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# Mountain Movement: The Design, Implementation, & Evaluation of a Youth Yoga Program

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**MOUNTAIN MOVEMENT:  
THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A  
YOUTH YOGA PROGRAM**

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PIM 70

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May 25, 2012  
Advisor: Professor John Ungerleider

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## **ABSTRACT**

Mountain Movement is a youth yoga program designed to introduce children to the sustainable practice of yoga as well as convey the ability to recognize stress and utilize relaxation techniques. Children face a number of challenges throughout their daily lives. These challenges, ranging from academic pressures to bullying, can create stresses with negative impacts. Yoga is an activity that can provide children with tools and methods to better deal with and cope with these challenges. Mountain Movement has demonstrated that a youth yoga program can favorable impact children while remaining simple to implement and requiring minimal logistic support.

## **Introduction**

Childhood is a time of continual change. Children therefore face a number of challenges in their daily lives. As I believe strongly that the hearts and minds of today's youth are the key to our planet's future, I have committed my professional life to serving children. In considering a capstone project, I sought to combine my own experience and talents with a clear need. Yoga has assumed a significant role in my own life, and I am a certified yoga instructor. The introduction of children to yoga and to related relaxation techniques seemed to be a natural fit. I have therefore undertaken the design, implementation and evaluation of a youth yoga program, a Youth Program Leadership Course Linked Capstone.

The practicum phase of my Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management Master's Program has been based in the communities of Buena Vista and Leadville, Colorado. I have served as Program Coordinator of the Boys and Girls Club of Chaffee County, Buena Vista site. This role has also facilitated access to other youth programs in the region, specifically the Chaffee County High School, an alternative public education program, and Leadville's Full Circle of Lake County, a non-profit community service program that targets at risk children and their parents. All three of these organizations allowed me to offer a youth yoga program.

I have titled the program Mountain Movement, in reference to the basic Mountain posture in yoga and the surrounding landscape of the "High Rockies." The following literature review should clarify the need for such a program, provide an introduction to yoga and its practice, and then consider youth program design. I then focus on the design of Mountain Movement, its implementation at the three different sites, and an evaluation of the program. I am confident that this work can serve as a model for a simple, inexpensive youth program with tangible benefits for the children who participate.

## **Literature Review**

### **Childhood Challenges**

Childhood is often portrayed as a time of innocence, wonder and simple joys. While we hope that is at least partially true for every child, childhood is also a time of rapid physical, intellectual and emotional development. If nothing else, childhood is a time of constant change. There is therefore always the potential for stress. Frequent stressors include: problems at home, hunger and illness, self-identity, social relationships, bullying and aggressive behaviors, and academic pressures to name only a few.

The many challenges facing youth today are potential sources of stress in their lives. Stress is caused by a negative interaction between an individual and their surrounding environment. (Allen & Klein, 1996). Ruth Arent, (1984) a leader in the field of youth stress, explains, “stress is the emotional condition that one feels when it is necessary to cope with unsettling, frustrating or harmful situations. It is a disturbing sense of helplessness, perhaps futility, that one feels when there are a number of problems to solve. It is uncomfortable. It can create uncertainty and self-doubt.” (p. iii). Dr. James H. Humphrey, who studied child learning through motor activities, argues that frequent exposure to stress creates anxiety. (Allen & Klein). In turn, anxiety has a disturbing effect on a child’s personality. These characteristics include dependence, low self-concept, rigidity, aggressive behavior, defensiveness, guilt, and disturbed relationships with peers as well as teachers and parents.

Stress and anxiety can cause physical responses in a child’s body. When faced with a stressful situation, a fight or flight response will be initiated. The adrenal glands begin to secrete catecholamine hormones, which will in turn act on the autonomic nervous system. A child will experience an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, alertness, and muscle tension. The body

also reacts by suppressing other systems such as digestion and elimination. (Curtis & Detert, 1981). Dr. Judith Lasater, (1995) author of *Relax & Renew*, believes that this response was beneficial for survival thousands of years ago. However she feels that in today's world this is not always the case.

“To his detriment, modern man is often unable to resolve his stress so directly, and lives chronically stressed as a result. Still responding to fight or flight response, the adrenals continue to pump stress hormones. The body does not benefit from nutrition because the digestion and elimination systems are slowed down. Even sleep is disturbed by this agitated state. In a chronically stressed state, quality of life, and perhaps life itself, is at risk. The body's capacity to heal itself is compromised, either inhibiting recovery from an existing illness or injury, or creating a new one.” (p. 4-5).

Health issues potentially related to or accentuated by stress include neck, shoulder, and back pain, arthritis, asthma, depression, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and deficiencies of the immune system. Lynea and Jim Gillen (2007), creators of *Yoga Calm for Children*, explain that in the face of sustained stress “in children, emotional and physical development may be impaired. And unhealthy ways of reacting to and interacting with the world may become entrenched.” (p. 23).

One stressor that is a topic of increasing concern among youth is bullying. This is due to the serious and continuous harm and suffering many children are experiencing in school systems, youth organizations, and even their neighborhood communities. Bullying, as defined by Ken Rigby (2008) author of *Children and Bullying*, is “the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relationships.” (p. 22). Naomi Drew (2010) of *No Kidding About Bullying* sites the Journal of the American Medical Association, explaining the consequences of continuous abuse. “Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to be depressed, lonely, anxious, have low self-esteem, feel unwell, and think about suicide.” (p. 2). Much attention and research have been focused on the victims of bullying, yet the *bully* is involved as well. Why is that child

acting out against another? The killings at Columbine High School in Colorado 1999, forced the public to view bullying in a different perspective, the “victims become the bullies.” (Rigby, p. 3). They too are experiencing the same symptoms and stressors as their victim. The Center of Social and Emotional Behavior believes that those involved with bullying are disrupted from normal development and their learning potential is impaired. Even going so far as to say, “this type of harassment leads to significant adolescent and adult psychiatric problems.” (Drew, p. 2).

The rise in electronic media, especially that of violent genres, is also a subject of concern for children’s health, emotional well being and academic development. Jeffrey Allen and Roger Klein (1996), researchers of relaxation, learning, and self-esteem in children, have found that an average 18 year old has spent 16,000 hours in front of the television and one third of that time portrays acts of violence. “Time spent on television, and video games has also been linked to increases in obesity and antisocial behavior, loss of quality sleep and an accompanying increase in health problems, and decrease in reading scores.” (Gillen & Gillen, p. 16). Bullying itself, as defined above, has also been linked to technology, in the form of cyber bullying. Harassment and harm can be caused by “sending threatening emails or text messages, or involves setting up defamatory websites.” (Rigby, p. 26). This subject has developed into a recent concern with the increased exposure and access to technology. A victim of cyber bullying or viewer of violent media will feel particularly distressed and powerless. They may be unaware of who the harasser is, and consider the risk of informing a parent or teacher too high, because they don’t want their phone or internet access taken away. (Rigby, p. 137).

Academic pressures are a significant source of stress among youth as well. In today’s school systems there is an imbalanced emphasis on standardized tests, which has proven to produce less than satisfactory results in terms of broader learning. (Gillen & Gillen). The No

Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has focused on standardized tests in evaluating both schools and students. In Colorado students are required to take the CSAP, Colorado Student Assessment Program. Taken by grades three through ten each academic year, this test seeks to measure student achievement, track progress, and determine literacy. (Colorado Department of Education, 2012). Allen and Klein explain, “test anxiety is a near universal experience, especially in this country [United States of America], which is a test-giving and test-conscious culture.” (p. 13-14). Allen and Klein go on to express that stress created by test taking consistently resulted in poorer performance on IQ tests. Not only are youth suffering from apprehension created by tests, but they are also experiencing strain from everyday classroom achievement. Competition among students and pressure to succeed placed on a child by parents and teachers lead to higher anxiety.

While home can be a refuge, a child’s home life can also be a source of strain and worry. According to Avis Brenner, author of *Helping Children Cope with Stress*, damaging stresses in a child’s family life can be measured on a scale. An example of an event that causes ordinary stress would be jealousy of a new sibling. Events such as divorce, death, abuse, separation, etc., however, are at the “severe extreme of the spectrum and are those stressors which are so long-lasting that they require the child to make major personality changes to survive.” (Allen & Klein, p. 7). These and other tragedies in a child’s life can be assessed by the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory chart, as seen in Table 1, created by The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc. (Gillen & Gillen, p. 22). By totaling the mean value of a life event experienced by a child, one can predict the impact in terms of stress on the child’s life.

Table 1: Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory (Modified for Children)

Life Event	Mean Value	Life Event	Mean Value
1. A parent has died	100	21. Losing or being robbed of a valuable possession	30
2. Parents have divorced	73	22. Major changes in responsibilities at home	29
3. Parents have separated	65	23. Sibling leaves home	29
4. Separation from parents	63	24. Trouble with relatives	29
5. Death of close family member	63	25. Outstanding personal achievement Recognition	28
6. Major personal injury or illness	53	26. Major change in living condition	25
7. Remarriage of parent	50	27. Personal habits change	24
8. A parent fired or you were expelled from school	47	28. Trouble with teacher	23
9. Parents got back together after separation	45	29. Major change in school schedule	20
10. parent stops working to stay at home or returns to work	45	30. Change in where you live	20
11. Major change of health or behavior of family member	44	31. Changing to a new school	20
12. Pregnancy of family member	40	32. Major change in amount of physical Recreation	19
13. Problems in school	39	33. Major change in religious activities	19
14. Gaining a new family member	39	34. Major change in school activities	18
15. Major school change	39	35. Major change in sleep habits	16
16. Family financial state changes a great deal	38	36. Major change in family gatherings	15
17. Death or serious illness of close friend	37	37. Major change in eating habits	15
18. A new activity begins	36	38. Vacation	13
19. Major change in # of arguments with family members	35	39. Holidays or birthdays	12
20. Feeling threatened	31	40. Punished for doing something wrong	11

(Gillen & Gillen, p. 22).

