

For a second year in a row, Niroga was invited to do yoga with inmates at San Quentin, as part of their annual health fair. We spent the entire day with the inmates - teaching yoga, breathwork, and meditation, sharing food, chanting OM and sending thoughts of peace out into the universe. Perhaps some day, San Quentin graduates will work with us, mentoring incarcerated youth in Juvenile Hall, in an attempt to smash the link between juvenile delinquency and adult criminality.

## Event Calendar

**Workshops and Clinics** on common chronic conditions ([www.niroga.org/events.html](http://www.niroga.org/events.html))

- Workshops on the first Thursday of each month
- 3-week clinics on the next three Thursdays of each month

**Healing Yoga for Cancer;** Workshop by Bidyut Bose, at International Yoga Therapy Conference, at San Rafael in California, 3.45pm-6.15pm, Sunday May 20

**Yoga Corps™ Training;** August 4 & 5, hosted at Satori Yoga, San Francisco

**Niroga Silent Auction;** Sunday, September 23, at Kensington Community Center; stay tuned for more information

**Niroga Yoga Teacher Training;** Niroga's next Teacher Training for becoming a Certified Yoga Teacher begins on September 22, 2007. We will meet on alternate Saturdays from 9am to 1pm in a small-group setting for about nine months, for a comprehensive study of the practice and philosophy of Raja Yoga. Please check the event schedule on our website for details.

**YES!** I want to help Niroga provide integral development programs to under-served communities.

Enclosed is my gift:

- I pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ monthly for 12 months
- \$ 50 Improves the health and well-being of 15 at-risk youth
- \$ 100 Gives 30 at-risk youth increased self-esteem and self-awareness
- \$ 250 Helps Niroga forge new partnerships for community outreach
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (use your imagination!)

*Every dollar donated will go to support programs.*

# Educational Offerings

**Healing Yoga DVD** – 20 minutes a day for health and well-being; \$15

**Raja Yoga DVD** – A Guide for Personal Practice; \$40

**Raja Yoga 4-CD set** – The Science of Meditation; \$30

You may order these products directly from [www.niroga.org/store.html](http://www.niroga.org/store.html), call Niroga at 510.336.7060, or from Amazon.com.

## We Need Your Help!

Niroga programs impact public health, mental health, education, youth development, community development, community crime and violence, and social justice. We depend on your contributions to sustain and develop our community outreach programs, as well as continue our efforts in education and research. To learn more about our activities, please visit our website at [www.niroga.org](http://www.niroga.org), and see an 8-minute video of some of our programs at <http://www.niroga.org/media.html>. Let us know if you would like to attend one of our community outreach classes, and if and how you would like to get involved. Feel free to pass this along and to let anyone know who may be interested.

If you have benefited from Yoga, perhaps you will help us reach out to help others, to bring hope to the lives of people confronting life-threatening illnesses or children who are abused, neglected, delinquent, or incarcerated. Just as a little raindrop can send ripples across a lake, perhaps a drop of your love and compassion will radiate out to your family and friends, reaching out in ever-widening circles. Please join our garland of donors; however small your gift, it will be significant for us to know that we are in this together, thankful for the privilege and opportunity to serve. Your offering, and perhaps your employer's matching contribution, is just a click away!

Donation Method:  VISA  MC  CHECK

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CARDHOLDER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name:  List in registry  Remain anonymous

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# NIROGA™ NEWS

## A newsletter for integral health and development

Niroga™ Institute is a non-profit Center for Integral Health dedicated to providing affordable, high quality Yoga instruction and Yoga therapy to hundreds of at-risk and under-served individuals and families. Niroga's supporters are making a world of difference by funding programs that improve, enhance, and enrich our communities.

## Director's Corner

As part of a recent day-long workshop on Healthy Lifestyle Choices at Summit Hospital's Breast Health Center, I was asked to present a talk on the effects of Healing Yoga on Breast Cancer. The room was filled with breast cancer survivors, and the meeting was hosted by Medical Director Dr. Lisa Bailey, a renowned surgical oncologist.

In my presentation, I touched upon the scope of the problem – every 3 minutes a woman in the US is diagnosed with breast cancer, 250,000 new cases are expected this year, and incidence rates are at 1-in-7 women today. Risk factors were outlined, including heredity, lifestyle factors, and age. Evidence of the effects of exercise on cancer were presented, where numerous studies have shown that being physically active prevents cancer, and it improves the outlook for those who already have cancer. Benefits have been found to affect a variety of tumors, including breast, colon, prostate, and lung. We went over some of the theories of why exercise helps, including the stimulation of lymph flow, and strengthening of the endocrine and immune systems.

