



FALL 2021

NEWSLETTER

1231 Gilbert Ct. | Iowa City, IA 52240 | 319-338-2674

www.friendshipyoga.com

From the Director

Nancy Footner, Certified Iyengar Yoga Instructor

It's been a long 20 months since the onset of the Covid19 quarantine. Who knew at that time the scope of the pandemic, its short-term consequences and long-term impact? It has been horrific and sad and yet there were and continue to be some silver linings to this global catastrophe. See the timeline below to appreciate all that we as Iyengar Yoga students and Friendship Yoga community accomplished.

Friendship Yoga classes went on pause for about 6 weeks, (didn't we think this would pass and life would return to normal in a month or two?). Then unexpectedly (*silver lining*), Zoom came to the rescue, and we emerged (virtually) from our bunkers in June 2020. Zoom was new and those who were "game" took the opportunity break free from forced isolation and resume their yoga studies. At the end of each class, I always encouraged everyone, before signing off to unmute themselves and to switch "gallery mode" so that they could see they were not alone, but in a class with many familiar faces. I think this became a small but important ritual that reinforced our bonds.

At first for props, we improvised as I urged students to use what they had within reach: hard back books for blocks, neckties for belts, rolled up blankets for a bolster. After all, this is how props were first invented by BKS Iyengar. What has now become a huge industry all stems from the inventiveness of a young and impoverished teacher. To this day, at the Iyengar Institute in India, blocks are called "bricks" because discarded clay bricks found on the street were in fact the first blocks!

By Fall 2020 when it became apparent that we were going to remain in quarantine for the foreseeable future, Friendship Yoga opened a prop lending library, and students finetuned their home studio setups to be more "camera ready". (*silver lining*) Many expressed their appreciation, now that they were spending more time at home for having set up a place to practice. Online classes continued through May 2021.

Friendship Yoga studio re-opened (Yahoo!) in June 2021 to fully vaccinated students with new safety protocols. Some preferred to remain online ("home schoolers") but for me and for the "in schoolers" it's been wonderful to reunite in our Gilbert CT home and reconnect with our yoga pals.

silver lining! Friendship Yoga has expanded its borders. Thanks to Zoom, we have several former students who had relocated elsewhere, attending classes and new students beaming in from as far away as New Zealand, the East coast and California.

Looking forward to 2022, I am hopeful that the risks of the pandemic will diminish, our bonds to each other will strengthen and your Yoga practice continues to nourish and inspire you. See the timeline below to appreciate how much we collectively accomplished since March 2020.

Thanks to all for your ongoing support.

Nancy

P.S. Save These Dates:

**May 20-22, 2022,
the Iyengar Yoga
Association of the
Upper Midwest/
Prairiewoods Yoga
Spring Retreat.**

Friendship Yoga Timeline

MARCH 2020 - DECEMBER 2021

MARCH
2020

Studio closes for spring break and remains closed due to COVID-19

FEB
2021

The Iowa City Bike Library is our new neighbor at 1222 Gilbert CT.

MAY
2020

Classes resume online (tentatively)
22nd annual Friendship Yoga
Prairiewoods retreat cancelled.

Not at Prairiewoods.... online retreat
with Mary Reilly, Senior Certified
Iyengar teacher

MARCH
2021

Friendship Yoga Early Spring online
workshop with Laurie Blakeney

FEB-MAR
2021

Covid Vaccine available (Yahoo!)

JUN-AUG
2020

Classes continue online. Students learn
to set up a camera-ready home studio
and improvise props.

APRIL
2021

Friendship Yoga presents a Zoom
reading by student, Marian Mathews
Clark of her newly published novel
These Doors

JULY
2020

Friendship Yoga presents a Zoom
reading by student Carol Tyx of her
newly published book *Remaking Achilles*,
Slicing into Angola's History

MAY
2021

2021 Friendship Yoga studio
reopens to fully vaccinated students!
Online classes continue.

SEP-DEC
2020

Fall semester online classes.
Prop lending library opens

FALL
2021

Semester begins with five hybrid
classes (in person & homeschoolers)
Shelter House resumes weekly class

JAN
2021

New Year's Day benefit class
for Shelter House

OCT
2021

October 2021 Covid Booster available

JAN-MAY
2021

Winter to Spring online classes

DEC
2021

Holiday benefit class
for Shelter House
(dates to be announced)

JAN
2021

Friendship Yoga Winter online
workshop with Laurie Blakeney



From The Students...

I'm Jeanne, new to Friendship Yoga this summer. My daughter Julia and I decided to embark on this journey together. We have both done yoga for a while, but it took isolation and the challenges of pandemic reality to commit to a daily practice. We are in very different places in our lives but are both realizing the need for the physical and mental strength that Iyengar yoga can bring us.

In my case, I started practicing yoga when I was 14 from a little Dell pocket-book that you could buy near the check out at the grocery store. Maybe some of you remember them. Throughout the years, I have had many teachers, and learned something valuable from each of them, but I have to say that the instructions and admonitions of the Iyengar teachers that I have had the good fortune to learn from are the voices that stick in my head when I practice.

The first time I talked to Nancy, I expressed my frustration at how even though I was practicing a lot of yoga, I felt that I wasn't making the progress that I wanted. She said, "Don't get frustrated, get curious." I think about that idea a lot now, when practicing yoga, when standing in line, when problems arise. It is such a subtle shift in perspective, that radically transforms how I relate to myself, and the world.

It is so much fun doing yoga with my wonderful daughter. Not only do I get to see her once a week, (I live in Davenport), but we are experiencing the amazing system of Iyengar Yoga as dedicated beginners together. I feel like I am learning, and un-learning so much, and get glimpses from time to time, of how the energy flows. When we leave class, we talk about what we learned, what struck us as either profound or funny, the epiphanies we experienced in a pose, and always marvel at how tall, centered, and amazing we feel.



I'm Julia and, while my mom summed up this experience beautifully, I'll throw in my two cents worth! Throughout the pandemic, yoga has been one of the main things keeping me sane. Growing up with parents who practiced yoga, it has always been a part of my life, but having the solitude and the time to make it a daily practice was a game changer. That being said, there is no substitute for a good teacher and a supportive community! After the first class my mom and I attended, I felt so energized, I went for a mile long run afterward just because it felt so good to be inhabiting this body. Since I started practicing Iyengar yoga, I notice that I'm standing more squarely on my feet, feeling the length of my spine stretch taller, and occasionally, noticing how it feels to find the sweet spot between effort and ease. The effects of this practice ripple out beyond the mat, whether I'm rehearsing for a play, preparing to go back into the classroom after a year of isolation, or just mindfully going about my business. It's been so much fun to approach this class with my mom and share the experience with a beginners' mind, and I'm excited to continue the journey!



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Taking a look at the year



Connie Roberts, Friendship Yoga student since 1995