The detrimental effects of stress on children underscore the need to develop ways for children to manage or counteract stress. “The physical changes in the brain’s neural pathways provide added incentive for us to provide children’s brains an opportunity for optimal growth.” (Allen & Klein, p. 20). Dr. Herbert Benson (1976) of Harvard Medical School and author of the *Relaxation Response* suggests a solution.

“Each of us possesses a natural and innate protective mechanism against ‘over-stress,’ which allows us to turn off harmful bodily effects, to counter the effects of the fight or flight response. This response against ‘over-stress’ brings on bodily changes that decrease heart rate, lower metabolism, decrease the rate of breathing, and bring the body back into what is probably a healthier balance. This is the Relaxation Response. (p. 25).

Benson’s relaxation response involves four simple elements; quiet environment, comfortable breathing positions, positive and passive attitude, as well as mental devices such as repeated self-talk.

Benson’s ideas as well as those of others in the field call for action. Children need to be provided with the tools and methods in order to cope with any and all negative factors arising in their lives. There is a need for a more balanced education. The Yoga Calm creators believe that “we have the privilege of observing the fragile beauty of children’s open hearts and minds, we understand how important it is to provide them with a safe and supportive environment, the tools for self-discovery, and the skills they will need to maneuver successfully through life.” (p. 15). Gillen and Gillen go on to express that the issue at need is the “reduction of children’s stress while balancing academics with more support and training in physical and emotional health.” (p.17) An emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of a holistic solution.

There are a variety of strategies for children and their families in this holistic approach. Recreation in general has been proven to benefit youth greatly. Researchers at the University of Florida, Kate Fogarty and Caroline Payne (2009), state, “sports provide numerous opportunities for children and teenagers to grow socially, emotionally, and physically.” (p. 2). Other options include extra curricular activities, offering youth a safe place to learn and grow, an opportunity to create solid, stimulating relationships, and hope for the future. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a nationally recognized after school program, states a clear goal: “to enable all young people to realize their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.” (“Boys & Girls,”

2012). They accomplish this by offering programs in five core areas. These include education and career development, character and leadership development, health and life skills, the arts, and sports, fitness, and recreation.

There are also emerging programs and opportunities for youth relaxation and stress management. There are a wide range of initiatives offered nationally to allow children to participate in stress reduction and wellness activities. Examples include Calming Kids, Yoga Calm, Yoga Ed., and Ready Set Relax. These programs share the mission of empowering children to manage their own behavior and attitudes towards themselves and others. Yoga Calm and Yoga Ed. are youth programs that incorporate the practice of yoga to promote academic achievement, fitness, emotional intelligence and stress management. (Gillen & Gillen, “Yoga Ed,” 2011). Calming Kids is a Colorado non-profit that implements anti-bullying yoga programs into the public school systems. (Marie, 2006). And Ready, Set, Relax is a research based program endorsing relaxation, learning, and self esteem for children. (Allen & Klein). These relaxation programs have all encompassed the practice of yoga. They believe this traditional practice emphasizes and incorporates mindfulness, physical exercise, emotional support and guidance, and social development with the ultimate goal of stress management and reduction, creating a happier and healthy future for youth.

## **Yoga**

For many in the Western world, the word yoga implies an Eastern approach to physical fitness and healthy exercise. Yet, the actual physical practice is just one aspect of Yoga. Yoga is “involved with three dimensions or realms: physical, mental, and spiritual.” (Rama, 1998, p. 9). The process of yoga is to unite these pieces in one’s self. In the ancient language of Sanskrit, yoga is a derivative of the root word *yuj*, which means to join or to yoke. (Iyengar, 2008).

B.K.S. Iyengar, founder of Iyengar Yoga and one of today's most renowned yoga gurus, believes that yoga practice leads to union and synchronization between the mind, body, and spirit. This will enable one to achieve *samadhi*, or self-realization and full consciousness. (Iyengar). The aim of yoga "is nothing less than the total transformation of a seemingly limited physical, mental and emotional person into a fully illumined, thoroughly harmonized and perfected being." (Satchidananda, 2009, p. xiii).

The history of yoga is somewhat obscure, as the practice predates written language. However there are stone carvings and drawings depicting yoga postures that have been found in the Indus Valley region, dating from more than 5,000 years ago. ("American Yoga Associate," 2006). The first fully recognized yoga scripture is included in the *Mahabharata*, an Indian epic poem, estimated to have been written around 400 B.C. The sixth book in the *Mahabharata* is known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Gita relates the story of a Hindu deity, Krishna, and Arjuna, who had been exiled from his home kingdom. Arjuna, seeking revenge, returns to wage war. Stefanie Syman (2010), author of *The First Books of Yoga*, relates his reactions and conclusions.

"Arjuna, a famed archer, is poised to fight. But he hesitates. He sees arrayed against him friends, teachers, and kin, and believes that to fight—and likely kill—these men would be to commit a grievous sin and could bring nothing good even if he were to win the kingdom back. Krishna chides him for his cowardice—Arjuna is from the warrior caste after all, and warriors are meant to fight—but then he goes on to present a spiritual rationale for not battling his enemies, one that encompasses a discussion of the *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* yogas, as well as the nature of divinity, humankind's ultimate destiny, and the purpose of mortal life." (p. 3).

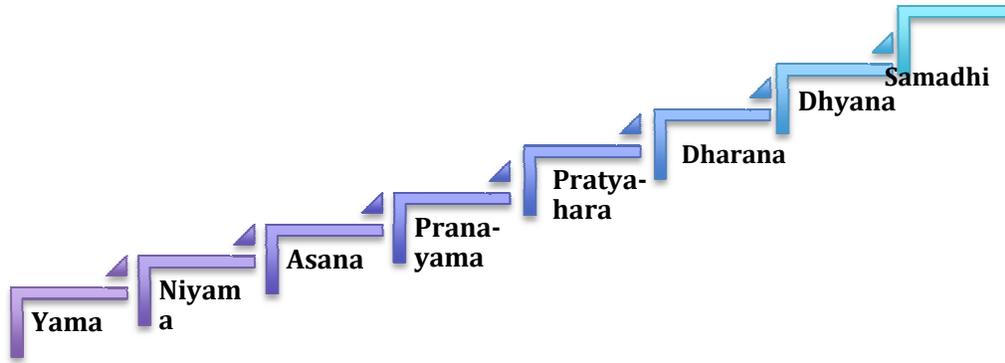
Dr. Judith Lasater (2000) explains in her book, *Living Your Yoga*, "their dialogue is a metaphor for the struggle we must all face between our attachments and our clarity- fight the good fight, to continue to live with courage, and to accept the challenges that life presents." (p. xxii). The first documented encounter by a foreigner with yoga was by Onesikritoc, Alexander the Great's companion, in 326 B.C. (Lanman, 1918). He was successful in translating the rudiments of the

Indian's beliefs. "The drift of the talk, he said, came to this, that that is the best doctrine, which rids the spirit not only of grief but also of joy; and again, that that dwelling place is the best, for which the scantiest equipment or outfit is needed." (Lanman, p. 358).

It was, however, the yogic sage Patanjali Maharishi, known as the Father of Yoga (Iyengar), who was the first to organize and record in a systematic way what had previously been a somewhat amorphous spectrum of yogic ideas. Approximately 2,000 years ago, Patanjali outlined 200 *Yoga Sutras* (Satchidananda). The translation of the Sanskrit word "sutra" is a thread or thought. Sri Swami Satchidananda, a translator of Patanjali's *Sutras* as well as a revered modern yoga master, explains that, "within the space of these 200 short *Sutras*, the entire science of yoga is clearly delineated: its aim, the necessary practices, the obstacles you may meet along the path, their removal, and precise descriptions of the results that will be obtained from such practices." (Satchidananda, p. 1). These yoga *Sutras* delineate the most fundamental ideas of yoga theory and practice (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* further condense yoga into eight limbs or steps known in Sanskrit as *Ashtanga*. These eight limbs, as seen in Figure 1, will guide one who practices on the royal path or *raja yoga*. (Anderson & Sovik). Iyengar believes these aphorisms are the "codes of ethical behavior which will ultimately lead to self-realization." (p. 52). Cyndi Lee (2004), a yoga practitioner and creator of OM Yoga studios, agrees. "The limbs begin by refining our behavior in the outer world, then lead us more and more inward until we reach samadhi." (p. 10). The 8 limbs are *Yama*, *Niyam*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*. Please refer to Table 2 for English translation.

Figure 1: Ashtanga: The 8 Limbs of Raja Yoga



(Sivananda, 1996, p. 7)

Table 2: Ashtanga: The 8 Limbs of Raja Yoga (English Translation)

The 8 Limbs	English Translation
Yama	Restraints
Niyama	Observances
Asana	Postures
Pranayama	Breath Control
Pratyahara	Sense Withdrawal
Dharana	Concentration
Dhyana	Meditation
Samadi	Self-Realization

(Anderson & Sovik, p. 3).

Yama and Niyama, known as the moral limbs, are to be observed in one’s everyday life. (Wood, 1988). The principals of Yama and Niyama, are as follows: nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from avarice and desire, chastity, cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of one’s self, and devotion. These fundamental responsibilities provide a guideline or code in order for social beings to frame their behaviors. (Iyengar).

Asana, the aspect of yoga that most of the modern world is familiar with, involves the physical movement of yoga. The past yogic sage Gheranda explained, “The body soon decays like unbaked earthen pots thrown in water. Strengthen and purify the body by baking it in the fire of yoga.” (Iyengar, p. 53). The purpose of postures is to create strength and stability.

Patanjali, in Yoga Sutra III.47, characterized the effects of an asana. “*Rupa Lavanya Bala Vajrasamhanantvani Kayasampat*: Beauty, grace, strength, and adamant hardness constitute bodily perfection.” (Satchidananda, p. 197).

