

The Sean O'Shea Foundation

empowering youth through a dynamic yoga curriculum

Letter from the President



Well, it seems like I just did the Presidents letter for Spring and here it is...already summer. We started the summer off right with a 108 Sun Salutations on Moonlight Beach overlooking and incredible ocean view that offered us a fabulous sunset. See more about the 108 Sun Salutations event in this newsletter.

As I promised you in our last letter... a report about our pilot program that took place in three schools this past spring. The first school I would like to share about is called Gompers Charter Middle School in San Diego. We taught yoga to a total of 17 kids in a seven week program. During the middle of the seven weeks, I visited the school to make a presentation about the program to the students (6th, 7th and 8th graders). They were mellow with what I was saying but when it came time to show them the yoga video of Sean, they really became interested... especially the boys sitting in the back with total amazement of what Sean was doing...even today...Sean is moving people.

The second school was 5th graders from Foussat Elementary in Ocean-side. WOW! What a happy and energetic group they were. They came to each session with excitement to learn more. One of the faculty members told me the student participants are now a club at school and many other students want to join them. At the last session I joined Katie Beroukhim (yoga instructor for the foundation) in giving the parents and teachers a demonstration with the students. I was so impressed with the students' level of skill they had learned in such a short time...Sun Salutations and jump through? They had even learned Sanskrit and they knew the teachers routine and followed it re-

spectfully.

Our 3rd school was High Tech High North County in San Marcos. All the students were 9th graders and some with yoga experience which made it a little difficult to teach since some of the other students were new to yoga. The students were eager to learn... many times requesting more advanced postures. Next year High Tech High will consist of 9th and 10th graders.

So, what was our goal bringing yoga to the youth of our communities? Well, to answer this...all you have to do is read our mission statement: "To empower youth through yoga and optimistic teachings that help to develop life skills that can enable youth to take responsibility for their life, develop respect for themselves and others, and have confidence in their own potential".

Sean taught his students to respect themselves...by doing so...they can respect others. He never said a bad thing about anyone or anything because by doing so you would show to the world your weakness. Sean loved thinking outside the box. He loved learning and expanding his knowledge about people and their cultures. So, we teach the kids to respect themselves by respecting others. We teach them to use Yoga as an instrument to improve their health, patience, fitness, discipline and joy for life.

Did it work and was there a need for a program like the Sean O'Shea Foundation? According to the San Diego Union Tribune there is an increase of about 29 percent in school dropout rates (2006). There has also been an increase in juvenile crime as reported in the San Diego County Report Card on Children and Families(2007). Studies show that identifying young people when they first begin to experiment with unhealthy and risky behaviors and providing them with programs that focus on quality during and after school programs can help decrease this type of behavior. According to a study completed by the Program Evaluation and Research Collaborative, the implementation of yoga **Continued on Page 2**

Kids Helping Kids

June 10, 2008 Little LuLu and Bella DeSilva celebrated their 7th birthday. This was a special day of fun for all their guests...35 classmates. Lulu and Bella asked their friends not to bring a present...instead, donate to The Sean O'Shea Foundation. This was a first time donation for many of the seven year olds.



What a wonderful gift from two beautiful twin sisters. The girls raised nearly \$300 for the foundation. It is amazing what an inspiration one (or two) can be at such a young age. Lulu and Bella helped the kids in our community by sending their birthday gift money which will support 10 young students into the Sean O'Shea Foundation program for seven weeks and each student will receive a Sean O'Shea Foundation t-shirt.

Kids helping kids...and inspiring adults by their selfless example!

On behalf of the foundation, we would like to thank little Lulu and Bella for their generous gift and the kids of our communities' thank you too!

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Pacific Crest Yoga Club



A yoga club? Yes, I am talking about a wonderful group of people who enjoy a monthly donation yoga lead by the one and only Rich McGowan at the Pacific Crest Apartments in Encinitas. How I wish I lived at the Pacific Crest Apartments...what a wonderful opportunity for the tenants. Speaking of opportunities...this very same group of people, along with Rich, has been donating all their yoga donations to the Sean O'Shea Foundation. To date, this dedicated group of yogi's have donated enough to put 32 young students through the full seven week program and this includes each child receiving a souvenir Sean O'Shea Foundation t-shirt. Thank you Pacific Crest Yoga Club...you are an inspiration to us all!

