

Dear BK,  
I have great admiration for what you and your colleagues are doing. From long practice in meditation and social activism, I've always felt disappointment in the gulf between practice and "preaching" within most of the organizations that express a desire to alleviate suffering, but all too often focus on alleviating the suffering of the privileged. That you and your group go into the world of the untouchables to teach is really how it should be. I know that you must know that the touch returned to you from inside detox, from hospitals with those struggling with death, the impoverished kids in forgotten schools, the prisons - the power of these people struggling to live with so much against them - these people touch you and give you gifts every bit as much as you give them. Namaste  
Valerie Kuletz, Ph.D., author and cancer survivor

Hi BK,  
Anthony did a class early in the week Tuesday and the boys treated him like they do most new teachers - lack of respect, talking, not participating etc. When I returned on Friday, the boys were totally involved in the class. Boys, who rarely participated, came in and lay down and were doing 90% of the poses. There was little or no talking, and the boys were also leading poses. Prior to the beginning of your class the unit was in chaos, and I was preparing myself for a difficult class, but it turned out great. Thank you.  
Yahru Baruti, Senior Psychiatric Social Worker, Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center

BK,  
Thank you for a wonderful first class, I think the hardest part was trying not to cry! I was so moved by the sight of so many black people practicing together in one room. This is a dream come true for me.  
Indira Allegra, Integral Health Fellow

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

Enclosed is my gift:  Youth Fund  Cancer Fund  
 Unrestricted

- I pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year for \_\_\_\_\_ years
- \$100 (gives 30 at-risk youth increased self-control and self-esteem)
- \$250 (allows our Healing Yoga DVD to be donated to 15 cancer survivors)
- \$500 (helps Niroga forge new partnerships for community outreach)
- \$\_\_\_ Use your imagination!

*Every dollar donated will go to support programs.*

## Holiday Gift Ideas

All proceeds go to support Niroga programs; order directly from [www.niroga.org/store.html](http://www.niroga.org/store.html) or call Niroga at 510.336.7060

- Raja Yoga DVD – A Guide for Personal Practice; yoga sequences for developing, sustaining, and deepening your personal practice at every level; 3 ½ hours (\$40)
- Raja Yoga 4-CD Audiobook – The Science of Meditation; Swami Vivekananda's authoritative translation and commentary on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras; over 4 hours (\$30)
- Healing Yoga DVD – 20 minutes for health and well-being; a gentle and restorative yoga sequence to help you relax and renew (\$15)
- Music for Mindfulness – Indian Classical Music; four expositions for different moods, viola and flute; 80 minutes (\$15)

## We Need Your Help!

Niroga programs impact public and behavioral health, education, youth development, community crime and violence, and social justice. If you have benefited from Yoga, perhaps you will help us reach out to help others, to bring hope to the lives of people battling life-threatening illnesses or children who are abused, neglected, delinquent or incarcerated. Please consider joining our garland of donors with a multi-year gift; you may choose to designate your gift to go toward our work with cancer survivors or vulnerable youth.

Donation Method:  VISA  MC  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)  
3101 Arizona Street - Oakland, California 94602  
PH 510.336.7060 FX 510.225.2428 [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.



Integral Health Fellows with Woody and BK

## Yoga Joins Fight Against Crime and Violence

Niroga Institute, in collaboration with the Bay Area Black United Fund (BABUF) and the International Association of Black Yoga Teachers (IABYT), will be training African American young adults to become Certified Yoga Teachers to bring self-transformative life skills into their communities in Oakland. Given the success of Niroga's program at Alameda County Juvenile Hall, BABUF is awarding Integral Health fellowships to sixteen selected interns to begin a two-year training program. Bobbie Norisse, President of the Bay Area Chapter of IABYT, said of the program, "This is simple, direct, and doable."

Woody Carter, the Executive Director of BABUF, said "We are very excited about partnering with Niroga. Yoga is the cornerstone of our African American Health Initiative."

## Niroga Benefit Success

On September 30, Niroga hosted a benefit to raise funds for its many programs for at-risk and incarcerated youth, seniors and cancer patients. These life-changing programs could not go on without the support of caring individuals and socially responsible public and private organizations. The fundraiser took place at the Joaquin Miller Community Center in Oakland. One hundred and seventy people enjoyed a buffet lunch catered by Gaylords, watched a short video, outlining the work Niroga does, and heard founder and Executive Director, Bidyut Bose, describe his vision for the future and the transformative potential of Niroga programs. Testimonials were given by Judy Vasos, La'Tanya Jackson, Erin Hill, and Woody Carter. The crowd seemed enthusiastically moved, and many donations were pledged for this and future years. Said Margi Clarke, "Congratulations on a flawless, gracious, beautiful, delicious and inspiring event (I hope Niroga's first annual!)." Jeff Ritterman, Chief of Cardiology at Kaiser Permanente Richmond, said "Richmond is a city with a tremendous need for programs like yours... I am honored to join your sacred work."

## Collaborative Research

The Division of Geriatrics, Department of Medicine, and the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, UCSF, will be collaborating with Niroga to study the effects of yoga, breathing techniques, and meditation on patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and early Alzheimer's, as well as veterans from Iraq returning with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

## Director's Corner

### Oakland Arise! Richmond Arise!

Niroga has been bringing a comprehensive discipline of self-transformative life skills through regular yoga practice to vulnerable youth in schools, juvenile halls, homeless shelters, and in community recreation centers. Results indicate that our programs have systematically developed stress resilience and increased self control among the participants. These changes in individual children could in turn, collectively, impact public and mental health, education, crime and violence, and social justice.

What if we could provide life skills as a booster pervasively for 12 years (K-12) for an entire generation of at-risk youth? I believe that it would not only transform that generation, but the beneficial effects would spill over and affect the generation that came before, and the generation that comes after. This generational reshaping could create a tipping point leading to lasting societal change.