Breath work, or Pranayama, coincides with Asana. *Prana* in Sanskrit translates to vital energy. (Iyengar). Swami Rama (1998), founder of the Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy, believes that pranayama is the control of breath that will sustain the mind and body. Pranayama, when performed with precision and rhythm, will internalize energy, allowing the mind to be prepared for the fifth limb of sense withdrawal, Pratyahara. (Satchidananda). Iyengar clarifies that “when the senses withdraw from objects of desire, the mind is released from the power of the senses, which in turn becomes passive.” (Iyengar, p. 53).

Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadi are all grouped by Pantanjali under *Samyama* in Yoga Sutra III.4. “*Trayam Ekatra Samyamah*: The practice of these three upon one object is called Samyama.” (Satchidananda, p. 177). Iyengar explains the progression of Samyama as the union of the body, breath, mind, and spirit.

“The controlled mind that is gained in Pratyahara is made to intensify its attention on a single thought in Dharana. When this concentration is prolonged, it becomes Dhyana. In Dhyana, release, expansion, quietness, and peace are experienced. This prolonged state of quietness frees a person from attachment, resulting in indifference to the joys of pleasure or the sorrows of pain. The experience of Samadhi is achieved when the knower, the knowable, and the known become one.” (Iyengar, p. 53).

Once Samadhi is reached, the final step on the royal path, one will surpass imperfections and limitations, while experiencing an unimpeded current of supreme consciousness. (Rama, 1998, p. 15). Self-realization at this level is the ultimate mission of yoga.

Following these 8 limbs in their entirety may seem unapproachable. Historically, yoga was the domain of an elite few who aimed to reach a state of higher consciousness, which not many could attain. Patanjali altered this situation by making yoga more accessible, specifically

by interpreting the Yoga Sutras in simpler language. Patanjali sympathized with the pleasures and burdens of conventional people and wished for all to reach their personal potential.

(Iyengar). Satchidananda translates Yoga Sutra II.31, “These great vows are universal, not limited by class, place, time or circumstance.” (p. 126). Patanjali believed that yoga practice was still advantageous for people who were not necessarily focused upon the ultimate yogic goal, that the practice could be individualized according to their needs. “Sri Patanjali was the epitome of acceptance of all methods and of broad-mindedness of approach. He did not limit his instructions to one particular technique, to members of any particular religion or philosophy, or in any other way. ...he simply gave various possibilities to choose from.” (Satchidananda, p. xiv). Swami Rama (1998) agrees by explaining that Patanjali’s work “encompasses teachings from all different paths, and because of the variety of methods it includes, it can be practiced by people of varying backgrounds and temperaments.” (p.9).

Yoga has since evolved into a universal practice, taking many forms, yet available to all. Yoga was first introduced to the United States in 1893 when Swami Vivekananda, an English educated yogi, arrived at the East Coast to exchange ideas. (Singleton, 2010). Reflecting the variety of modern yoga practitioners and their interpretations, yoga has now become a versatile practice with many popular styles. Examples include yoga practice in a heated room such as Bikram Yoga (Bikramyoga, 2010), yoga for the disabled or war veterans as seen with Yoga Warriors (Cimini, 2006), for golfers and businessmen, and even for children. “Yoga can be tailored to suit each individual’s capabilities, allowing students to develop and improve at their own pace.” (Iyengar, p. 32).

Yoga is now truly available to all. Many are experiencing and enjoying the benefits of this extraordinary practice. Nancy Williams (2010), a yoga therapist, states, “yoga is becoming

more visible and viable as an available service in institutions and programs across the world for the myriad benefits it provides.” (p. 20). The benefits of yoga touch on all aspects of a social being from the obvious physical, but also psychological, intellectual, and emotional. Iyengar believes that “if practiced with dedication, yoga has the ability to draw our positive qualities and lessen defects. With the knowledge of anatomy, physiology, consciousness, and conscience, yoga is a science that is able to integrate the body, mind, breath, and awareness, understanding the genuine needs of each person and dealing with every aspect of health and well-being from the periphery to the core.” (p. 32).

The benefits received from the physical practice of yoga are most readily apparent. An Asana routine involves standing, seated, and relaxation poses. These will tone and strengthen muscles, lubricate joints, stimulate glands and nerves. This will maintain effective balance and functioning of all bodily systems. Dr. Rudolph M. Ballentine, recognized for being one of the first physicians to incorporate the Ayurveda medicine of India into Western medicine, believes, “By increasing the circulation to different parts of the body and restoring natural, flowing body image in the mind, a harmonious feeling of energy throughout the system can be re-established. One beneficial effect of the exercise accentuates another.” (Rama, 1998, p. x). Iyengar reminds those who practice to become comfortable and continue with Asana. It is only then that the practitioner will receive the full benefits. Patanjali stated this in Yoga Sutra II.46 and 47. “Asana is a steady, comfortable posture. By lessening the natural tendency for restlessness and by meditating on the infinite, posture is mastered.” (Satchidananda, p. 154).

Mental and emotional benefits are evident as well. A practice of yoga can aid in minimizing and even dissolving stress. Iyengar believes that the chaos of modern living diminishes our energy. This will leave one feeling exhausted with unrelieved tension leading to

the breakdown of mental and physical equilibrium. “Yoga science believes that the nerves control the unconscious mind, and that when the nervous system is strong, a person faces stressful situations more positively.” (Iyengar, p. 41). Sustaining the nervous system involves maximum airflow throughout one’s body. The diaphragmatic muscle controls air intake. When one is in a stressful situation the diaphragm will tense, and limit the potential amount of the oxygen available to the body. With the combination of Asana and Pranayama, however, the body will correct its posture and allow for an uninhibited flow of energy. (Rama, 1998). Iyengar continues by arguing that when this happens invading fears and anxieties will cease. “You enter a state of true clarity of intellect. Your mind is free of stress and is filled with calm and tranquility.” (p. 41). All who practice yoga will benefit from the physical and mental stability that is created, providing confidence and balance to live a positive life.

### **Benefits of Youth Yoga**

Youth can experience all the same benefits from yoga as can adults, and potentially even more during the formative years of their lives. Helen Purperhart (2007) of *The Yoga Adventures for Children* quotes Swami Satyananda Saraswati, author of *Yoga Education for Children*.

Saraswati expresses in a metaphor how youth may grow through the practice of yoga.

“When you want to plant a garden with flowers and trees, what do you do first? Do you just sprinkle seeds? Many people might do that, but not much would grow. First you have to prepare the ground. You break up the earth and pull out the weeds. Then you can plant seeds, and they will grow into beautiful flowers and trees. The same goes for the human spirit. Just like the earth, the spirit needs to be prepared in order to allow things to grow. Practicing yoga is like working on your own garden so that the quality of your consciousness is able to develop. If a person has a spirit with good soil and without weeds, all kinds of things may be planted and grown.” (p. 7-8).

Yoga is a practice and philosophy that will aid youth as they develop and grow. Marsha Wenig (2003), author of *Yoga Kids: Educating the Whole Child Through Yoga*, believes “the intention is to build a lifelong foundation for yoga, so they will continue to practice forever. Over time

and with repeated practice, their technique and form will continue to refine and improve.” (p. 15). Youth yoga will strengthen a child physically, creating greater self-confidence and awareness. It can also promote mature social skills, stabilize behavior, and in turn facilitate academic success. Most importantly, yoga aids in the reduction of stress as well as provides tools and methods to cope with challenging and stressful situations.

The asana practice of yoga for youth offers positive physical benefits. Authors Yael and Matthew Calhoun (2006) of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids: Fun, Flexibility, and Focus* believe, “the physical and physiological benefits alone – toned muscles, upright posture, a balanced nervous system, and free and healthy breathing patterns, among many others – are enough to set a child on a track that will serve her/him well throughout life.” (p. 13). The asanas, combined with breath work, will contribute to an overall feeling of well being while also bringing body awareness and motor skills to the maturing body, thus building greater self-esteem. (Williams). The Yoga Calm curriculum agrees. “Physical strength helps prevent injury and disease and develops capability, confidence, and self-esteem based on measurable outcomes.” (Gillen & Gillen, p. 27). Grounding is a main principal of Yoga Calm. Lynea and Jim Gillen believe grounding is connecting to the moment, and being physically present in one’s body and finding balance. “A strong sense of balance and other healthy sensory-motor functions are building blocks for academic, behavioral, and emotional growth.” (p. 27).

As mentioned above, yoga melds together the physical body with the mind. Yoga thus conveys emotional benefits for children. Again Gillen and Gillen add, “The social/ emotional training and guidance allow them to tell their stories, feel and express their emotions, and learn to give and receive support.” (p. 17). This allows for greater stability in behavior. Nancy Williams has found that breath work is beneficial in regulating behavior. A child learns to breath

slower and more deeply if he or she becomes impassioned. Yoga can also teach youth to remove themselves from an unhealthy environment, turning to their familiar yoga practice to help manage behavior outbursts. (Williams). Williams continues by stating, “Once a child has been able to modulate his performance by using a technique to quiet, focus and calm himself, he is on the way to improving his ability to interact and succeed in society.” (p. 24). This is confirmed by a study conducted by yoga therapist Dee Marie (2006), founder of Calming Kids. In the third year of the six day Calming Kids anti-bullying yoga program, she documented through participant questionnaires that 81% reported an increase in their ability to control anger.

Yoga is performed in a non-competitive group setting. This can provide youth with an optimal situation to build communication and social skills. “The ability to take turns, listen, observe body space, and initiate kindness are mutual aspects of a yoga class, as well as a successful social interaction.” (Williams, p. 24). Partner yoga is an option that can add to the development of these social skills. Having a partner to experiment with positions will further their progress and introduce or build relationships. Lisa Trivell (2000), author of *I Can't Believe It's Yoga for Kids*, is an advocate of partner yoga.