What can you do to help? Have your own fundraiser in the name of the Sean O'Shea Foundation, find Corporate funders from our local communities, wear a Sean O'Shea Foundation t-shirt and spread the word to your neighbors and community, attend foundation events, and volunteer to become an active foundation committee member.

First Annual Yoga Fiesta!

By Reid Olmstead



September 28, 2008 children, parents, educators, yogis, and supporters of the Sean O'Shea Foundation will converge in the city of Encinitas to participate in the Foundation Celebration Fiesta.

Within its first year, the Sean O'Shea Foundation has made significant progress towards its mission: empowering youth by helping to

develop life skills that will enable them to take responsibility for their life, develop respect for themselves and others, and have confidence in their own potential. The Sean O'Shea Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization in San Diego County that is designed to empower youth with a Yoga curriculum focusing on providing memorable programs aimed at enriching young lives and providing invaluable instructors who will be a positive role model while developing long-term relationships with educators and community. Because of the Sean O'Shea Foundation, students at multiple schools across San Diego County had yoga in their curriculum. The number of participating schools and young yogis will more than triple this fall as more students and schools are hearing about the outpouring of positive experiences of those that participated this past spring.

The Sean O'Shea Foundation will be celebrating the success of its first year at the foundations Celebration "Fiesta" this September 28, 2008. The foundation will be hosting a Latin-inspired fiesta at the Encinitas Community Center. Fare from local restaurants, professional dancers, live music, silent auction and many surprises are guaranteed at this event. The foundation has began working on the event this past spring and intends on establishing this celebration as an annual event that people across southern California mark on their calendar each year. We welcome the public to support this foundation by attending this memorable event. To purchase tickets, go to www.seanosheafoundation.org or email goya59@yahoo.com.

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programs in risk schools, targeting at children, produce many positive outcomes and statistically significant findings. These included that yoga class participation helped students improve their attitude towards themselves, improve students' behavior and physical health, as well as helped students perform better in school academically. (Slovacek, Tucker, & Pantoja, 2003). Yoga practice increases young people's awareness and their ability to look within, to think independently and trust themselves. This promotes feelings of self-confidence and peace, affirming students' ability to engage the world with positive expectations. Besides the physical benefits of yoga, it can help improve a child's ability to focus, concentrate and listen, and it develops flexibility, strength and self-discipline.

In addition, we will be adding a nutritional seminar for all our participants. This seminar will teach the students to:

- ◆ Increase awareness of the nutritional link to long term health
- ◆ Increase awareness of marketing budgets and demographics in relation to the target age group
- ◆ Decrease overall risk of health issues by offering education on proper fiber, antioxidant and water intake.

Our students will easily be able to add one or more healthy snack/foods into their daily life by the end of the first nutritional session and the number of students who can recite basic nutrition do's and don'ts will be 100%.

I hope this letter has given you a good example of our program. I welcome any questions or suggestions...our hearts are always open to changes for success...after all...our precious young participants are priceless to us and to our community!

Our youth program committee and advisory committee have taken many, many hours to provide this dynamic yoga curriculum. We recently gathered to develop a consensus of all the before and after evaluations from each participating student. In conclusion, 100% of our participants said that yoga gave them a sense of peace, relaxation and calmness. Approximately 80% said they want to continue practicing yoga. Some said they improved on grades and others said they were not nervous during state testing. Some said they do not fight with their siblings any more and some said they take time to play with younger siblings. Many said they are more patient and more tolerant. Most said that they now have a more optimistic outlook and some said they felt they could be themselves while in our yoga program. Sean, are you listening? I bet you are smiling cheek to cheek.

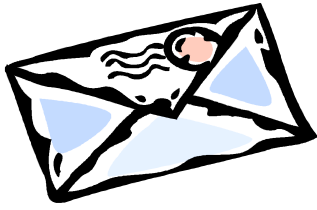
I leave you with a quote I once shared at my commencement speech in 2001...

"I can think of no better way to thank those who have inspired us...than to simply follow their example".

Gloria O'Shea

Letter From a Friend

By Jeff Leininger



Hi stranger/friend(s),
I worked with Sean at the Sporting Club, just for the last ten months or so...I was at the class this morning...thank you

for making it available to his students. here, I just wanted to share some thoughts with you that I sent to some of his colleagues at the club.

