
YOGA

behind bars

*peace is an
inside job*

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

3161 Elliott Ave | Seattle, WA 98121
(206) 783-0403 | yogabehindbars.org



Throughout the pandemic we offered our community

2

Race-Based Caucuses

10

Race and Justice & Yoga Sharing Circles

18

Trauma-Informed Yoga Training Scholarships for BIPOC & Formerly Incarcerated People

WHO WE ARE

Let's Break the Cycle of Suffering

Mission

We share yoga and meditation with incarcerated people to promote rehabilitation, personal transformation, and a more just society for all.

Vision

We envision a world where all communities are healthy and thriving, where all people feel safe, connected, and valued.



"Yoga reminds us to breathe... I find that whether in a challenging Yoga pose or in a challenging circumstance in life, if I just breathe, taking some nice deep breathes—things get easier."
-Dion, Former Participant & Current Community Member

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Our community members in jails, prisons, and detention centers across Washington State have significantly suffered during the global COVID-19 pandemic. We felt and continue to feel deep concern for the adults and youth we serve who were even more isolated than usual, even as things begin to reopen.

On April 2, 2020, Yukio, a YBB participant, wrote a beautiful piece sharing their experience adapting to lockdown and advice for others (inside and out) on coping with the fear and anxiety of our collective lockdown. We encourage you to read their insightful post on our YBB Blog [on our website](#).*

The traumatizing combination of events faced in 2020 will likely impact individuals and communities for a long time. As a trauma-informed healing community, it is clear that our work is needed now more than ever behind bars and beyond.

Throughout 2020, as community awareness grew around the impacts of trauma, the importance of our good work continued to be recognized, our partnerships are evolving, and we feel fortunate that new and long-time community members gave generously during GiveBig in 2020. This kind of recognition and support allow us to increase teacher training programs behind bars and increase scholarship opportunities for individuals (system impacted/affected, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, veterans) to access our trauma-informed yoga teacher training. We are excited to see how all these beautiful humans will bring our teachings to their communities.

As stewards of this organization, we are hitting our stride on renewed strategic goals that include building more community partnerships, training more teachers behind and beyond bars, growing our youth programming, and holding space for community-based racial caucusing events. To do all this, we must ensure that the organization continues to recruit skilled and mission passionate team members for new roles and provide current team members with equitable compensation.

The work we do is not just external. We recognize that as individuals and within our organization, we have more work to do to unlearn white supremacist ideologies and values. To challenge systemic racism, inequity, privilege, and policies that support mass incarceration of black and brown people, we must first understand the role we may have played in these systems.

With your continued support, we look towards YBB's continued growth and development, enabling us to become part of the healing solution and reach more system impacted individuals and their communities.

*In gratitude -
Yoga Behind Bars Board of Directors*

*<https://yogabehindbars.org/how-i-cope-with-physical-isolation-yukio-ybb-teacher-behind-bars/>

**Yoga Behind Bars
has 5 full-time
staff and 4 part-
time trainers.**

**Supporting
programs
in**

15

**facilities
throughout the
state.**



WHAT WE DID

Staying Connected During a Pandemic

sosfYUKIO, YBB Studfsdfosdfsent

Pivoting During the Pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic led the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to close correctional facilities to all outside organizations and family members, leaving our participants isolated to their cells.

Yoga Behind Bars had to halt our statewide volunteer teacher programs at 15 facilities temporarily. We worked with our partners at DOC to distribute a quarterly e-zine offering yoga, breath, and embodiment toolkits. We worked hard to pivot our programs around trauma-informed methods wherever we could, including moving our in-person training events to a virtual format. Intrepid Teachers Behind Bars were able to teach ten classes weekly.

Racial Equity Commitment

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death, YBB shared an [accountability statement](#) about our commitment to anti-racism. We weren't 5 for 5, but as an organization, we made progress. See how we did:

YBB will pay full-time staff who choose to volunteer or lawfully protest during working hours.

- *ACHIEVED* - Not only were staff supported to take paid time off to protest in Seattle, but we also supported Justice-Impacted Advocates in Eastern Washington by hosting their virtual organizing meetings.

YBB staff and board will collaborate to create and post a racial equity statement.

- *IN PROGRESS* - While a statement was written, we are actively looking at ways to use a racial equity statement better to support the evaluation of existing and future initiatives throughout the organization.

YBB will create a publicly available racial grievance policy.


- *IN PROGRESS* - We are reviewing the best path forward to create accountability around anti-racism for our board, staff, and volunteers.

YBB will continue paying for racial equity training for full-time staff and expand this policy to cover all paid staff members.

- *ACHIEVED* - Paying for course fees and time off is an ongoing offering for YBB staff.


YBB will continue to give no-questions-asked scholarships to our Trauma-Informed Yoga Training for Formerly Incarcerated People and People of Color -

- *ACHIEVED* - YBB provided 17 scholarships for our Trauma-Informed Yoga Training in 2020.



Our Teachers

The seven incarcerated yoga teachers that YBB trained and mentored through a 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training certification continued to offer classes when conditions permitted. Before COVID, our teachers behind bars taught about 50% of our current classes. During COVID, they single-handedly kept programs alive when the state shut down facilities to volunteers.



According to social distancing guidelines, our Teachers Behind Bars led small groups, multiple times a day, for an average of 10 classes per week and 18 participants per day. We are proud of teachers like Dwayne at Airway Heights and Garrdian at Stafford Creek, who continued to teach despite the challenges.

These teachers held our programs up in ways that we could never dream of.