“Subtle lessons in relationships are demonstrated and taught through double yoga. Each child learns to give and take, while communicating mostly non-verbally. Some verbal communication is always encouraged, especially while learning the positions. Kids learn to literally bend over backwards to assist one another, while remaining centered and focused themselves. Double yoga gives children the opportunity to teach and help someone else. Whether a child practices with a friend or meets someone new, double yoga opens the door to friendship and fun.” (p. 84).

Yoga games are another way to facilitate communication and social skills. The author of *The Yoga Adventure for Children*, Helen Purperhart, explains, “Group play helps children communicate their ideas and wishes. In turn, it exposes them to other people’s viewpoints and ideas. An open exchange of thoughts can help children learn to consider each other, to trust each

other, and to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, they derive more enjoyment and better results from working together.” (p. 51).

Youth yoga also crosses over to the academic world. Lisa Trivell believes there is a strong connection between yoga and cognitive learning. “We all learn in different ways, spatially, visually, emotionally and analytically. Yoga helps us integrate and develop each of these areas of the brain.” (p. 2). The practice of yoga incorporates core subjects found throughout the school day. Marsha Wenig, in her Yoga Kids curriculum, combines Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences and the philosophy of yoga to create The Elements of Yoga Kids. These elements are “designed to stimulate and teach a multitude of ways to perceive and access information. Together, the elements create a matrix for learning.” (p. 10). Examples of academic subjects touched upon in yoga are human anatomy, geometry, the environment, language, reading, and storytelling. Creativity and use of participant’s imagination is also encouraged. “Kids have fun roaring like a lion, flying like a bird, or stretching themselves like a cat.” (Purperhart, p. 23). In yoga, youth have the ability to imitate animals, objects, or surrounding nature, even create their own postures. Thia Luby (1998), author of *Children’s Book of Yoga*, explains, “Children naturally imitate things around them and these exercises will stimulate their imaginations.” (p. 9).

Academic improvement has been documented following implementation of youth yoga. A study conducted by Yoga Ed. at The Accelerated School in South Central LA demonstrated that integrating yoga into the daily school curriculum led to significant improvement in SAT scores comparing the years 1997 through 2001. It was also highly noteworthy that school attendance with the program was 94% above the national average. In May 2001, *Time Magazine* named The Accelerated School’s primary grades Elementary School of the Year. (Slovacek,

Tucker & Pantoja, 2003). A further study, *The Benefits of Yoga and Meditation Instruction in Schools*, conducted by Dr. Lynn C. Waelde (2006), showed that after regular yoga and meditation practice there were significant improvements in test anxiety as well as an 80% increase in attention allowing for better performance on tests. Herbert Benson's Relaxation Response (1976) research concurs, as he explains that students with at least two semesters of relaxation curriculum earned higher marks in GPA, work habits, and cooperation compared to students who did not participate.

One of the most profound potential benefits yoga offers youth is the multiplicity of strategies to manage stress. Children are faced with increasing challenges in their young lives. Yoga offers an opportunity to help recognize, cope with and ameliorate stress. Trivell explains, "Knowing some of the basics of yoga will give them [children] the tools to relax, center themselves and remember their lines. As academic demands and test pressures increase, it is very important for children to learn stress management skills." (p. 6). Elements of yoga practice that can help children manage stress include breath work, mantras or self talk, meditation, as well as the physical activity itself. Marsha Wenig believes "sharing yoga with children helps them know that the quiet, still place within is there for them, through the changes, challenges, and confusion of growing up." (p. 13).

Breathing, or pranayama, is the most crucial part of yoga in relation to stress management and relaxation. Nancy Williams believes, "The maximal benefit is accomplished by coordinating the breathing pattern with the natural physiological flow of the body. A well oxygenated body relaxes and brainwaves may alter, contributing to an overall feeling of well-being." (p. 20). A study conducted in Germany and published in *The Early Childhood Development and Care* journal, found that participants in yoga classes transferred the breathing techniques learned to

both school and beyond school situations. This increased emotional balance, reduced fears and feelings of helplessness. (Stuck & Gloeckner, 2003). With deep inhalations through the nose, children can experience the benefits of relaxation. “Children can train their breathing to positively impact health. Yoga breathing exercises can help channel energy and reduce stress and tension.” (Purperhart, p. 58).

Meditation is a further element of yoga practice that can aid relaxation and stress management. Meditation takes place in the fifth limb of ashtanga yoga, pratyahara. It is through meditation that one is able to focus internally such that “distractions intrude with less intensity, and a sense of inner flexibility and calmness develops.” (Anderson & Sovik, p. 207). As Iyengar has explained, the limbs pratyahara, then dharana and dhyana allow the body to experience release, expansion, quietness and peace. (Iyengar). This may be difficult for a new learner such as a child, however. Youth relaxation methods are most successful when guided by a leader, and the child is in a relaxed position such as *Savasana*, a pose lying on one’s back. (Williams). Gillen and Gillen confirm this as they have found that “simple guided relaxations that include some sort of story help them [children] relax more and develop their imagination.” (p. 133). Lisa Trivell also agrees, as she believes, “we all need to learn basic relaxation techniques to help in our everyday lives. If taught at a young age, these techniques will always remain in a child’s muscle memory.” (p. 113).

These guided meditation techniques can be successful in the form of Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) or scripts. The PMR method teaches a child to focus on progressively relaxing one muscle group after another, allowing him or her to experience the difference between tense and relaxed muscles. (Gillen & Gillen). Allen and Klein are in agreement. They found that with the use of PMR children “improved significantly on measures of skin

temperature, respiration, heart rate and state anxiety.” (p. 23). Meditations that include scripts, repetitive mantras or self-talk “help students focus their minds on positive thoughts and can evoke positive emotions.” (Gillen & Gillen, p. 134). The word mantra comes from the Sanskrit words *manas*, mind, and *tras*, transcend. Dr. Judith Lasater explains, “A mantra is something that helps you transcend ordinary ways of thinking. These are meant to be your life affirming companions throughout the day.” (p. xxiv). Anderson and Sovik, authors of *Yoga: Mastering the Basics*, believe mantras can be coordinated with one’s breath, chanted aloud, or recited quietly. “It is most effective when it is allowed to reverberate in the mind without being externalized. The internal repetition calms thinking and refines concentration.” (p. 214). The Yoga Kids curriculum uses imagery such as riding on a magic carpet and mantras that repeat, “When I get upset, I take five. When I get frustrated I take five. Before a test, I take five to quiet my brain and focus my mind.” (Wenig, p. 111).

### **Youth Program Design**

Formal youth programming has been demonstrated to be extremely successful in linking goals to desired outcomes. John Ungerleider (1997), Professor of Conflict Transformation at the SIT Graduate Institute and founder of World Learning’s Youth Peace Building and Leadership Programs, uses the Vermont Governor’s Institute on Public Issues and Youth Empowerment program as an example. “Horizons were broadened not only through obtaining new information about public issues but also by gaining a sense of personal empowerment--- a feeling that they could make a difference or assume leadership. An overriding sense in reviewing the impact of the institute was that it empowered students to become more fully who they are.” (Ungerleider & DiBenedetto, p. 75). There are a variety of programs offered to youth, for example sports based camps, outdoor leadership initiatives, student government organizations, or even international

service adventures. Simon Norton, SIT Youth Programs Director and Professor at SIT Graduate Institute, observes, “The work we do [in youth program leadership] is incredibly powerful and transformative for our participants. It is life changing and profound. Compassion and inspiration are present always. We create and hold the space for extraordinary things to happen.” (Norton, 2011).

Proper design and preparation is crucial for successful youth program implementation. The major building blocks for designing a youth program are a master timeline, a logistics plan, assembling a budget, and a detailed calendar. Simon Norton states in the SIT Youth Program Leadership handbook, “Mastery of the details and logistics: orchestrating the big picture & tiny details to create a world-class experience for the participants” is the essence of youth program leadership. (Norton). Yoga Calm creators Gillen and Gillen agree as they state, “Class actually starts before you teach, with the intention you create. But in immediately practical terms, it begins with your preparation.” (p. 41).

The design of a youth program begins with a broad overview of the area of interest. Once the big picture is in sight, a timeline is crafted. The timeline shows “all phases of the project – from initial planning to evaluation.” (Norton). It is an opportunity to map out the macro plan of the intended program. Please refer to Figure 2 for an example timeline. Authors of *Children Moving: A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education* agree. “We think it is important to start at the beginning. Any good program begins with a good plan.” (Graham, Holt & Parker, 2004, p. 110). They continue by explaining that failure to plan and design properly may lead to ineffectiveness and even disaster. The Project Adventure authors of *Youth Leadership in Action* continue by explaining an appropriate program outline will “make you more comfortable presenting the activities to a group, make you more confident that you can

handle difficulties that may arise, make your program go more smoothly, help your own group communicate and cooperate better, and allow you to have more fun when you are leading the activities.” (Project Adventure, 1995, p. 20).

Figure 2: Example Youth Program Timeline



(Norton).

The next step in the implementation of a youth program is the creation of a logistics plan. Norton continues by explaining once the big idea is defined, it is time to organize and “massage” the details in. (Norton). Norton, in his Youth Program Design curriculum, provides a copy of the *Vermont Program Logistics Planning Checklist*. This logistics checklist is to be used as an example and may be adapted in anyway for alternative use. The main logistic concerns of a program are; location, transportation, equipment, supplies, props, medical forms, and an emergency plan. To view an example of a logistics checklist, please refer to Figure 3. *Children Moving* authors, George Graham, Shirley Ann Holt, and Melissa Parker, having stated planning is essential, believe it cannot be reduced to an exact formula although definite elements do influence a program. “Each factor [of a youth program] is important, and all interact to determine the teaching environment for which the reflective teacher must plan. When planning, we consider class size, frequency of class meetings, available equipment and facilities, personal characteristics of children, and children’s skill levels and interests.” (p. 110).

Figure 3: Example Youth Program Logistics Checklist

Program:	Program Coordinator:
Time:	Location:
Transportation:	
# Of Possible Participants:	
Props:	
Member Medical Forms/ Permission:	
Emergency Plan:	

(Norton).

