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August 12, 2025



You call this

YOGA.

A Message from Howie

Over the past year, YCTY has made significant progress in its #1 priority of creating systems (protocols for the operation of our organization) and recruiting talented people to help generate and sustain them.

From Board President Marc Gracieux to LinkedIn marketing adviser Deborah Mathias, website redesigner Leigh Silverstein, strategic planner Mimi deGrandpre, content creator Lauren Rosenberg, Google Ads manager Brooke Houck, to our team of leadership advisers: banker, Brandi McCarn Gerew, and executive coach, Cyndy Robinson, attendance managers, JJ Gormley and Jon Morin, marketing manager, Garrett Jurss, and dozens of talented teachers from the past few years. YCTY is positioned for greater stability within as well as providing a broader impact on the wellbeing of the people of North Carolina.

It is so affirming and inspiring to keep meeting and working with kind and dedicated people. Thank you all. Your time, treasure and talent enriches the community.

We welcome more team: teachers, community engagers, fundraisers, marketing management, Board prospects. [Please visit here.](#)

– Howie

Ambassador Lunch in Greensboro

YCTY Ambassadors met in person for the first time since the pandemic. The quarterly Meet and Greet has been virtual for years and we have broken out of the mold, gathering in Greensboro after the Saturday morning class on July 26. The local team of Andi, Jihyue, Cindy and Tamara welcomed Wake County members Celina, Mimi and Howie. It was a joy for many of us to meet in the same room for the first time, share our paths, a new hobby and passion for accessible yoga. We will hold a virtual meeting later in August and an in-person one in October. [Join us!](#)



(l-r: Andi, Jihyue, Celina, Cindy, Mimi, Howie and Tamara)

Deep Breathing for Deeper Awareness with Lauren Rosenberg



Teacher Lauren Rosenberg shares a deep breathing practice to develop deeper awareness. You can find more full practices and pearls of wisdom to enhance your yoga practices over on our YouTube channel.

[Check Us Out on YouTube](#)

Spotlight on Teachers Karla Vallecillo (Durham) and Rachel Bush (Boone)



Kara Vallecillo

Karla Vallecillo is a Bilingual Yoga Teacher who joined YCTY in 2021. Since joining the organization, she has collaborated closely with YCTY to bring yoga programs to the community in Durham. With a deep passion for accessible wellness her classes are welcoming, adaptable and empowering, designed to meet each participant where they are.

"From virtual classes to now weekly classes at the park, it's been a heartfelt experience to watch our community grow, inviting friends and family to practice and heal together."



Rachel Bush

Rachel Bush began her practice of both Yoga and Ayurveda while she was in college in response to chronic pain and a general lack of health and well-being. The practice was very difficult for her at first, both physically and mentally, but in a short period of time some of her life-long symptoms started to dissipate. She decided to dedicate her life to these practices and throughout the next decade became a Certified Yoga Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Licensed Massage Therapist and Ayurvedic Practitioner.

After the isolation of the Pandemic, Rachel felt the desire to be a part of a larger community, so when she discovered the Art of Living Retreat Center 2 years ago, she decided to relocate to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. She works as a direct assistant to the Vice President of Operations at the Retreat Center and has had the privilege to work in many different facets of the business including staff support, outreach and most recently in the management of the Volunteer Program. She has cultivated and hosted a free weekly yoga class series at the center and aims to make the center more accessible to the local community as a resource for health and well-being.

Recently, an opportunity arose to partner with You Call This Yoga in offering free classes in her new home community. After learning about YCTY's mission to offer inclusive and accessible classes to underserved populations, she knew this was the next step in connecting with the local community.

"I am thrilled to be a part of the team and look forward to sharing the knowledge of how to manage and potentially overcome the stressors of modern day life through the practices of breath, movement and mindset."

What is a Strategic Plan Roadmap? Why have One?

Over the past five years since the pandemic began, the question of where YCTY is headed has repeatedly come up. In 2020, we were primarily a Triangle based organization with relationships statewide. Then after being adrift from the local community and providing classes online for several years, we have landed primarily in person again, with online education available too.

Over the past eighteen months, we have been working with a basic framework from the book Traction to review and work towards our goals. Now that YCTY is back in the community sharing accessible yoga practices statewide, we are capitalizing on the opportunity to plan for the short to medium term. With the help of Mimi deGrandpre, a strategic plan roadmap has been created to provide us with a clear list of initiatives, responsibilities, timelines and updates. Thank you Mimi.

Here are some highlights of the process:

Purpose statement:

We exist to educate and inspire individuals & communities to greater health.

Mission statement:

We do this by providing accessible yoga practices at no cost to participants.

Vision statement:

We aspire to a world where *anyone* can experience the benefits of a yoga practice.

Unique value statement(s):

We bring yoga directly to communities with limited access to wellness resources

We eliminate financial barriers by providing all classes at *no cost to participants*.

We customize our approach to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve

Key Successes to date:

- Renewal and expansion of contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC for six locations statewide
- Increased number of Spanish Yoga classes in Wake County
- 30 new You Call This Yoga YouTube channel subscribers in July
- Recruitment of two advisers and one Board of Directors prospect

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