



# Funds Distribution Report

## Recipient Organization:

**Yoga Behind Bars**

## Address:

3161 Elliott Ave, Suite 350  
Seattle, WA 98121

## Mailing Address:

PO Box 84497  
Seattle, WA 98124

## Contact:

(206) 783-0403  
<https://yogabehindbars.org>

## Organization's General Goals:

We advocate for restorative justice solutions, holistic re-entry services, and the removal of other barriers that prevent formerly incarcerated people to rebuild their lives upon release. We work with the WA State corrections leadership to create opportunities within the system, including yoga classes for prison staff and yoga teacher trainings for incarcerated people.

## Date of Award:

2019 Q2

## Level:

\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Yoga Behind Bars.

8802 27th Ave NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271

**TulalipCares.org**

Disclaimer: This report may be a summary of content provided by the recipient, not always complete quoted material.



January 9, 2020

Re: Tulalip Cares Fund Beneficiary Report: **Q2 2019 14.2**

Dear Marilyn,

On behalf of the Yoga Behind Bars Staff, Board of Directors, Volunteers, and the thousands of people we serve, I send my sincere thanks to the Tulalip Tribe for your meaningful gift of \$[REDACTED] to support our general operations in 2019. With your partnership, we can continue to bring critical tools of healing to incarcerated people, helping us build a healthier and more integrated world for all.

### **YOUR IMPACT**

Your generous contribution to Yoga Behind Bars (YBB) helped bring transformative experiences to thousands of people in incarceration. Last year we hosted approximately 32 trauma-informed yoga classes each week in 15 correctional facilities - totaling to approximately 1,700 classes throughout 2019.

Our students were able to connect with over 50 volunteer teachers – all of which bring compassionate and specialized skills to support every person in class. Ultimately, we were able to connect with approximately 4,000 unique adults and youth, providing tools that support mental health, self-worth, and overall well-being.



*Marriam, one of YBB's incarcerated instructors teaching class at  
WA Corrections Center for Women*

Alongside our service reach, we continue to learn about the personal experiences of our students; each journey

expressed continues to underscore the vitality of this work. Below are several examples of the testimonies that our students have shared with us:

"Yoga reminds me of who I really am. Sometimes we forget and we slip, but in yoga class, I can get back on the path."

"Thank you for your time and caring. Yoga is a very calming force in my life, and a way to bond with my loved ones through my practice and theirs. Know that your efforts and compassion have been well spent and your appreciated. Thank you."

"Today I developed a sense of gratitude because of yoga."

“I think that a lot of people have fear about coming into prison because they don’t know what to really expect. But we’re humans that just made mistakes. And I can tell you that we are very grateful for the volunteers that come in...it means a lot to us.”

## **ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES**

Not only has your gift helped us continue our trauma-informed yoga services, but also you have helped position us for areas growth and refinement within our organization. We are excited to share several recent updates:

### ***New Leadership***

In August 2019, YBB welcomed Julian Saucier as the organization’s new Executive Director. Julian comes to YBB from RI International of Washington State, a nonprofit mental health crisis services firm empowering individuals in recovery, where he spent eight years as a peer counselor and support



*Julian at WA Corrections Center for Women*

services manager. Throughout most of his tenure at RI, Julian also served on YBB’s board of directors including most recently as board chair. Previously, Julian worked in information technology for America West Airlines, Florists’ Transworld Delivery, Chicago Public Schools and the New York State Department of Health. He also owned and operated two small businesses in Arizona.

In addition to his rich business and nonprofit experience, the board is pleased to share that the organization will, for the first time in its history, be led by someone who reflects the students we serve, and who has been personally impacted by yoga as an incarcerated person. Julian learned yoga while incarcerated for several years in the Federal Bureau of Prisons and says practicing yoga personally changed his life.

### ***Prenatal Yoga Behind Bars***

YBB was fortunate to work with Kimberleigh Weiss-Lewit from Liberation Prison Yoga and partner Birth Beyond Bars for an inaugural Prenatal Yoga Teacher Training - both for our volunteer teachers and our incarcerated teachers. This provided the background we needed to support our Teachers Behind Bars to offer prenatal yoga to pregnant, parenting, and postpartum womxn who are held in the Washington Correctional Center for Women – a facility where many of the parents are able to have their babies within the facility’s nursery.

### ***Youth Curriculum Evaluation***

YBB continues to reflect on the impact of our services in order to best support our communities. In 2018 and 2019, we received feedback from the young people serve that many struggled to connect with our current class structure. Thus, our program staff created a “listening tour,” where we hosted focus groups with youth, officers, and YBB teachers at the facilities we serve in Washington to learn about challenges, questions, and impactful aspects of our classes. Through this process, we plan to refine our trauma-informed yoga curriculum to have tools and structures specific to youth needs – such as refining

class length, communication techniques, and relationship-building emphasis. We worked closely with our two long-term facilities where we teach youth - Echo Glen Children's Center and Green Hill School, as well as a similar organization, Holistic Life Foundation, to train us and our teachers in October, 2019. We expect to launch our new curriculum later in 2020.

Thank you again for your meaningful gift for Yoga Behind Bars. Together, we can offer compassionate and effective supports that help address the complexities of trauma for people impacted by incarceration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to learn more about the impact of your gift, as well as other ways to become involved at YBB.



*YBB staff with the Holistic Life Foundation*

With Gratitude,

Amara Oden  
Development Director  
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