An important factor in any logistics plan is safety. This includes not only current health information on youth participants, but also prior risk assessment of planned activities, safe behavior, and an emergency action plan. Norton believes in, “keeping people safe, healthy, happy. We are responsible for our students’ holistic wellbeing and their lives. We never take that responsibility lightly or for granted.” (Norton). Before initiation of youth programs, Norton believes proper staff training is appropriate. He asks, “What type of health skills, knowledge and certifications will you need in your staff team?” (Norton). Leaders need to be well versed in program activities and to also be prepared for an emergency situation. He bluntly adds, “Hope for the best, plan for the worst.” (Norton). Safe behavior of participants is expected. *Youth Leadership in Action* authors suggest creating safety guidelines each participant must agree to before the activity. (Project Adventure). Youth programs such as Calming Kids, The Yoga Adventure for Children, and No Kidding About Bullying are consistent with creating safety guidelines, and encouraging youth participants to sign Peace pledges or agreements before commencement of the program. (Marie, Purperhart, Drew).

Budgeting is another critical building block in the program design process. Norton advises a simple and clear budget. (Norton). Included in the *Fundamentals of Designing & Building a Youth Program*, Norton provides an outline for a proper youth program budget. To begin, one must have an idea of the basic program parameters and have the ability to list all cost areas and budget expense lines. Norton continues by asking questions to aid in the shaping of a budget. “What types of decisions are going to have the biggest impact on cost? What types of creative decisions can you make to save money? What types of unexpected expenses might pop up during the program? What type of fiscal management will you use during the program to keep track of expenses?” (Norton). All must be answered and continuously managed in order to maintain a reasonable youth program budget.

After creating a basic program outline, the next step is to undertake the creation of a detailed calendar. A calendar includes specific activity plans, also known as lesson plans. (Norton). Graham, Holt and Parker concur as they state, “Once you have developed a yearly overview for your program, you’ll need to translate it into a yearly calendar. Essentially, this involves deciding which skill themes or concepts you’ll emphasize during which days of the school year.” (p. 113). To begin, one must organize specific dates with activities, specifying the program details for the event. To aid in this organization Norton has provided a *Workshop Planning Sheet*, again allowing for adaptations to fit each youth program. (Norton). Figure 4 shows an example Workshop Planning Sheet. *Youth Leadership in Action* suggests a similar checklist, raising questions such as, “Have I got the props and materials I need? Are my co-leaders and I clear on our plan of action? Does the space I’ve got work for the activities I have planned? Do I know what activities I want to do and in what order I am going to use them?” (Pp. 25). *The Yoga Adventures for Children* author, Helen Purperhart, reiterates these activity

guidelines, however specific to yoga. “It is important to carefully prepare lessons. Before beginning, think about how to begin the class, where to stand, what to say (rules, agreements, duration of the games, signals to stop), and what might go wrong. Gather everything needed for the class in advance.” (p. 3).

Figure 4: Example Youth Program Workshop Planning Sheet

Type of Workshop:

Your Catchy Title:

Designed by:

Issue or Skill Focus:

Facilitated by:

Logistics: Date:	Time:	Room:
Room Set Up & Proxemics:		
Materials, Handouts and Staff Needed:		

Agenda at a Glance:	Overall Purpose:
	Goals:
	Learning Objectives:

Detailed Outline: Activities, Techniques, Questions, Timing, etc.

(Norton).

In order to assure that each activity and lesson runs smoothly, Norton emphasizes the use of back ups and even, “The back ups have back ups!” (Norton). Factors may surface that cannot be anticipated, such as weather, emergencies, or even an activity that fails to go as planned. One must always be organized and equipped to continue. Toward this end, Project Adventure insists on over planning. “Some of us list back-up activities on the back of our index card. This is always great in case you run out of activities before you run out of time or if you need to change

plans for any other reason.” (p. 25). In reference to yoga lessons, Helen Purperhart offers advice. “Harmonize the lesson with the atmosphere the children bring with them. This may mean that the lesson takes a different path from the one you envisioned. For this reason, it is always a good idea to have a couple of extra exercises in reserve in case some do not work well.” (p. 3).

All successful youth programs allow for debriefing and evaluation toward the culmination of the curriculum. This is an opportunity for leaders and participants to review the activity, even making the program more meaningful and educational. Debriefing increases the likelihood that those involved may all take home valuable lessons. (Project Adventure). In *Youth Leadership in Action*, the authors continue by explaining, “it’s important to have all members leave with a positive feeling, which leads to more interest and anticipation for the next Adventure session or other programs you may be doing with them.” (p. 32). Norton believes youth programs involve “a relentless focus on delivering quality: always looking to improve, strengthen, innovate.” (Norton).

### **Mountain Movement Program Design**

I have chosen a Youth Program Leadership Course Linked Capstone focused on the design, implementation and evaluation of Mountain Movement, a youth yoga program. This coincides with my professional interest in working with young people, hopefully instilling them with instincts, knowledge and skills for a happier and healthier future.

I have employed a case study methodology, allowing me to explore and evaluate the development and implementation of the Mountain Movement yoga curriculum within the bounded systems of The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista Site, Chaffee County High School and Full Circle of Lake County, Colorado. I have chosen an intrinsic case study, focusing on the design, implementation and evaluation of the program itself.

The major goals of Mountain Movement are fun, fitness and flexibility, and above all relaxation. I believe the program has the potential to benefit children greatly. In addition to providing an introduction to yoga, Mountain Movement is designed to provide children with a few basic techniques for recognizing and managing stress. Beyond this, it is my hope that it will be the start of a lifelong fulfilling practice for some participants. Further, Mountain Movement can serve as a model for yoga instructors, classroom teachers, and even parents in supporting youth as they face daily challenges.

I selected the title Mountain Movement because in yoga, the Mountain pose or *tadasana* in Sanskrit, is the foundation posture for all other yoga positions. It properly aligns the body and increases awareness of one's self. Iyengar believes practicing Mountain "gives rise to a sense of firmness, strength, stillness, and steadiness." (p. 68). These are all desirable for children. I also chose the title for another more personal reason. My SIT Graduate Institute practicum has been centered in the communities of Buena Vista and Leadville, Colorado, high in the Rocky Mountains. Majestic snow-capped peaks have provided an added inspiration for Mountain Movement.

Mountain Movement was implemented in three different locations: The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County in Buena Vista, CO; Chaffee County High School, an alternative public high school also in Buena Vista; and Full Circle of Lake County, a program for at risk children in Leadville, CO.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County are part of the national affiliation of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The Buena Vista site hosts over 70 young people per day, five days a week, fifty weeks a year. The Boys & Girls Clubs seek to empower youth to "reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens." ("Boys & Girls," 2012).

Chaffee County High School, CCHS, is a public high school in the Chaffee County School District. It is an alternative option in education for students whose needs have not been met in the traditional school system. This alternative school serves grades 9-12, focusing on an individual approach to education for each student. Their educators are dedicated to success regardless of a student's past or current circumstances. CCHS has 75 students enrolled for the 2011-2012 academic year. (Buena Vista School District, 2011).

Members of the Buena Vista Boys & Girls Club as well as students at Chaffee County High are primarily from the town of Buena Vista, Colorado. BV claims a population of 2,500 within the town limits and another 2,000 from the immediate environs. The median household income is approximately \$40,000, indicating that it is not a wealthy community. Demographic data indicate that 89% of the community is Caucasian, while the remainder is comprised of 4% Hispanic, 4% Native American, and 2% African American. (Buena Vista Area Chamber of Commerce, 2012).

Full Circle of Lake County, Colorado is located in the town of Leadville. Leadville is famed as the highest incorporated town in North America, with an elevation of 10,200 feet. The county is home to the two tallest mountains in the continental United States, Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive, both reaching above 14,000 feet. Lake County and Leadville combine a population of 7,310. Demographic data indicate that 58.2% of the residents are Caucasian and 39.1% Hispanic. The county also includes 1.3% American Indian and .4% African American. The per capita income for the county is \$20,437. ("US Census," 2010).

Full Circle is a non-profit that has been providing youth and family services within Lake County, Colorado since 1991. With a mission to deliver preventive programming opportunities in the areas of outdoor leadership, mentoring, parenting education and community integration,

Full Circle seeks a united Lake county community in which families can thrive and kids are aided in making healthy decisions. The 2010-2011 annual report reveals that Full Circle served 252 youth, supported 271 parents, and provided 583 activities in the community. (“Full Circle,” 2011).

Once preliminary contact was made, these three sites granted permission for Mountain Movement, a program that consisted of four sessions. The Boys & Girls Club in Buena Vista was my SIT Graduate Institute practicum site from August 2011 through February 2012. The program there took place on four consecutive Tuesdays, beginning on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The Chaffee County High School program took place on consecutive Mondays and Wednesdays beginning January 16<sup>th</sup>. The Full Circle of Lake County program was offered consecutive Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Having been granted permission to conduct Mountain Movement at three different locations, I began the program planning and preparation, relying upon guidelines learned during the on campus phase of my SIT Graduate School experience. Referring back to Youth Program Leadership and Youth Program Design, I began with a broad timeline for the implementation of the program. This provided me with a temporal map that included not only the planning stages, but also the actual completion of the program, and then its evaluation. Faced with the challenge of offering the program at three different sites, I chose to create three timelines with the corresponding dates for each site. Please refer to the Appendix, Figures 5, 6, and 7 for each specific timeline.

In creating these three separate timelines, I organized the common period set aside for proper planning, specified the three sets of dates for program implementation, and then again a

common evaluation process. I shared these details with each sites' point person, confirming the timeline from their respective perspectives.

Once the broad outline was established, my next step was to initiate the logistics plan. With the aid of Simon Norton's Youth Program Logistic Checklist, I began to add the program details. I chose to create three separate logistics plans for the three sites. Please refer to the Appendix, Figures 8, 9, and 10 for specific site logistic plans. Before finalizing each logistic plan, it was further reviewed with each site's supervisor. Communication was primarily through direct contact, after which further particulars were reviewed through e-mail.

