Press Release

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Yoga Community Launches Global Fund to Support Professionals in Extreme Economic Distress Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Applications Now Being Accepted from Yoga Professionals Facing Exceptional Hardship; Donations Welcomed

Arlington, VA (May 26, 2020) – Understanding the significant, negative economic impact the yoga community is experiencing due to COVID-19, the Yoga Alliance Foundation, the 501(c)(3) charitable arm of Yoga Alliance, established its Emergency Relief Fund to support yoga professionals experiencing extreme financial hardship as a result of the global pandemic. This Fund is being deployed in partnership with Ivy Child International and Reclamation Ventures.

All yoga professionals with financial need, regardless of geographic location, are eligible to apply for support. Funding is prioritized for those whose economic survival depends on their income from teaching yoga and training yoga teachers and who therefore can no longer meet basic needs, such as food and shelter, due to the impact of COVID-19. Eligibility requirements, including how to apply, can be found here. In order to establish the Emergency Relief Fund, the Yoga Alliance Foundation redirected funds originally earmarked for its inaugural grants program scheduled to launch earlier this year. The Yoga Alliance Foundation is seeking to partner with institutional funders, including foundations, corporations, organizations, and individuals, both within and outside of yoga, to grow the resources necessary to meet the community’s financial needs and shared goals.

“We’ve heard directly and clearly from yoga professionals around the world, most of whom are self-employed or small business owners, about the economic hardships they are facing due to COVID-19. For us, this meant that immediate financial assistance must be our top priority in order to protect and support the global community of yoga professionals,” said the Yoga Alliance Foundation Managing Director Kristina Graff. “The COVID-19 pandemic is hurting professions across the board, yet we know first-hand that the economic impact disproportionately affects small businesses and those whose income depends on in-person engagement. Further, we also understand that these and all of the negative impacts are magnified among the most vulnerable.”
How to Contribute

In addition to inviting yoga professionals to apply for funds, the Yoga Alliance Foundation invites the broader yoga community and others to contribute to the Emergency Relief Fund. Tax-deductible contributions—100 percent of which will be passed directly to Fund recipients—are welcomed by all, including those whose lives have been positively impacted by a yoga teacher or through the practice of yoga itself. Donations are accepted by PayPal or major credit cards and may be made via the Yoga Alliance Foundation’s website. Institutional funders interested in partnering with the Yoga Alliance Foundation are encouraged to email foundation@yogaalliance.org.

“Through the yogic practice of Seva—“selfless service”—yoga teachers give back to others every day, not just in times of need,” said the Yoga Alliance Foundation Board Chair Kerry Maiorca (E-RYT 500, RPYT, YACEP). “Because so many yoga teachers are sole proprietors or very small businesses, today we find that they are among those most in need. We are humbled to be able to support this community in that need and to encourage practitioners and the general public to do so as well. It’s our hope that the assistance provided through this Fund will help seed yoga professionals’ return to work and service.”

Current Funding Partners

In order to assess applications and economic need, award recipients, and administer funds objectively, responsively, and swiftly, the Yoga Alliance Foundation teamed up with strategic partner Ivy Child International, a global nonprofit that partners with systems of education and care to enhance wellbeing through innovative and culturally responsive programs. Ivy Child will leverage its expertise in relief funding to help the Yoga Alliance Foundation serve and support the yoga community through this critically important Emergency Relief Fund.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Yoga Alliance Foundation to support our global community during the COVID-19 crisis. Our shared intention is to help support and elevate the work of our diverse teachers who inspire resilience and leadership through their daily practices, stories, and teachings from around the world,” says Rose Felix Cratsley, Founder and CEO Of Ivy Child International.

The Yoga Alliance Foundation also is a contributor to the Reclamation Ventures Wellness Relief Fund, which provides rapid response to yoga professionals facing financial hardship due to COVID-19. In selecting partners, the Yoga Alliance Foundation prioritized organizations whose work is anchored in yogic values; aligns with the Foundation’s mission of leveraging yoga for social impact; and fosters an expansive, accessible, and equitable yoga community. Foundation partners demonstrate a proven track record of providing financial support to communities and individuals facing monetary hardships, the
capacity to execute an equitable and transparent application and disbursement of funding process, and a strong history of financial health. To ensure an equitable approach to the distribution of funding, the Foundation assembled an Emergency Relief Fund Advisory Committee representing a cross-section of perspectives and lived experiences.

“Our intention is for a community-centered response to support yoga professionals through the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to the journey that resulted in our Ethical Commitment and our position on equity shared in late February. As we work to understand the best ways to support our member community and the yoga community at large, we will continue to lean into a practice of deep and intentional listening and to adhere to yogic principles,” said Yoga Alliance and Yoga Alliance Foundation President & CEO Shannon Roche. “We recognize yoga schools’ and teachers’ needs will continue to evolve during this time of financial insecurity and general uncertainty, and we will continue working to be responsive to the most critical needs of the community.”

For more information on how to contribute or apply, visit YourYA.org or YogaAlliance.org/foundation, or email us at foundation@yogaalliance.org.

About Yoga Alliance and the Yoga Alliance Foundation

Founded in 1999, Yoga Alliance (YA) is a member-based, non-profit organization that serves yoga schools and teachers across the globe, providing world-recognized, best-in-class credentials and unifying its members around a shared ethical commitment. Yoga Alliance’s goal is to support and foster the high quality, safe, accessible, and equitable teaching of yoga. In addition, Yoga Alliance delivers a strong value proposition to its members through community-building initiatives, educational resources, advocacy efforts, and social impact programs.

Its partner organization, the Yoga Alliance Foundation, leverages yoga for social impact and fosters an expansive, accessible, and equitable yoga community. It does this through broadening access to yoga’s healing potential, fostering greater equity and more diverse representation within the yoga community, and expanding educational, service, and economic opportunities for yoga teachers.

Yoga Alliance understands that in many locations around the world, the marketplace has designated its credential as a de facto requirement for employment, serving as an indicator of high-quality teaching and safe instruction. Yoga Alliance does not take this lightly and rather embraces this responsibility and the associated accountability that comes with it, pledging to uphold it now and into the future.