



USHA YOGA FOUNDATION

BRINGING THE BENEFITS OF YOGA TO LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

May 2007

Dear Friends,

Namaste. I am happy to share an update on the Usha Yoga Foundation. We enjoy bringing the empowering and liberating practice of yoga to those who have little or no access to it. Thank you for your time and support!

Scholarship Recipients:

Kennedy Owino and James Njunge of Nairobi are attending a teacher training and will teach yoga to street children in the slums of Nairobi and in homes catering to HIV positive youth.

The Little Stars School, an alternative school for working, street children in Varanasi, India, has built a space for yoga as part of its school and offers yoga classes regularly.

Yoga classes are being offered at The Rainbow House, an orphanage for girls in Goa, India.

Kelly Nguyen teaches yoga in a shelter for Asian women in Los Angeles, California.

Elana Omari teaches yoga to at-risk youth in inner city Baltimore, Maryland.

Ellie Kaufman is attending a teacher training and will teach young women with eating disorders through the Eudaimonia Professional Theatre in Chicago, Illinois.

Marie-Claire Jenkins teaches yoga to people overcoming bipolar and emotional disorders in a hospital in Norwich, England.

A meditation/yoga workshop will take place in the village, Khaknar in North India, to provide tribal women with a safe platform for expression.

Vishal Shroff is attending a two-year teacher training course in Indore, India, and will be the resident yoga instructor in the village, Khaknar.

Ketut Bandiastra offers yoga to a staff of 600 Balinese employees at a jewelry-making factory in Bali, Indonesia.

Danny Paradise, with musician friends worldwide, has helped organize benefit concerts in London (Triyoga), Zurich and Munich (AirYoga), Massachusetts (Kripalu), India (Temple of Humanity), Bali (Purnati Center of the Arts, in conjunction with Bali Spirit) and Chicago (Yoga

View). Kim Abraham, Beryl Bender Birch, and Leza Lowitz have also held benefits for Usha in the U.S and Japan.

Thank you, yogis, musicians and friends involved in these events! You are the reason we exist. Thank you to everyone for your time and donations. We are deeply touched by your support.

We have a lot more work to do. There are people worldwide whose minds and bodies limit them from realizing their Spirit's infinite potential. There is also an abundance in the world, and an unbounded source of energy inside each of us, eager to give and manifest any dream, and ready to be awakened.

In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, it is clearly written, 'We do yoga for the evolution of humanity.' Thank you again for your support.

Namaste,
Reema

Usha Yoga Foundation is a registered tax-exempt 501-c3 organization. We support yogis to bring the practice to remote areas around the world and to venues in their community such as inner city schools, battered woman's shelters, nursing homes and clinics for those overcoming eating disorders or drug addictions.



Left to Right : Boy in Khaknar Village, India, ; Girl in Orphange in Goa, Young girl in Capetown.

www.ushayoga.org "Empower Yourself, Empower Others" info@ushayoga.org
Donations may be made on www.ushayoga.org or sent to Usha Yoga Foundation 9727 Pembroke Dr.
Hagerstown, MD 21740 USA. Thank you.

Scholarship Recipients Share Their Stories

Kennedy Owino, Nairobi, Kenya; Street Children, HIV homes

I would like to offer my experience to street children centers in the slums of Nairobi where I grew up, and in homes catering to the aged and to H.I.V positive children. With so many negative images out there for children to identify with, sharing a holistic message of peace would offer a meaningful path that will help build the children's self esteem.

I would also like to help the street children access yoga training from me (as their teacher) which at the moment is reserved for the affluent here in Kenya. I see myself using the skills as a bedrock of community development.

Anonymous, Los Angeles, California, USA; Woman's Shelter

Almost twenty years ago, my family and I escaped Vietnam on a boat built to ship rice that instead carried one hundred and eighty refugees out of present day Ho Chi Minh City. For two years, we lived in the refugee camps of Malaysia and the Philippines with very little food and medical care.

For many, myself included, a transition into a life free of violence does not happen overnight, but I am living proof that with time and effort it is possible. For me, it happened when I discovered yoga, not only as an outlet, but a way of believing and living.

I now help underserved and economically disadvantaged women achieve self-sufficiency and inner peace. With each day I realize their need for assistance beyond economics. It is a battle of mental and physical strength. It is also a battle that can be won through unity of body and mind.

Through physical expression and self-realization I instill in others the belief that life's seemingly unavoidable sufferings can be, at the least, controlled through yoga. My yoga classes at the Asian Pacific Women's Center offer survivors of violence a means of nurturing their bodies and minds. For those faced with the challenge of building a new life from the pains of violence it is important to have such an outlet.

Elana Omari, Baltimore, Maryland, USA; Inner-city School, Juvenile Detention Center

Exposing at-risk youth to yoga creates a world of difference and will possibly save many lives. I pray that my classes in juvenile detention centers, shelters and inner city schools will help to decrease the number of violent acts amongst teenagers that occur too often in Baltimore City.

The teenagers in this region do not have much to look forward to. Their high schools and elementary schools are being shut down. The majority of youth get into mischief due to the lack of neighbor recreations centers, no nearby parks or even playgrounds. A Youth Yoga Group reaches, teaches and inspires students to enjoy the beauty, power and potential of their minds, bodies and spirits.

Being a teenager is, for the most part, challenging. Through yoga, you become more aware of your true nature and purpose. As opposed to what someone taught you, you discover who you are on a deep level. Yoga allows you to view the world with a clearer and a more precise vision.

Once you learn and practice yoga, before you know it, you have participated in a self-healing process. This powerful healing puts you in a place to create something meaningful in your life.

Marie-Claire Jenkins, Norwich, England; Hospital

Three years ago I was diagnosed Bipolar II (manic depression). Medication made me very sick and gain weight. When I came across a yoga, I went through a purging process emotionally and physically. One year later, my psychiatrist could not believe the progress I had made. I was described as calm, confident, self-sufficient, and strong mentally. I no longer needed doctors and was sent off to live my life.

Yoga gave me my life back first, and then gave me more. One of those things was to run the Yoga Space group sponsored by the Usha foundation. Here I can extend a steady hand to those who step up, and enable them to experience the healing effects of yoga. They see that so much more is available to them in their lives. I take immense pleasure in supporting others who experience depression, anxiety, stress and other emotional issues and I feel grateful for this gift.

Ellie Kaufman, Chicago, Illinois, Eating Disorders through Theatre Company

I remember the exact moment I began to believe I was fat. Fourth grade, ten years old. Where did this come from? No one had ever called me fat because I wasn't. *And yet* an obsession began which lasted over a decade until I found yoga..

I do not know any woman who has not dealt with body image issues in her past. Not one. I want to teach yoga to counter a society that convinces young people that they are the sum of their external parts. I want to live in a world where girls do not start dieting at the age of ten and where the energy of young people is not spent obsessing over numbers, but rather on figuring out what they love to do, and finding ways of changing the world for the better by doing it.

A year ago I couldn't do kapotasana. Two years ago I couldn't do chaturanga. And more importantly, five years ago, I could never have looked in the mirror with a quiet mind, without criticizing what I saw. Through nothing but my own dedication and determination, I have done these things that I once thought impossible. This is something I will learn how to teach.

I will work with Eudaimonia Professional Theatre to begin community-based yoga programs in different neighborhoods in Chicago, open to female at-risk youth. Eventually, I will have a database of service-minded yoga teachers who will rotate teaching these programs so that we keep them going year-round.

Usha Yoga supports projects around the world. www.ushayoga.org