and wants to promote children's social and emotional intelligence. "Be authentic, but stay as you are, become the best version of yourself," she calls out to the circle. One pupil beams afterwards: "This is more than gym class . . ." Something that the pupils at BORG Volders were also able to experience a day later.

### **Tyrolean entrepreneur brought Kathi to Tyrol**

The fact that Kathi Donnelly found her way to Tyrol from the US state of California is down to Brixlegg entrepreneur Beate Rissbacher. "I teach meditation myself and came into contact with Kathi during an online course. A joint seminar in Hawaii formed the basis of our friendship and Beate has had one goal ever since: "This training program, which can positively change children's lives, should be brought into Tyrolean schools." It has been running in Brixlegg for two years now.

Kathi has been successful with her mission in the USA. "It's about convincing teachers to learn our program relatively and pass it on to pupils aged 6 to 14." Will her ideas soon take root in Tyrol?