My close friend died six months ago from a heart attack - he was 42. Sean is 32. Both are beyond tragic. In some ways, however, my fiends death

followed the natural laws of cause and effect, while Sean's didn't. It only seems like chaos. What's striking me so sharply is how differently I feel about these two deaths. With my fiend, sadness ran deep, of course, but most of it came from a nostalgic remembering. With Sean, as he was my teacher, I feel a different and heavier loss. I've known him for

nearly nine months, took three classes with him a week, and felt like I was just stumbling on a new direction because of him. Believe it; I was drawn to him, like most other students, not in terms of physical possession/attraction, but as an inspiration. As students, we loved and cherished him because we wanted to be more like him. I was excited because of what was in store for me under his direction. Sometimes when I would watch him - he had a quiet strength about him. **Article Continued see below...**

108 Sun Salutations



Rich McGowan leading the 108 Sun Salutations

Recently, nearly 30 people from across southern California met at Moonlight beach in Encinitas to honor Sean O'Shea, the beginning of summer and the foundation with 108 sun salutations. Gloria O'Shea, Executive Director of the foundation as well as Sean's mother said afterwards, "It was one of Sean's favorite beaches since childhood. He taught the monks from Deer Park to surf there as well as many other people, many of them youth. The 108 was a tradition that Sean enjoyed practicing and leading for all seasons and each New Year." The next 108 sun salutations the foundation will sponsor will most likely be on Sean's birth date in December. On behalf of the foundation, we would like to thank all those who participated and especially Rich McGowan for leading the event.

Letter from a Friend Continued...

His leadership was most palpable in his silence-- in his energy and deliberate movements. His power was clean and immanent. I've never met a man who accomplished the delicate balance of masculinity, egolessness, patience, strength and gentleness as he did. I've never met anyone so young and self-possessed. Yes, he was stunning to look at as he accomplished his poses, but he was more amazing to talk to and experience because of the calmness he gave to each of his listeners. I'm remembering, through his teachings and short stories, that despite any pain and tragedy, we all have a reserve of strength, stillness, a center, a breath. You all reminded me of this earlier today. Thank you.

Just two weeks ago I asked him what I should think of when I was doing a pose or movement that was uncomfortable or even painful. He said think of nothing - feel the air moving in and out of your body - appreciate what it feels like to be alive. Perhaps, in certain situations -- occasions that seem so senseless -- we can become our only teachers by reminding ourselves nothing is as powerful as our mindful, soulful, and sensuous experience of life. To feel more is to live more.

I also feel a deep sense of loss for Sean because I can't remember any other person in several years whose interest in teaching me was based on no other reason than my will to learn. I'm grieving the potential in me that will be more

difficult to access because I will no longer have his instruction.

Except for the Wednesday class I took at four seasons, two thirds of the classes I took from him, I didn't pay for (part of my complimentary membership at the sporting club)...nonetheless, he was whole-heartedly interested in my learning only because of what it could bring to my life. The only value attached to his instruction was in the process and it wasn't measured against anything else, i.e. money, time, etc. he gave to his students, like a parent does to a child. He taught because he wanted the student to grow, to do the right thing. As we sometimes struggle financially, it's almost impossible not to attach a monetary value to relationships, giving, time, etc. Gifts frequently don't exist outside of our families apart from ego. And if they do, they sometimes are a means for something else. This wasn't my experience with Sean.

Again, compared to him, this is why sometimes, I think, I wasn't the greatest English school teacher words, ego, my time, and my expectations got in the way. I'm not sure how one has the capacity to give like he did...I'm not sure if it's even selfless giving - as it's unclear to me where his self ended and our will to learn began. There was no exchange. It was an uninterrupted flow. His self was/is the actual giving, the two remain inseparable.

With peace,
Jeff Leininger

Words From Sean



In this month's newsletter I would like to share with you a few words that were very important to Sean and he lived his life everyday to live up to this creed. Sean and I shared a beautiful banner for many years that had the creed scripted on it. When either Sean or I were going through a difficult time in our lives we would call the other and talk about what we were going through and within days the creed would be at our front door. The creed has traveled all over the world. If I was in Europe and having a hard time Sean sent me the creed, when he was in San Francisco I sent him the creed, it has been to Iowa, Costa Rica, England, Spain, all over. It was a blessing to us both and helped us through many difficult times in our life and continues to be my rock. I encourage you to print this creed out and display it on your desk at work, on your fridge, in your car...wherever you will see it everyday and be able to read it. Hopefully the creed will bring you optimism and peace of mind and Sean will be smiling down on all of us helping us to live our life by the creed. ~Mercedes~ (Sean's sister)

Optimists CREED Promise Yourself -

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.