

Ananda Marga Launches Pro-Bono Community Project: Yoga-on-Wheels (Project YoW)

Inspired by Ananda Marga's mission of self-realisation and service to humanity (collective welfare), Ananda Marga's Project Yoga-on-Wheels (Project YoW) is initiated as a social service project by the Ananda Marga Yoga Society of Singapore to provide pro-bono yoga services to the aged, underprivileged and the disadvantaged (mental or physical). We do this through community outreach by working with voluntary welfare organisation (VWO) partners. At Ananda Marga, we believe that yoga is flexible & suitable for all, regardless of age, health condition and financial capacity – and that no one should be deprived of the opportunity for self-development.

Our very first project wheeled off successfully in Feb 2011, to the doors of aLife, a secular, non-profit voluntary welfare organisation providing direct counselling, childcare and financial assistance to low income families. Project YoW sees our teachers teaching yoga to the parents and carers of aLife's The Caterpillar Club which provides enrichment programmes to children aged 5-12 years old. The programme has attracted a number of regular followers attending the classes, some even incorporating the techniques they learnt into their private practice at home.

Ananda Marga's style of yoga (Raja-dhi-Raja) is an all-round systematic and scientific process for the development of the body, mind and soul. The postures (or asanas) give many positive physical benefits, but the most important effect is on the mind. Through asanas, the endocrine glands are being massaged and stimulated, which results in a balanced secretion of hormones from those glands. This, in turn, regulates our emotions positively. Mental and physical wellness creates a sense of harmony within us and is essential for a healthy and blissful life. Basic meditation techniques are also introduced to give students the strength and peace they need in coping with the many challenges of their daily lives.



Teacher demonstrating the cobra pose (bhujaungasana) to the students at aLife



Students practising yoga mudra, a posture that is beneficial for the digestive system



Satisfied student feeling rejuvenated at the end of the class

"I had backaches for many years and rarely slept well but since attending the first class, I felt my entire body has loosened up" said Xiao-Yun, one of the students whose daughter is with The Caterpillar Club. "What has been most amazing was that I slept through the night for the first time in years, after my first session with Project YoW, and have not had any problems with restful sleep since."



Students also learn lymphatic drainage massage to promote better circulation of blood and lymph

"We can see that the parents are much more relaxed and happier after attending the yoga sessions" said Sara Abraham, Programme Executive at aLife, "When they are more relaxed, they complain less during their counselling sessions, and their relationships with their children also improved."

"We are delighted to see that the programme has taken off so successfully in helping to improve the quality of life through yoga to the people who, perhaps, need it most", commented Dada Shankarsa'nanda, facilitator and dean of the Ananda Marga Yoga Academy. "The project is in line with Ananda Marga's mission and provides a platform for our teachers to give back to the society."

Moving forward, Ananda Marga aims to expand Project YoW's coverage in the community so that more can benefit from this project and the holistic benefits of yoga. If you feel that we can contribute to the wellbeing of any aged, underprivileged or disadvantaged groups in Singapore, please email projectyow@anandamarga.org.sg.

To find out more about Ananda Marga and its services, please visit <http://anandamarga.org.sg>