"For some of us, this is the only peace we ever get."

- one of 400 participants behind bars

e-ZINE PRACTICE

Here's your opportunity to try.
Body Percussion

This is one of our favorite practices that helps to calm and soothe us while also bringing blood flow and awareness to numbed or disassociated parts of our bodies.

- Use the tips of your fingers, a soft fist, or open palm to gently yet firmly rhythmically tap your body.
- There is no particular sequence, and you can tap nearly every part of your body.
- Be kind to your body and lighten up your touch if anything feels uncomfortable.
- Common tapping locations are just under your collarbone and around the chest. You can gently tap around the eyebrows and eyes and up/down your arms and shoulders.
- It can be helpful to imagine heavy raindrops hitting your body.
- Tap for 2-5 minutes.
- Complete this practice by gently wiping the raindrops off of your body using long sliding gestures.
- Notice how you feel.



ALWAYS LEARNING

2020 Board & Staff Common Book
*My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized
Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our
Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem



"In today's America, we tend to think of healing as something binary: either we're broken or we're healed from that brokenness. But that's not how healing operates, and it's almost never how human growth works. More often, healing and growth take place on a continuum, with innumerable points between utter brokenness and total health."

Resmaa Menakem

New Partnerships

White Bison

We began a new partnership with Colorado-based White Bison, a national Native-American-led non-profit "dedicated to creating and sustaining a grassroots Wellbriety Movement that provides culturally based healing to the next seven generations of Indigenous People."



Sanctuary Studios

www.meetsanctuary.com

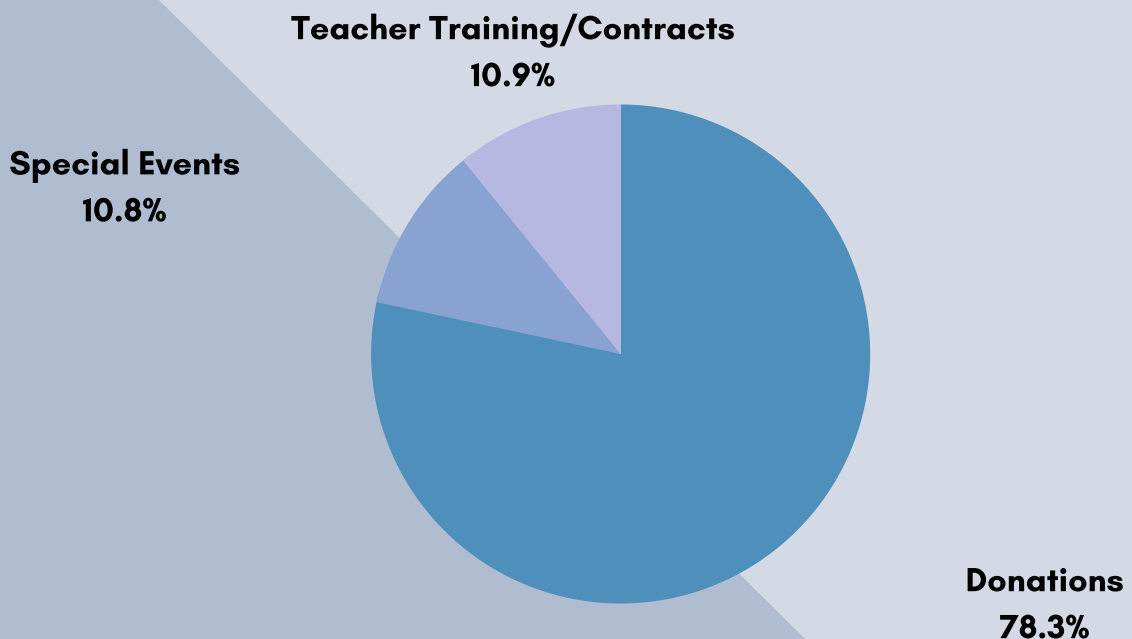
Sanctuary Studios. Whose leading-edge, cinematic experience brings best-in-class teachers and inspiring wellness content directly to your mat. Come experience a Yoga Behind Class, deepen your yoga and meditation practice. Learn more [here](#).

AND GROWING

Reaching New Fundraising Goals in 2020

In the midst of a challenging year for service provision and fundraising, YBB ended 2020 in the black because of extraordinary community support, most notably during GiveBig and from lululemon's corporate granting program, Here To Be.

We are grateful for your support to fulfill our mission. The empathy you demonstrated was so heartfelt, and we hope you are proud of how YOU stepped up to help us support incarcerated communities in WA during the pandemic.



TO OUR
COMMITTED
SUPPORTERS

Thank You



OUR DEDICATED STAFF

2020

We celebrate our staff who continued to show up for our clients at facilities across the state.

Julian Saucier | Executive Director

Jess Frank | Program Director

Amara Oden | Development Director

Maggie Wegener | Program and Operations Manager

Anthony Blankenship | Development Coordinator

Jessica Bhuiyan | Development Director (Aug. 2020 interim)

Launa Lea | Program Coordinator

2020 - 2021 | BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kate Aitken | KC Dept of Public Defense
2021 Secretary

Holly Brauchli | Bullivant Houser
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Karlie Calvin | Brighton Jones

Jenny Cronin | NanoString Technologies

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Foundation

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UW Board Fellows |

Alain Chan | 2019-2020 | Masters of Social Work Administrative, Policy Practice

Holly Williams | 2019-2020 | Masters of Social Work Administrative, Policy Practice

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