



community | seva in action



# RISING LOTUS SEVA PROJECT

Offering yoga with  
an open heart

BY KELLY VOGT CAMPBELL



The Rising Lotus Seva Project, a nonprofit organization that brings Yoga into underserved communities and people in need throughout Los Angeles, has been working in a variety of settings since 2009. The Seva Project has brought Yoga to domestic violence shelters, mental health facilities, safe houses for victims of human trafficking, and centers for homeless youth. The program recently expanded to offer classes for members of the Los Angeles Fire Department and LAMP, a homeless services agency on Skid Row.

The project stems from Rising Lotus co-owner Claire Hartley's desire to offer the healing potential of Yoga to the people who need it most. The Project, which also cultivates community through organizing kirtan gatherings and other events, celebrated a kickoff fundraiser in March, with plans for more in the future.

"I was inspired to start the Rising Lotus Seva Project by our community at the studio," said Claire. "Over the years I've been fortunate to see many transformations of

people's personal energy as well as my own, and I wanted to find a way to channel this to others who might not necessarily have the opportunity to start a Yoga practice or be introduced to the healing properties of Yoga."

The Project is a pragmatic expansion of the studio's teacher-training program. "We've been training these incredible teachers and it felt like an obvious path for them to gain experience and serve," Claire explains.

Shannon Baker, a Yoga teacher, bodyworker and peer counselor speaks about her experience teaching former victims of human trafficking, "As a Yoga practitioner and teacher in a studio, it's easy to get caught up in the more esoteric aspects of the practice. However, when I'm working with these women, there's no talk about philosophy – by just putting them into the poses, I watch as the practice does the work."

For more information or for teachers to sign up, check out the project page on Facebook or visit:

[Risinglotussevaprosject.org](http://Risinglotussevaprosject.org)