



YOGA WITH A HIP-HOP ESSENCE FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

“When Isaac told me that he taught yoga in detention centers, I was moved, but when he told me that he rolled his yoga mat out in front of cell doors and taught incarcerated people through their food slot, I was speechless,” said Matt Jared, Executive Director for United We Om, a yoga and meditation non-profit that provides yoga to communities in need, “At that moment I knew I found the perfect teacher for the teens at the Osborne Association’s YES program.”

That yoga teacher is Isaac Tecosky, an inspiring Brooklyn based yoga teacher, currently teaching yoga at the Manhattan Detention Center as well as studios throughout NYC. A student and teacher of Dharma Yoga, Tecosky “came to yoga through hip-hop,” and will share his unique perspective on yoga this summer, with 13 to 15 year old teens who have one or both parents incarcerated, at the Osborne Association’s YES summer program. The classes are a part of United We Om’s Karma Project program, which hires highly trained yoga and mediation teachers to work directly with communities in need of practice. “We always try to find a teacher with a shared history or common language with the participants,” says Jared.

Yoga continues to be embraced by rehabilitation facilities throughout the United States after multiple studies have concluded that yoga has a direct effect on incarcerated life and recidivism rates. Studies show yoga improves symptoms of anxiety and depression in incarcerated people, while increasing focus and decreasing impulsivity, which reduces violence overall. Children with incarcerated parents often experience similar forms of regression, poor self-concept and acute traumatic stress reaction but thankfully, the same positive and life-changing effects from yoga and mindfulness practices, have a powerful and lasting impact on at-risk teens. At-risk teens that practice yoga regularly score higher on psychological tests, report less negative emotions, show higher cognitive functioning and do better in school than their peers.

Tecosky will lead two sessions of yoga at the Osborne summer program, designed to provide tools for the teens to begin to incorporate mindfulness techniques into their daily life. United We Om and Osborne Association plan to expand the yoga program into weekly classes starting in the fall of 2016. Osborne is the oldest and most experienced organization in New York State serving men and women involved with the criminal justice system, which means this collaboration could have a pronounced impact on the children of incarcerated people in New York City. “Yoga offers people an alternative that respects their dignity and honors their capacity to change,” says Jared, “which is exactly what Osborne does and what Isaac is all about, which is why we’re so excited to be collaborating with them.”

United We Om is a Long Island based non-profit providing yoga and meditation to a variety of communities including Veterans, foster children, homeless single mothers and Autistic adults. United We Om offers weekly by-donation classes at Lululemon in Manhasset to support their work and are expanding to all five Long Island Lululemon stores in the fall of 2016. For more information about United We Om visit www.UnitedWeOm.org or follow them on Twitter and Instagram at @unitedweom. Learn more about the Osborne Association at www.osborneny.org and on twitter at @osborneNY. Find out more about Isaac Tecosky at www.Isaactechosky.com or on Instagram at Isaac_Teco.

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