



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** Story Telling Yoga **Name:** Ana Cabrera  
**Other Team Members:**  
**Program:** Chicago Program  
**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** CA & MA  
**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 0

**Project Summary:** Telling stories is a very human tradition. There's nothing better than hearing a good story, whether you're sitting around a campfire or in a classroom, it's easy to be transported to another time and place through the magical weavings of a good story teller. This summer I attended a five day story-telling residency in California with a professional storyteller. The residency helped alleviate my own concerns and doubts as to what a good storyteller does as well as opened up a whole new world that I was previously unaware of. The skills I learned will be invaluable in helping children in developing their own storytelling skills, critical thinking skills and finding their own voice when reflecting on their personal narratives.

Yoga is another ancient tradition that has gained a lot of popularity in the last decade or so. It's a tradition that links mind, body and breathing techniques through flowing movements, meditation and breathing exercises. I wanted bring the many benefits of yoga to my classroom and school. So I went to Kripalu in Lennox, Massachusetts, the Harvard for yoga, ayurveda and other non-traditional methods to take care one's self. At Kripalu I gained many skills, techniques and essential knowledge to expand on my current teaching curriculum. The classes guided me through various games, visualizations and yoga based activities that make yoga more accessible to children of all ages. I also learned how to share the benefits of yoga with other teachers in non-intimidating, non-spiritual ways.

I was inspired to pursue this fellowship because of my own students. Yoga has taught me new ways of bringing a sense of calm, awareness and gratitude to my everyday life. As my passion for yoga grew I began to integrate some of the things I was learning into my classroom. I began teaching my third grade class some breathing exercises and basic yoga poses to help clear their minds, ease tension and help them focus before taking a test. When I began teaching first grade, I found yoga to be a wonderful way to transition the children from one activity to another. I discovered that yoga is a very natural way for young children to creatively express themselves using their bodies and language. Their interest encouraged me to look into starting an after-school program geared towards teaching yoga to first graders.

During my fellowship I was inspired by all the wonderful people I met. People who are interested in the same things I am, mainly helping children become excited about yoga and storytelling. During the storytelling residency I met many strong and creative women ranging in ages from 13 to 80, all of them fueled by a passion to bring the magic of a well told story to an audience. Through the yoga workshop I learned more about the philosophy and the science behind yoga that has in turn helped me to create a more meaningful and creative practice that will lay the foundation for a life time of health and wellness. I feel that participating in these intensive courses has better equipped me to design a more structured curriculum that integrates traditional yoga with imaginative play, diverse activities and the arts. I am thrilled to be creating an opportunity for children, who might not otherwise have one, to get excited about yoga, something many of them have never heard of and might never experience again.

**Career Impact:** The yoga workshop in particular has had a deep impact on my teaching since it was aimed specifically at teaching yoga to children. I learned many new activities, games, and practices that renewed my passion and interest for yoga in my first grade classroom and bringing this into my school community. I created a new curriculum that will help me teach yoga in a more scientific, non-intimidating way.

Through story telling I am providing an opportunity for my students gain a better understanding and respect for other cultures as well as people in general. The story telling exercises I am now doing in the classroom are heavily focused on character development; with an emphasis on emotions and motivation all of which help students see things through another's perspective.

**Classroom/Community Impact:** I will be sharing what I learned with my school community through various means. I will be conducting two professional development meetings this school year. I will show teachers how to use yoga in classroom and behavior management plans. I will also share the techniques I learned to bring out the natural story teller in every student.

**Open Response:** My after-school yoga program is also part of the Community Arts Program of the school. As of this date, the older

students are working stories to tell during Family Literacy Night at the end of October. The younger students are working on a yoga routine to perform at our Winter Celebrations Assembly. As a final project we will be putting together a photo collage of yoga poses and creating ABC yoga books for future students

**Quote:** I am thrilled to be creating an opportunity for children, who might not otherwise have one, to get excited about yoga, something many of them have never heard of and might never experience again.

Photos:



Lion At San Francisco Zoo Because My Story Is Called Lion's Whiskers



Kripalu Main Entrance



Kripalu Entrance



walking in philo



Yoga Ed Group Picture



Working on Balance



Tree



Full Wheel