The latest scientific evidence more specifically on the effects of Yoga on breast cancer was presented next, with studies documenting measurably enhanced physical and social functioning, improved mood and energy, and reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. In closing, I had the group do some hands-on Healing Yoga, after which Dr. Bailey came up to me and said, "This is absolutely amazing! I felt what it did for me, and I could see what it did for everyone in the room. We need this program here, not only for our patients, but for our staff as well." Over lunch, we agreed that there is a need for studying this more, if it is to make a lasting and substantial impact, and proceeded to outline a research study to look at the effects of Healing Yoga on stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as endocrine and immune system function.



Photo by Ching-Wei Jiang and Evan Snow

*"In the midst of a life-threatening illness, Yoga turned my life around!"* says Sue Steel, participant in Healing Yoga class for cancer survivors.

*Fifteen million Americans are practicing Yoga, reaping its healing benefits. Yet, millions more need Yoga, but cannot afford it. If you, or anyone you know, has benefited from Yoga, please help us reach out to others!*

## Serving Cancer Survivors

Niroga recently completed an evaluation of our Healing Yoga program for cancer survivors at Alta Bates Comprehensive Cancer Center. For several years now, cancer patients and their families and friends have been packing a small room in the hospital basement in Berkeley, to attend this weekly class. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with program quality, instruction, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction consistently extremely high.



Photo by Ching-Wei Jiang and Evan Snow

The feedback indicates that the benefits extend well beyond the physical, to the psychological and beyond. Says Deena, a participant, “This Yoga class is the one truly healing activity I’ve participated in since my cancer diagnosis eight years ago.” And Judy, another student, adds, “This Yoga class is one of the most healing experiences I’ve had after all the toxicity of treatment – surgery and chemotherapy. It is very important to me!”

One participant in a recent class was Rev. Nancy McKay, President of Healing Journeys, an organization that has been hosting large national conferences for cancer survivors for 13 years. At the end of the class, Nancy said, “This is the first time that I have ever experienced anything like this, where an invitation was made to my body to stretch, and my mind to open to the present, gently yet mindfully.” She took a glowing report back to Jan Adrian, Executive Director of Healing Journeys, and this led to our Healing Yoga session in their 2-day workshop for cancer survivors in Monterey in April, which received an extremely enthusiastic response from all participants.

## Research Collaboration

**Cancer Patients:** Summit Hospital’s Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center is interested in studying the effects of our Healing Yoga protocol on stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as endocrine and immune system function of pre-operative patients. These are patients who have just been diagnosed with cancer, and awaiting their first surgery, when stress levels, fear, and anxiety are maximal, when “it feels as

if you have been hit by a ten-ton truck!” according to one of our students at the Cancer Center.

**Incarcerated Youth:** Preliminary results of our work at Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center indicate a statistically significant decline in stress and increase in self-control of incarcerated youth. Noting these encouraging results, researchers from UC San Francisco Medical School and UC Berkeley School of Public Health are interested in conducting a thorough, academic, independent evaluation of our programs with youths in detention. They are proposing to evaluate stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as self-control and self-esteem, pre-intervention and post-intervention, in some of the most challenging youth in Alameda County.

Departments in neighboring counties are eagerly awaiting the results of an intervention of this nature and magnitude. Our comprehensive evaluation plan includes exit surveys, staff evaluations, and psychometric tools designed to assess changes in general health, stress (and anxiety and depression) and self-awareness (and self-control, self-esteem, and subjective happiness). Stay tuned!

## New Programs

### Oakland Unified School District

Edna Brewer and Cole Middle Schools

Provides health and leadership tools for dealing successfully with stress, increases focus and attention for enhanced academic potential, and creates positive role models in our schools and communities.

### Berkeley Unified School District

Malcolm X, Thousand Oaks, and Willard Schools

As part of the Berkeley LEARNS after-school program for at-risk youth, this program is designed to help young people build self-esteem and self-control to make healthier life choices. There is a strong focus on self-empowerment, to enable the realization of their full potential.

### Oakland Parks and Recreation

Campbell Village Recreation Center

Requested by West Oakland youth, this program provides anger-management and violence-prevention tools for dealing with the pervasive presence of daily trauma and constant threat of violence. This program provides a safe haven for at-risk youth, while helping them gain mental and physical resiliency, as well as self-awareness.

