

Do yoga and help the community! Imagine taking yoga classes to develop and deepen your personal practice, while at the same time enabling others less fortunate to benefit from the practice – your practice!

Respected Bay Area yoga teachers are stepping forward to offer benefit workshops at the Niroga Center for Healing, with all proceeds going to support Niroga community outreach programs. Perhaps you, too, can help us in our Yoga for Niroga efforts. Ask your favorite yoga teacher to hold similar workshops wherever you are. Ask your yoga studio to write a paragraph on our work in their newsletter, telling all that it is eminently possible for your practice to not only help and heal you, but to actively help change and shape the world around you.

Please do your part in spreading the word. Imagine the power of 20 million Americans doing yoga and working together for social transformation, using our personal practice to transform ourselves and simultaneously transform the world around us!



Yoga for All

**YES! I want to help Niroga provide integral development programs to underserved communities**

Enclosed is my gift:

- I pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year for \_\_\_\_\_ years
- \$182 50 cents/day provides 20 low income cancer survivors Healing Yoga DVDs for home practice
- \$365 \$1.00/day enables one incarcerated youth to receive TLS once/week for one year
- \$1,095 \$3.00/day: allows one child one 15 minute TLS session in classroom daily for one academic year
- \$\_\_\_\_ Use your imagination!

Every dollar donated will go to support our mission, with a social return on investment (SROI) of over 500 fold!



As someone who has benefited from our yoga classes, you may feel especially inspired to express the blessings of the holiday season by participating in this program.

### Buy a Gift Card for a Friend

Make a difference in your friend's life. Lend a shoulder, give a hug, share a laugh and give a gift for a healthy life. By giving a card for classes at the new Niroga Center for Healing, you will give a gift that extends well beyond the holiday season, bringing both health and happiness.

### Buy a Gift Card to Sponsor Someone in Need

Make a difference in the life of someone less fortunate than you. As a holiday gift, donate in the name of your friend or loved one, a gift card to provide yoga classes to a cancer survivor, disabled person, senior, or at-risk youth. For example, if you buy a gift card for 8 yoga classes for a cancer survivor donated in the name of your daughter, your daughter will be recognized as a sponsor for those classes and will receive a personal note of thanks.

Buy a Class Card that works for you:  
\$ 30 for two / \$ 55 for four / \$100 for eight classes

To buy Gift Cards and Sponsored Gift Cards, please visit our website [www.niroga.org](http://www.niroga.org). You may call 510.451.3004 or email [info@niroga.org](mailto:info@niroga.org) to find out more.

Donation Method:  VISA  MASTERCARD  CHECK

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

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

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please contact me about paying with stock, or my company matching my gift

Niroga Institute | [www.niroga.org](http://www.niroga.org)  
111 Fairmount Avenue, Oakland, CA 94611  
PH 510.451.3004 FAX 510.451.3004 [info@niroga.org](mailto:info@niroga.org)



# 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 underserved individuals and families. Niroga's supporters are making a world of difference by funding programs that improve, enhance and enrich our communities.

## New Center for Healing



Niroga recently opened a beautiful, eco-friendly, spacious new center in downtown Berkeley, offering a full spectrum of yoga classes with an emphasis on Healing Yoga for special populations. Consultations with holistic health practitioners are available for many common chronic conditions. The space is also an urban TLS (Transformative Life Skills) training center for youth and young adults of color, school teachers, mental health staff and others. All classes are donation-based, and proceeds benefit Niroga's outreach programs in the community so that an indelible personal connection is made between those taking the classes at the center and those we serve in less fortunate communities.



Audience at the Niroga Benefit Event

## Yoga for Cancer

Cancer survivors from across the country experienced the benefits of Healing Yoga over a weekend in September, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Even with just a few minutes of an experiential taste, participants felt a "calming, gentle, wise, wonderful addition" to the program, and found it "lovely, peaceful, excellent!" Many left with a desire to develop a personal practice, having felt "such positive effects in such a short time!"



Cancer Survivors doing yoga together

## Niroga Fall Benefit

On October 5th, Niroga hosted a benefit at the Joaquin Miller Community Center in Oakland, CA to support its ongoing work with at-risk and underserved populations. Over 150 people came to the event, which included a buffet lunch catered by Gaylords India Restaurant and a program giving guests a sense of the power and potential of Transformative Life Skills (TLS) and of the work Niroga has been doing. Niroga yoga teachers and teachers-in-training spoke about the effects of the work on themselves and their students. A highlight of the event was an exercise in TLS led by BK Bose, executive director of Niroga Institute. The event was a success in raising funds, raising awareness, and creating new connections to take the work further into our communities.

## Director's Corner Cancer as a Turning Point

### Too short! Too short!

Memorial Auditorium in Sacramento was packed - about 1000 cancer survivors, their caregivers, and health care professionals gathered during a recent fall weekend to use cancer as a turning point in their lives, from surviving to thriving. The annual conference was organized by Healing Journeys, which has been offering these conferences across the country for the last two decades.

We were asked to present Healing Yoga on each of the two days. I presented the latest research on how and why healing yoga, breathing techniques and mindfulness can make a profound difference in dealing with this potentially life-threatening disease. And then I led the audience through a short practice, as senior Niroga teachers demonstrate - just standing and sitting, a few minutes of mindful movement, connecting with our breathing and gently emerging in movement - no mats, no props, stripping the practice down to its essence.