Due to the element of physical exercise incorporated in the yoga program and the corresponding risk of injury, even though minor, I chose to create a participant permission form and waiver. The participation form, designed to be signed by both participants and parents, included a detailed program description. It also informed participants of their option to withdraw at any point. Please view the Appendix, Figure 11, for a copy of the participation and permission form.

I did not seek medical information regarding individual participants prior to program implementation. However, I did confirm that each site had current medical and emergency contact information for all Mountain Movement participants. Emergency plans, already in place at The Boys and Girls Club and Chaffee County High sites, were reviewed. However, Full Circle and I had to create an emergency action plan for Mountain Movement, due to the decision to locate the program at the Lake County Public Library. Together Rohan Roy, Full Circle point person, and I decided upon the back parking lot as the emergency egress destination and meeting spot.

Forming a budget for the program was relatively simple. Yoga is an uncomplicated practice, requiring little in the way of equipment or supplies. Yoga mats, one for the use of each participant, were the one major need. Fortunately, each organization was able to provide its own. Boys & Girls Club gained permission to utilize mats available at their host site, Avery-Parson Elementary School, and Chaffee County High already had mats. Finally, the Lake County Recreation Department loaned mats at no charge for the Full Circle program.

There were no facility charges at any of the sites. I was also able to provide minor props such as music and yoga chimes. The one expense, fortunately minor, was for two CDs I purchased in order to have appropriate youth yoga background music. I was pleased to cover this expense from my own funds. Although the budget for all three programs would be the same, I elected to create a separate budget for each site. See the Appendix, Table 6.

The most challenging aspect of the planning process was the design of a detailed calendar, more specifically the lesson planning. The program consisted of four sessions at each site; the same lesson plans were utilized at each site. In creating these lesson plans, I relied on both the youth programming and the yoga literature. Each yoga session has a definite beginning, middle, and end that flows in a cycle from calm to lively and back to calm. Yoga Calm authors explain, "This cycle allows students the opportunity to transition, calm themselves, and focus so that they can perform the physical activities with better control and with more physical, mental, and emotional awareness." (p. 154) Due to the importance of sequencing yoga poses, Yael and Matthew Calhoun, of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids*, further advise that it is helpful to write out the practice prior to implementation. I therefore compiled a booklet outlining my lessons, using Norton's Youth Program Workshop Planning concept, to serve as a program guide.

The four Mountain Movement lessons reflect the goals of the program: fun, fitness and flexibility, and relaxation and stress management. Each hour long lesson incorporates all of these features. I have separated the lessons into four important aspects of yoga. The first lesson serves as an introduction: *What is Yoga? How to Align & Balance Mind, Body, & Spirit*. Lesson two focuses on breathing, *The Ins & Outs of the Air We Breath*. *A Strong Student*, combines strengthening exercise and further academics in lesson three. The fourth and final lesson, *Mountain Movement*, provides a review of the prior lessons and introduces individual creativity in planning and executing exercises. The four lesson plans are specified in the Appendix, Figures 12, 13, 14, and 15.

The first lesson begins with a brief overview of the Mountain Movement program. I introduce the youth participants to the program goals, briefly discussing stress and relaxation as a means to manage stress. In the process, I ask about prior experience with or knowledge of yoga, and together we create a definition of yoga. Moving on to the physical practice, we begin with simple positions. In the process we discuss how aligning our body can align our mind, body, & spirit. I then guide participants through a series of basic and easy, sometimes even silly, yoga postures. As we transition through the positions, I provide some yoga history, the influence of nature and animals, and the many benefits they can expect from Mountain Movement and beyond, should they continue an interest in yoga. I incorporate a game, “Red Light, Green Light,” in order to maintain a fun atmosphere, instill energy, and review the postures. Toward the end of the session, we cool down with a guided progressive muscle relaxation script. This introduces the students to calmness and stillness at the culmination of each lesson. The session ends with an explanation of *namaste*, the light within our selves that honors the light within each

other. (Iyengar). I explain the yogic sign of respect, hands at heart center. Just before we leave, I ask each participant to share his or her reaction to the session in a single word.

Breath work, *pranayama*, is the focus and basis of lesson two. Participants learn the importance of controlled breathing. After briefly explaining with visuals how our breathing mechanism works and how our bodies react to stress and anxiety, I introduce participants to a variety of breathing exercises. They learn the importance of controlled breathing for yoga exercise, but also how they can incorporate breath control and breathing exercises throughout their daily lives. This lesson includes proper breathing posture, calming breaths, focused breathing, tension relieving movements, and revitalizing actions. The session ends with a diaphragm strengthening relaxation pose while peaceful music plays in the background. After sharing *namaste*, I conclude by encouraging each to use one of the breathing exercises during their next day, taking a moment afterwards to experience the effects.

Lesson three, like the others, is structured around, the standard cycle of yoga practice; warm-up, exercise, cool down, and relaxation. After the initial warm up with simple stretching, I explain to participants that yoga can help us strengthen both our bodies and our mind. As we flow through a sequence of standing postures, we make geometric shapes with our bodies, imitate local animals within our surrounding environment, and briefly review anatomy. I emphasize how holding these positions can strengthen muscles. The major activity for the lesson is then experimentation with partner yoga. Performing more complex *asanas* together promotes trust and mutual reliance. Lesson three ends with guided relaxation and with a challenge to find objects in nature or in their classrooms that resemble or suggest a yoga pose.

The final session of Mountain Movement encourages review and then creativity prior to the conclusion of the program. After stretching, we review the yoga postures and breathing

exercises with a game of “Yogi Says,” an adaptation of “Simon Says”. Then the participants form small groups to create a new yoga asana. They work together to create not only a posture, but also a name for it and a reason to practice it. The groups then present their creation to the whole class, teaching the others the how and the why. We then close Mountain Movement with a relaxation exercise using imagery. As the participants depart, they are asked to consider an intention or personal goal, in addition to incorporating some of the lessons learned into their daily lives.

### **Mountain Movement Program Evaluation**

To conclude the case study of Mountain Movement, I have drawn upon multiple sources for program evaluation. The basic question is whether the programs goals were met: did the participants have fun; have they learned relaxation techniques as they have learned about yoga; and have they benefited from the experience? I administered a pre and post questionnaire to youth participants of the Mountain Movement program. I also conducted interviews with adult experts in the field. Additional data were obtained from direct observations and training.

The data collected from formal observation, training sessions, interviews, and questionnaires, were compiled and analyzed for program evaluation. I have used the form of direct interpretation in the evaluation of the Mountain Movement youth yoga program. Quantitative data were derived from the questionnaires distributed to program participants. Finally I have developed naturalistic generalizations from my overall analysis, forming an overview from which others can learn and potentially apply to their own programs.

My in depth interviews involved all of the point people at each Mountain Movement site as well as local experts from the field. Erin Dziura, counselor at Chaffee County High School, was interviewed. Director of The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista Site,

Adam St. John, was not available for interview. Ashley Biesboer, program Coordinator of the site and a direct observer of the Mountain Movement program, was interviewed in his place.

Rohan Roy, Outdoor Leadership Coordinator of Full Circle of Lake County also offered his time and insights. Regional experts in the field included Dee Marie, owner and creator of Calming Kids Yoga, and Brynne Caleda, Yoga Ed. Teacher and founder of the Stretch Your Imagination youth yoga program.

After analyzing and coding the interview transcripts, I extracted significant statements to aid in the evaluation of the Mountain Movement program. These statements are included in the following table, 3, along with their formulated meanings.

**Table 3: Interviewees’ Significant Statements**

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
“Kids are rushed around too much. They need to slow down and feel.” Dee Marie	Many challenges in children’s lives. They need to learn to relax and to manage stresses and emotions.
“Students that had a hard time focusing before the yoga activity were able to focus on tasks in the classroom for a longer amount of time after.” Ashely Biesboer	Mountain Movement participants experienced greater focus in academic settings following the program.
“Recently I had a third grade student tell me, ‘When I get stressed out I do rock pose and listen to my breath; it helps me calm down.’” Brynne Caleda	Youth yoga participants can learn tools to aid in relaxation.
“Students showed above-average interactions (kindness, consideration, appropriate language) between each other and Full Circle staff for 30 minutes following yoga class.” Rohan Roy	After the Mountain Movement program, participants exemplified positive behavior.
“Several of the students enjoyed the experience and asked to have more classes.” Erin Dziura	Mountain Movement participants enjoyed their yoga experience.

In order to collect data from youth participants, I administered pre- and post-participation questionnaires to students of Chaffee County High School, members of The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista site, and participants of Full Circle of Lake County. The pre questionnaires were distributed prior to the beginning of the first session of all Mountain Movement programs. Post questionnaires were completed at the conclusion of all final sessions. Due to attendance issues at all sites, I collected thirty-two pre questionnaires but only twenty-five post questionnaires.

Table 4: Mountain Movement Pre-Questionnaire

Questions	Yes	No
Have you ever practiced yoga before?	9 (28%)	23 (72%)
Do you have trouble controlling your anger?	19 (59%)	13 (41%)
Do you have trouble focusing in school?	25 (78%)	7 (22%)
Do you have trouble relaxing?	11 (34%)	21 (66%)

(32 participants questions).

Pre questionnaire results indicated that 59% of Mountain Movement participants admitted to trouble controlling their anger. 65% claimed to not know how to relax, and 78% reported difficulties focusing in school. Only 28% of participants had previous experience with yoga.

Post questionnaires were key in the evaluation of Mountain Movement, and indicate that even a brief program can have a positive impact. 100% of participants reported that they learned tools to aid in controlling anger, to help with focus in school, and to facilitate relaxation. 88% enjoyed the Mountain Movement program, and 88% expressed a desire to try yoga again in the future.

