



Story photos by Charles Montague

Scene one:

On a knoll with expansive views of West Los Angeles, Tara Guber has created the ultimate spiritual yoga sanctuary, The Yoga House. Here, she offers private evenings and intimate workshops where leading teachers in spirituality, healing, and higher consciousness share their wisdom and insight with those walking a spiritual path.

Scene two: In the middle of the inner city of South Central Los Angeles lies Tara's dharma, passion, and inspiration: The Accelerated School. Built on the site of a former garment manufacturing plant, it has become an innovative model charter public school that incorporates yoga and meditation into the curriculum, a project empowered by Tara's love and commitment to children. "I feel so blessed to be able to bring meditation skills to kids in the inner city," she says. "The results have been impressive."

"I'm grateful to the board because they listened to my dream of giving children back to themselves . . . helping them get in touch with their inner mentor. We spend so much money trying to help our children from the outside, but I believe there is an inner mentor and when we get in touch with it, it helps us discipline ourselves." Tara calls it taking a "time in" instead of a "time out." Time in means stopping and going inside and taking a moment. Asking, what can I do? And, who can I be, in this moment? "You don't have to know anybody, go anywhere, or buy anything," says Tara. "You only have to stop and be. It's the easiest thing in the world. Everyone has the ability to do this."

"Teachers and children have found that when the classroom gets silent, the energy changes; the children's school work and their relationships with teachers, peers, and parents improve. The yoga helps the kids to concentrate, and, says Tara, "When children are centered and focused they do better on tests and presentations. And not only are the kids enjoying the yoga, but the teachers and parents want to learn now, too!"

"I like the Butterfly pose . . . it made me feel like I was flying."

—Erika, 2nd grade

Yoga is incorporated into the curriculum through the physical education classes. Approximately half of the class time is physical exercise and half is yoga. Tara explains, "The class comes together in a circle. Often the children create their own postures and share their favorite postures with the class. The instructor asks the children what they would like to accomplish for the day. Then they close their eyes and we teach them how to create clear intentions for themselves. It is so empowering for the kids."

Tara, with the support of her friends, is also providing a Yoga House on the campus for the students and for the community—a house of Spirit, as she calls it, that provides meditation, yoga, therapy, and a mind-body wellness library. "Once Spirit resides in a space, the energy is transformed," she says. The children will use the Yoga House during the day and it will be available to the community after school lets out.

Tara has been practicing yoga for twenty-four years. Her dream was to create a model school with yoga and meditation in the curriculum.

Tara helping Accelerated School students with their yoga poses. The children's response to yoga and meditation has been overwhelmingly positive.