The response was overwhelming - hundreds swamped our little table throughout the two days, many saying that they never thought they could do yoga, and yet when they followed along, they found that they could do it, and that it felt wonderful! They wanted to know how they could practice wherever they had come from, and we distributed hundreds of our Healing Yoga DVDs.

One participant said that it was the "most motivating appeal to do yoga that I've ever heard!" while another said, "Too short! Too short!" Indeed, a practice too short, in our short, fragile lives, and yet the power and the promise of a practice that gently nudges us to live each moment fully, as if it were an eternity, pregnant with possibility.

Bidyut (BK) Bose



BK Bose addresses cancer survivors as Miriam demonstrates postures

## A Splash of Color



Woody Carter, Sasi Maier and BK with new batch of IHF students

We know that there is a preponderance of minorities in underserved populations. To correct this social injustice, Niroga has been systematically training youth and young adults of color to become Certified Yoga teachers, to be able to serve their own communities with cultural competence and sensitivity. With partial funding from the Bay Area Black United Fund and Kaiser Permanente, we started the program last year with 16 candidates selected from a pool of 35. As they graduate into their second year of this rigorous two-year program, a new cohort of 20 began this fall, selected from an excellent pool of 50 applicants.

## Yoga with Special Children

This fall, we started a new yoga program at Fred Finch Youth Center, a level-14 group home in Oakland that serves youth 12-17 years of age. The youth here have been diagnosed with severe emotional disturbances and many are developmentally delayed.

The class is voluntary and still, most of them choose to participate. We chant, center, breathe, play "yoga games," practice leading one another in the poses, do affirmations, and test our balance and focus. When asked what they like about yoga, everyone had something positive to say: "Yoga relieves my stress and helps me look and feel taller." "Yoga helps me relax and release some of my tension when I come back from school." "I always feel better after yoga." "The chant and the relaxation calm me down." "I like to show how flexible I am (with a big smile)." I can honestly say that I love my job working with these kids. Their enthusiasm and sweetness often make my day. As one of the kids exclaimed, "Finally, I feel better!"

~ Antonia Fokken, Niroga Yoga Corps Teacher

## Yoga in the Classroom

A novel and innovative program was launched this fall at El Cerrito High School. Niroga is bringing Transformative Life Skills (TLS) to 600 students in 15 classrooms several times each week. Students and teachers are very enthusiastic. Students are learning how to focus, attend and engage while teachers learn to nurture themselves and achieve a more optimal teaching state. With partial funding from Full Circle Fund, the program includes training teachers in these foundational skills so they can bring them into their lives, their classrooms and their learning communities.

Principal Jason Reimann says, "I get it; you are preparing our students to learn - we need this here!" ECHS teachers who participated in the training, as well as teachers who attended our workshop on TLS and Education at the 'Teachers For Social Justice' conference in San Francisco, had this to say:

- Something I can use for myself and my students.
- I am seeing the beneficial effects of TLS on my students; I feel inspired to apply yoga in my life.
- Made me aware of my own feelings and thoughts. Calmed me way down!
- Starting with ABC (mindful Action, Breathing, Centering), getting focused; having a yoga DVD I can use! Showed me how to use it in the classroom.
- Calm, peaceful way to unwind after class; very simple practices that I can do.
- Felt nurtured. Taking care of myself first! Want to apply to myself and my class.
- Relevant, useful, practical; created HOPE!

## TLS Impacts Education

Niroga's TLS program addresses all four aspects of personal and social assets that facilitate positive youth development:

- Physical Development: health risk management skills
- Intellectual Development: essential life skills; decision-making skills
- Emotional Development: positive self-regard; emotional self-regulation skills
- Social Development: connectedness; valued by larger social networks

National Research Council, 2002  
Community Programs to Promote Youth Development  
Washington D.C. National Academy Press National

## A Matter of Life and Death

For over two years, incarcerated youth have been doing yoga in Alameda County Juvenile Hall. Independent researchers have shown that our program can lower stress and increase self-control. We intuitively know that self-control affects everything we do, but perhaps Chris Magnus, the Richmond Police Chief summarized it best, "self-control is a matter of life and death on our streets". Let us remember that, as we decide our society's priorities and calculate the social return on investment of this program. TLS provides life skills that transform ourselves from within, builds self-control, self-esteem and self-confidence, connecting with the infinite possibilities within each one of us.

## Niroga Yoga



Tree Pose

Standing with feet together and your weight evenly distributed across your feet, stand tall with your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles aligned and your spine neutral. Gently shift your weight onto your right leg, and bring your left heel to right ankle, with hips open and left knee out to your side. If you are stable, you can bring your left foot to rest on your right calf or all the way up to your right thigh. With palms in salutation at your chest, find an external point of focus that holds your attention. On the inhale, reach up and away with your arms, with every bit of you fully engaged. Hold the pose for about 30 seconds, breathing naturally, and then switch sides.

Practicing this pose daily will improve your postural awareness and sense of balance, reducing the probability of falls. These balance poses serve as great metaphors for daily life as well, as if gently nudging you to play with that edge of uncertainty and fear of failure, even as you try to find balance in body and mind, between life internal and external, between action and contemplation.