Table 5: Mountain Movement Post-Questionnaires

Questions	Yes	No
Did you enjoy yoga?	22 (88%)	3 (12%)
Did you learn tools to help you control your anger?	25 (100%)	0
Did you learn tools to help you focus in school?	25 (100%)	0
Did you learn tools to help you relax more?	25 (100%)	0
Will you practice yoga in the future?	22 (88%)	3 (12%)

(25 participant questioned).

My own observations have been another key component in the evaluation of Mountain Movement. As the leader of all sessions, I was able to observe the participants in my own Mountain Movement program. I have also been able to observe youth yoga sessions offered by other instructors. It is not at all unusual to see students who are initially reluctant to participate. However, most listen closely, and then begin to participate. An initial focus on relaxation and especially breathing seems to help participants get involved. I was struck that exercises that included closing their eyes seemed to help some participants get past the obstacle posed by self-consciousness and focus on the exercise. Many participants listened more closely as the sessions

progressed. I was also struck by how often students smiled more and were calmer after classes. Above all, there were far fewer behavioral issues at the end of a session than at the start.

### **Themes**

Several major themes appeared as I analyzed the Mountain Movement experience and the associated data. These include favorable behavior change, academic advantages, relaxation and stress management, and the enjoyment of yoga.

### **Behavior**

There was a definite change in behavior evident after the implementation of the Mountain Movement youth yoga program. As indicated in the pre questionnaires, many participants reported trouble controlling anger, yet many learned methods to aid in self-control. I was particularly pleased that many students evidenced more respectful behavior following the sessions. On one occasion, three boys stayed behind to help clean up the studio. On another, a young girl held the door for her classmates. Most students thanked me after each class. The impressions compiled from interviews coincide with this theme as well. Yoga Ed. Teacher, Brynne Caleda, expressed, “Yoga can give children the ability to become aware of who and how they are at any moment, and then gives them the tools; breath, poses, relaxation techniques, to shift into who and how they want to be.” She referred to this as being “yoga educated.” Ashley Biesboer of The Boys & Girls Club believes “yoga is an outlet and provides youth with the ability to release pent up emotions.” After three years of offering her Calming Kids program, Dee Marie explains that she has seen a decrease in aggressive behavior after yoga and enhanced anger management. Both Ms. Biesboer and Chaffee High counselor, Erin Dziura, believe that the improvement in behavior from experiencing yoga extends into all spheres of the school day. “They are more able to regulate themselves and therefore can meet their goals,” explained Ms.

Dziura. The weight of evidence supports the conclusion that youth yoga favorably impacts behavior.

### **Academics**

The literature reviewed prior to Mountain Movement implementation suggested that academic performance can be enhanced through participation in youth yoga. Although I was not able to assess the academic success rate of participants before versus after the Mountain Movement program, I did attempt to gauge their ability to focus in school, which can aid academic performance. The majority of participants reported trouble focusing in the classroom when surveyed prior to the program. Yet at the conclusion of Mountain Movement, most were confident that they had learned tools and methods to improve their focus. Those experts interviewed agreed. Ms. Caleda articulated that she “receives a lot of feedback from teachers and counselors at school that the over all health and wellness have changed since we integrated yoga programs onto campus.” Erin Dziura observed that her students were more focused after a yoga practice. And Ashley Biesboer shared that, “they were able to think more clearly and approach decisions with a clear decision-making process. They seemed to be less overwhelmed and more able to handle big tasks in an orderly way.”

### **Relaxation**

The Mountain Movement program emphasized relaxation methods. It was clear that participants absorbed this information. Many claimed to have trouble relaxing or expressed uncertainty that they knew how to relax. Post questionnaires confirmed overwhelmingly that participants had incorporated relaxation strategies in their daily lives. This result held true in my observations. At the conclusion of yoga sessions, students evidenced a calmer presence then when they had entered. Interviews reported this as well. Ms. Biesboer shared that yoga “is

calming and can help students clear their mind.” Erin Dziura, after observing the Mountain Movement program, commented, “I believe it helped them develop the ability to relax and center themselves.” Rohan Roy, of Full Circle, observed that his participants were “noticeably calmer.” The theme of relaxation was dominant in the literature review, and was a major theme throughout Mountain Movement.

### **Enjoyment**

I was pleased to discover that most participants enjoyed Mountain Movement. Above all, I wanted them to have fun. Rohan Roy was excited to share that, “Over half of the male students asked about doing yoga again in the future.” Ms. Caleda concurs, “Clearly children are responding to the program and finding the yoga to be useful in their daily lives.” I was pleased to conclude from the questionnaires that the majority of Mountain Movement participants enjoyed yoga and hoped to continue with further yoga practice.

### **Conclusions**

After evaluating Mountain Movement, I am confident that the program met its major goals. Participants had fun, they were introduced to the physical aspects of yoga, and they learned some basic relaxation techniques. The themes that emerged from the evaluation, particularly improved focus and better behavior and relaxation, underscore its favorable impact. The fact that the program was successfully implemented at three different sites and at minimal expense indicates further that it could be easily adapted for use in a wide range of settings. Mountain Movement is a simple, inexpensive and effective program that can benefit children.

I understand that there were some limitations in my program implementation. The largest obstacle was the inconsistent attendance of participants. The Boys & Girls Club in Buena Vista operates from 3pm when the school day ends until 7pm each day. This means a parent may pick

up a child at anytime during these hours. Mountain Movement was scheduled at 5:30pm. Unfortunately, some potential participants had left before the class began, and some parents arrived in the midst of the class. I was frustrated that these members were not able to experience the full benefits of each yoga session. Marsha Wenig, author of *Yoga Kids: Educating the Whole Child Through Yoga*, believes “the intention is to build a lifelong foundation for yoga, so they will continue to practice forever. Over time and with repeated practice, their technique and form will continue to refine and improve.” (p.15). Inconsistent member participation could certainly impact the outcome of the program. A program structure that encourages consistent attendance and minimizes disruptions is strongly recommended.

I also realize that I was unable to truly assess the impact of the program on academic performance. Improved focus and behavior could be expected to have a favorable influence, but it was beyond the scope of Mountain Movement to systematically analyze grades before and after the program. Chaffee County High School was the setting in which this could conceivably be done. Ideally, yoga could be introduced as a regular part of the curriculum during one term, and grades compared during that term with the prior term.

I believe a visual aid, such as a participant booklet, could have been added to the Mountain Movement program as well. Visual stimulation is another tool to convey information to children. A program booklet for participants to refer to during the program and even to review afterwards could only lead to greater success. Dee Marie of Calming Kids found that the second and third year of her program were more successful with the implementation of a booklet for each student. It allowed teachers and parents to follow along, and aided participants throughout and after the program. (Marie).

Based upon my experience with Mountain Movement, I cannot over state the importance of planning and organization. Schools and youth programs are subject to last minute changes in schedule. Flexibility was key, but without a precise timeline and well-developed lesson plans, the program could have easily become disorganized. When dealing with multiple sites, it was also key to keep site specific information and maintain close contact with each site's point person, confirming and reconfirming dates, times, and locations.

Above all, I take great satisfaction in the fact that I was able to provide participants with an initial exposure to yoga and introduce them to an alternative form of exercise, one that can even aid them in managing the stresses of youthful lives. Wenig shares with her readers that yoga "might not create a yogi out of your child, but it allows you to bond and share time together with a wholesome activity that helps your child learn about his or her body, mind, environment, and creativity. Using the elements of yoga let the poses flow into reading, writing, drawing, art, and music. Providing tools for health, fitness, relaxation, and education that will last a lifetime." (p. 13). If nothing else, I hope that I have planted a seed. An initial introduction to yoga while young can translate into a more successful future. I hope for that which Simon Norton believes is true. "The work we do [in youth program leadership] is incredibly powerful and transformative for our participants. It is life changing and profound. Compassion and inspiration are present always. We create and hold the space for extraordinary things to happen." (Norton). If I keep this advice in mind, adhere to the fundamentals of youth program design, and stay consistent within myself and yoga practice, Mountain Movement will be a continued success.

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**Appendix**

**Timeline**

Figure 5: Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista Site Timeline

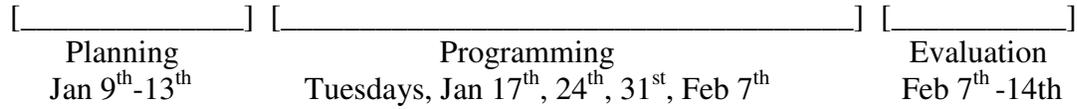


Figure 6: Chaffee County High School Timeline

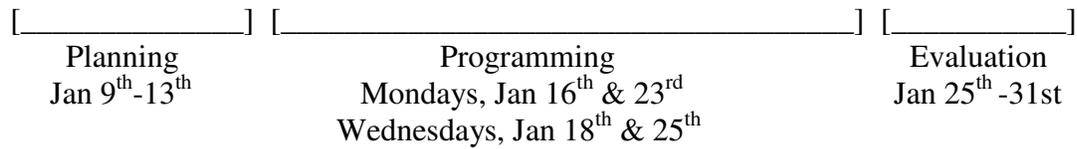
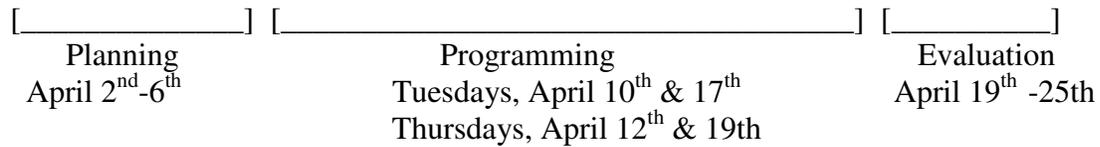


Figure 7: Full Circle of Lake County Timeline



## Logistics Plan

Figure 8: Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista Site Logistics Plan

<b>Program:</b> Mountain Movement	<b>Program Coordinator:</b> Abigail Long
<b>Organization:</b> BV Boys & Girls Club	<b>Point Person:</b> Adam St. John
<b>Dates:</b> Tuesdays 1/17 – 2/7 <b>Time:</b> 5:30-6:30pm	<b>Location:</b> Avery-Parsons Elementary
<b>Transportation:</b> None	
<b># Of Possible Participants:</b> 10-20 youth ages 5-13 (dependent on parent pick up). <b>Props:</b> Yoga mats (stored in elementary school gym).	
<b>Medical Forms/ Permission:</b> Parental permission and medical forms (collected upon becoming B&G Club member) stored on front desk computer.	
<b>Emergency Plan:</b> Exit gymnasium to B&G Club emergency meeting spot in back baseball field.	