Integral Health Fellows doing Yoga

We are proposing an ambitious program to take two troubled cities, Oakland and Richmond, providing life skills with Yoga in every school for every child for 12 years. We are calling the vision Oakland/Richmond Arise!, a call for our communities to reclaim their birthright. This will require extensive mobilization of resources, inter-agency collaboration, and strong public-private partnerships. Let us dream of the possibilities for our children and our children's children.

### Global Sustainability

I recently presented a talk on Yoga and Global Responsibility at the headquarters of Google. I tried to establish the connection between personal transformation as a necessary condition for global sustainability and Yoga as a time-tested effective and efficient tool leading to personal transformation. External efforts (industries and nations) and internal efforts (individual awareness and responsibility) are needed in an integrated approach to deal with global sustainability. As more people achieve personal transformation, manifesting love a little more unconditionally and accepting social responsibility for the welfare of others, perhaps it will lead to a collective evolution of our consciousness as a society.

Bidyut (B.K.) Bose



Yoga for Youth

## Niroga Program Results

Alameda County has one of the highest rates of incarcerated youth in the U.S. As part of a countywide violence-prevention blueprint, Niroga began a daily program that included yoga, breathing techniques, and meditation. Psychometric data was collected from 185 youth who went through the program, and analysis of the evaluation data over the last year was done by Ai Kubo, Ph.D., Staff Scientist, Kaiser Permanente Division of Research. Results revealed the following:

- There was a marked decrease in stress and increase in self-control in the entire group
- Youth exposed to more than 10 classes showed statistically significant improvement in stress resilience and self-control

Summarizing the results, Dr. Kubo said, "Those who attended yoga more regularly were at significantly better general health, had better self-awareness, and lower stress."

## Effects of Mindfulness on Academic Potential

A multi-component practice of yoga poses, breathing techniques, and meditation has been shown to increase self-control and self-awareness, improve focus and attention, and reduce stress.

A 2004 study done by Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone showed that higher scores in self-control assessment tests correlated with higher grade point averages, better adjustment, less binge eating and alcohol abuse, better relationships and interpersonal skills, secure attachment and more optimal emotional responses.

UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center has been conducting research on Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPS) on the executive function of 48 children, who received two MAPS classes per week for eight weeks. The results from their study showed improvement in executive function as reported by teachers and parents.

Integrating Yoga and mindfulness into the curriculum in schools could prove to be a highly effective approach to improving the academic potential of under-performing students.



YMCA Seniors' class

## Serving Seniors, Managing Stress

Yoga is an optimal form of exercise, as well as a powerful discipline for stress management. There is evidence that certain stress hormones decrease our immune system function, making us susceptible to many common chronic conditions. In a landmark study done by Blackburn and Epel at UCSF, it has also been shown that stress and perceived stress can affect us at the cellular level, down to our DNA and the lengths of our telomeres (an aging marker). Dennis Novak, at Drexel University College of Medicine said, "There is no such thing as separation of mind and body, the very molecules in our bodies are responsive to our psychological environment," which affects the aging process. Since reducing stress often seems beyond our control, the question is how we can manage it, how we can alter our perception of stress, how we can increase our resilience to stress. Yoga breathing techniques have evolved over thousands of years, providing a powerful set of tools for evoking the relaxation response. Rhythmic breathing, thoracic and abdominal, as well as alternate nostril breathing, can be practiced to systematically address the issue of stress reduction and the slowing down of the aging process.

## Osteoporosis

In addition to stress management, another application of healing yoga for seniors is the treatment of osteoporosis and osteopenia. We begin losing bone density at about 1% per year from around the age of 30, with women losing more around menopause. As an integral health practice affecting the musculoskeletal and endocrine systems, healing yoga can reduce the potential for bone fracture, by improving balance and postural awareness, as well as encourage the growth of new bone cells through weight-bearing exercise. Studies are currently being discussed with the Orthopedic Bioengineering Laboratory, UC Berkeley, on the effects of yoga on bone density and fracture reduction.

## Yoga Improves Memory, May Prevent Alzheimer's

New research with older people finds a daily meditation session can improve thinking and memory. The head of the study thinks daily 12-minute yoga sessions may even prevent Alzheimer's. Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa, President and Medical Director of the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation, the non-profit organization that sponsored the study, reports, "This exciting study confirms what we have been observing in clinical practice for many years, that meditation is one of the most effective tools to address memory loss." He continues, "While we are planning additional research in the area, we can say today, that daily meditation is recommended as part of an integrated brain longevity strategy to delay, even prevent, cognitive decline."

Senior Journal - June 2007

## Niroga Yoga Sitting Spinal Twist

One of the commonest fracture sites for patients with osteoporosis is the spine. Since we know that weight-bearing exercise helps slow down bone loss, what are some ways you can apply pressure to your spine? You can try to compress your spine, elongate it, or twist it. Applying gentle torsion along your spine can be very beneficial, not only for its effect on bone loss, but also to open up space between the vertebrae, allowing nutrition to enervate the inter-vertebral discs, helping keep your spine strong, healthy and flexible.



Seated Spinal Twist

Sit on your mat and extend your left leg. Bring your right arm back behind your right hip for support. Flexing your right knee and raising it, bring your right foot towards your groin or to the outside of your left knee. Sit up tall, as you breathe in, and on the exhale, wrap your left arm around your right knee, and gently twist away to the right. On each inhale lengthen along your full torso, and on each successive exhale, engage the spinal twist from left hip to right shoulder and beyond, turning your head to look right, with your chin over your right shoulder. Breathe with your chest and abdomen relaxed, and sustain for about 5 breath cycles. Now, switch sides and repeat.