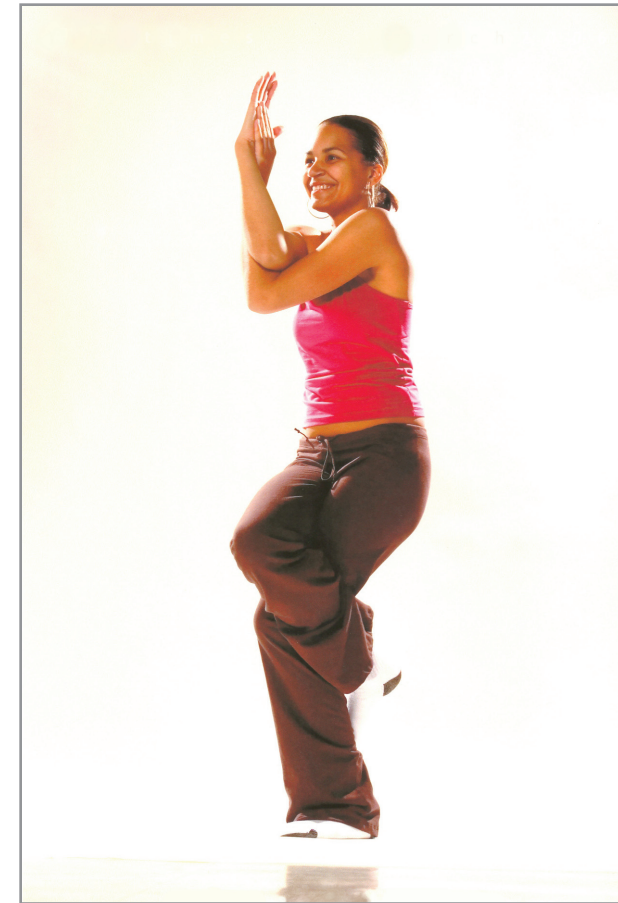
### West Contra Costa Unified School District

Verde Elementary and Helms Middle Schools

Niroga Yoga, breathwork, and meditation are being used as part of the training curriculum for campus ‘Peace Makers’ at Verde Elementary, where selected fourth, fifth, and sixth graders are given life skills in anger management and violence prevention. Teachers at neighboring Helms Middle School initiated a pilot program for their most troubled students to help with focus and attention skills to enhance academic potential and manage stress.

## Helping Incarcerated Youth

Our Yoga, Breathwork, and Meditation program at Alameda County Juvenile Hall has been received enthusiastically by youth, staff, and administration. One youth said, “I learned a lot from it – whenever I get mad, just start breathing; and I actually like Yoga!” Another youth best summarized the pervasive effect Yoga could have on our communities by saying, “Wow, if everyone did Yoga, there would not be so much violence in the world!”



Sierra, a student at Rock la Foleche Community School  
Photo by Jasper Johal

We know that a self-transformative practice requires regular and frequent contact, and so we had proposed that each youth attend our classes 5 days per week, given an average length of stay of just 19 days. A few weeks ago, Deputy Chief Fenton (Alameda County Probation Department) approached us and said that his Probation Officers in the field were reporting that youth were taking Yoga and Meditation outside of Juvenile Hall with them, practicing in their homes and group homes! Now they would like to discuss our proposal for Camp Sweeney, an unlocked facility with 80 youth, who are incarcerated for an average of 9 months. Probation has already committed up to \$40,000 to bring our Yoga and Meditation programs to incarcerated youth in Camp Sweeney, their families, and staff. Based on that commitment, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency has promised to match Probation’s contribution, in a beautiful example of inter-agency collaboration.

This provides \$80,000 out of a total program budget of \$226,000, which still leaves a budget shortfall of about \$150,000. Mike Howe, President Emeritus of East Bay Community Foundation and Founding Director of the National Center for Community Leadership at Stanford University, said “The breadth and depth of this proposal is such that \$150,000 seems to be a very modest request. This Yoga program could have wide-ranging impact on recidivism and community crime and violence, and could serve as a national model.”

## Niroga Yoga Alternate Knee-to-Chest Movement

Here is a foundational movement that will help articulate your knee joints and your hips, and stretch and strengthen your quadriceps and hamstrings. Additionally, with a variation in which you raise your head and shoulders, you begin to strengthen your abdominal core, helping protect and stabilize your lower back. Next, by turning your torso into your incoming knee, you add a spinal twist. This helps strengthen your spinal column, while enhancing spinal flexibility, as you apply torsion along your spine and allow more nutrition into your inter-vertebral discs.



Photos by Ching-Wei Jiang and Evan Snow

Lie down on your back, and flex your knees, keeping heels and knees a hip-width apart. Cradle the back of your head with your hands with fingers interlaced, keeping your arms relaxed and your elbows back. Begin a cycling movement while lying on your back, as you bring one knee into your chest while straightening the other leg, going back and forth while breathing normally. If you are comfortable with the movement, you can raise your head and shoulders off the mat, while still keeping your arms relaxed. Finally, you can turn your torso towards your incoming knee on each quick exhale. You can begin with 8 repetitions per side, slowly increasing that number with time as you gain strength and flexibility.