Figure 9: Chaffee County High School Logistics Plan

<b>Program:</b> Mountain Movement	<b>Program Coordinator:</b> Abigail Long
<b>Organization:</b> Chaffee County High School Point Person: Erin Dziura	
<b>Location:</b> Chaffee County High School	
<b>Dates:</b> Mondays and Wednesdays 1/16-1/25 <b>Time:</b> 10:30-11:30am	
<b>Transportation:</b> None	<b># of Possible Participants:</b> 10-20 ages 13-18
<b>Props:</b> Yoga mats (Will supply their own).	
<b>Medical Forms/ Permission:</b> Parental permission and medical forms stored in Erin Dziura's, counselor's, office at high school.	
<b>Emergency Plan:</b> Will follow high school's EAP. Meeting spot in main parking lot.	

Figure 10: Full Circle of Lake County Logistics Plan

<b>Program:</b> Mountain Movement	<b>Program Coordinator:</b> Abigail Long
<b>Organization:</b> Full Circle of Lake County	<b>Point Person:</b> Rohan Roy
<b>Location:</b> Lake County Library, Conference Room	
<b>Dates:</b> Tuesdays & Thursday 4/10 -4/19	
<b>Time:</b> 3:45-4:45pm	
<b>Transportation:</b> Full Circle Van will pick participants up from school to bring to library.	
<b># of Possible Participants:</b> 5-15 middle school ages	
<b>Props:</b> Yoga mats (Permission granted from Lake County Recreation Department – Rohan will transport them to library as well as return to Rec. Rept.)	
<b>Proper Medical Forms/ Permission:</b> Rohan Roy collected permission slips prior to program which are stored with medical forms at Full Circle offices.	
<b>Emergency Plan:</b> Exit front doors of library and meet in library parking lot.	

## Permission/Participation Form

Figure 11: Permission/Participation Form

Abigail A. Long  
PO Box 1877 Leadville, CO 80461

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Abigail Long and I am a graduate student at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. As a prerequisite of my degree in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management, I am designing and implementing a youth yoga program. I am inviting you to participate in this program and its evaluation.

I will be implementing a youth yoga program at The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista site/ Chaffee County High School/ and Full Circle of Lake County, CO. This yoga program will be known as *Mountain Movement* and is designed to not only introduce participants to the practice of yoga but also to provide them with tools and methods to contribute a more productive school day. This has the potential to benefit both the individual participant, gaining skills for a healthier future, as well as The Boys & Girls Club, Chaffee County High School, and Full Circle communities as a whole.

Youth participants will be asked to partake in *Mountain Movement*, four one hour yoga lessons. These lessons will take place during regular operating Boys & Girl's Club hours/ regular Chaffee County High School hours/ and Full Circle after school programming hours. Youth participants will be asked to fill out both a pre and post questionnaire as well as physically take part in the practice of yoga. The questionnaires will be used for evaluation of the program. The yoga lessons involve bodily exercise practiced at a peaceful pace for all levels of ability, involving breathing, stretching, and strengthening activities. The practice of yoga at this level carries no risk of physical or emotional harm or discomfort.

At the first meeting I will inform all volunteer participants of the program and purpose, as well as answer any questions or concerns. Any participant may feel free to withdraw at any point during the program, and completion of questionnaires is entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality will be assured. All youth participants will remain anonymous. If direct quotes from participants are incorporated into the project report, pseudonyms will be utilized. Questionnaires will be destroyed upon project completion.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in the above project. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Buena Vista Site/ Chaffee County High School/ and Full Circle of Lake County, CO will receive a copy of the final program report to share with participants. If you have further questions do not hesitate to contact Abigail A. Long (see contact information below) or the SIT Graduate Institute Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [irb@sit.edu](mailto:irb@sit.edu).

Thank you,  
Abigail A. Long  
(508) 769-6252  
[along06@gmail.com](mailto:along06@gmail.com)

-----  
“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that if I am under 18 years of age I need a parent/ guardian to give permission.”

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(If participant is under 18 years of age)

-----  
“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.”

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Budget**

Table 6: Mountain Movement Budget

Item	Purpose	Quantity	Price
Playful Yoga CD	Background Music	1 CD	\$16.95
MC Yoga Elephant Power CD	Background Music	1 CD	\$10.99

## Lesson Plans

Figure 12

**Lesson 1:** What is Yoga? Align & Balance Mind, Body, & Spirit.

Theme: Intro

Date:	Time:	Room:
Room Set Up: Circle formation		
Materials: Yoga mats, music, chimes, 3 yoga blocks, participant booklets		

<p>Agenda</p> <p>Opening: Program/ Yoga Intro/ Stretch</p> <p>Sequence: Alignment/ Balance postures</p> <p>Activity: Red Light, Green Light</p> <p>Relaxation: PMR</p> <p>Namaste: Emotion</p>	<p>Purpose: Present Mountain Movement and introduction to yoga.</p> <p>Goals: Understand importance and benefits of practicing yoga.</p> <p>Learning Objectives: Become aware of connection between body, mind, and spirit.</p>
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### Outline

#### A. Open

1. Centering breaths
2. Mountain Movement description: Provide tools for stress management
3. Yoga Intro: What do you think it is? Your past experience? Create definition
4. Simple stretching
5. Block Theory

#### B. Sequence – Alignment/ Balance postures

1. Mountain
2. Crane to Stork
3. Squat to Seated
4. Cat/ Cow
5. Spinal twist
6. Cobra
7. Down Dog
8. Mountain

#### C. Activity – Red Light, Green Light

1. Review of yoga poses learned/ energy exertion

#### D. Relaxation

1. Progressive muscle relaxation script

#### E. Namaste

1. Describe and share your emotions in one word

Figure 13

**Lesson 2:** The Ins and Outs of the Air We Breath

Theme: Breathing

Date:	Time:	Location:
Room Set Up: Circle formation.		
Materials: Mats, Music, Chimes, Stuffed animal/ other light objects for each participant.		

Agenda Opening: Stretch  Sequence: Breathing Exercises  Activity: Watching Breath  Relaxation: Music  Namaste: Try 1 exercise tomorrow	Purpose: Introduce different types of yogic breathing.  Goal: Experience the healthy benefits to breathing exercises.  Learning Objective: Able to identify breathing exercises that may aid them in daily life or stressful situations.
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Outline

A. Open

1. Centering breaths
2. Simple Stretching
3. Hot Air Balloon Breath

B. Sequence – Breathing Exercises

1. 3 Part Breath
2. Take 5
4. Lions Breath
5. Breaths of Joy
5. Elephant Breath

C. Activity – Watching Breath

1. Laying on backs have members place a stuffed animal on top of their bellies.
2. Breath in – Belly rises, pushing object upward.
3. Breath out – Belly falls
4. Experiment with deepening and lighting the breath, encouraging members to watch the action of the object.

D. Relaxation

1. Crocodile with peaceful music

E. Namaste

1. Encourage participant to use 1 exercise tomorrow and feel the effects

Figure 14

**Lesson 3: A Strong Student**

Theme: Strength & Academics

Logistics: Date:	Time:	Room:
Room Set Up & Proxemics: Circle formation		
Materials: Yoga mats, music, chimes, participant booklets		

Agenda Opening: Stretch  Sequence: Shapes/ Anatomy/ Nature  Activity: Partner Yoga  Relaxation: PMR  Namaste: Examples of yoga around you	Overall Purpose: Incorporate academic learning into yoga.  Goals: Stimulate academic progress using yoga as an alternative approach to learning.  Learning Objectives: Introduce geometric shapes, anatomy, and local environment through yoga.
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Outline

A. Opening

1. Centering breaths
2. Simple stretching

B. Sequencing – Shapes/ Anatomy/ Nature

1. Mountain
2. 5 Pointed Star
3. Triangle into Pyramid
4. Warrior 1, 2, Reverse, 3
5. Eagle
6. Bridge or Wheel
7. Cat/ Cow
8. Lotus

C. Activity - Partner yoga

1. Tree
2. Lizard on a Rock
3. Riding the Wind – Entire class

D. Relaxation

1. Progressive muscle relaxation script

E. Namaste

1. Ask participants to find object in nature or classroom that resembles yoga pose

Figure 15

**Lesson 4: Mountain Movement**

Theme: Review

Logistics: Date:	Time:	Room:
Room Set Up & Proxemics: Circle formation		
Materials: Yoga mats, music, chimes, participant booklets		

Agenda Opening: Stretch  Activity #1: Yogi Says  Activity #2: Invent your own pose  Relaxation: Imagery  Namaste: Set Intention	Overall Purpose: Review Mountain Movement program.  Goals: Participants continue to use yoga exercises beyond Mountain Movement program to aid in their daily lives.  Learning Objectives: Participants retain benefits of yoga. Yoga is fun and healthy. Sparking creativity.
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Outline

A. Opening

1. Centering breaths
2. Simple stretching

B. Activity #1 – Yogi Says

1. A game of Simon (Yogi) Says to review yoga poses learned

C. Activity #2 – Group Creativity

1. Separate into groups
2. Together invent yoga pose
3. Name/ Benefits of pose
4. Present to class

D. Relaxation

1. Imagery script

E. Namaste

1. Encourage students to continue using yoga in their daily lives
2. Ask them to set an intention for their life incorporating yoga