

47th Annual General Meeting - AGM Report

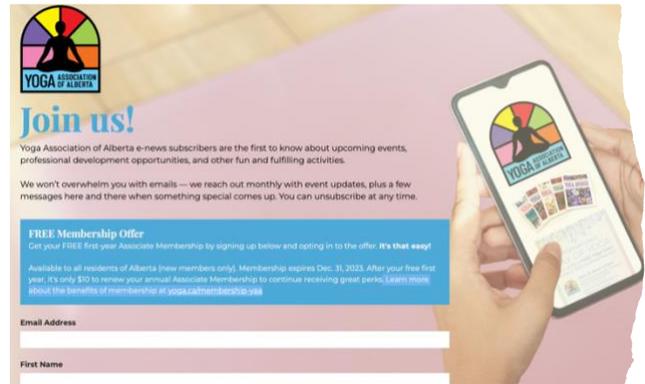
Executive Director Donalee Campbell presented a report on the YAA’s activities during 2022. She first thanked the Executive Board for their support. These people volunteer their time selflessly on behalf of the YAA and we couldn’t do any of this without all of them. Paula Carnegie Fehr & Rachel Foster are both stepping down this year and we thank them for all their contributions over the years. The current Executive Board is as follows (*new MALs elected at the 2023 AGM):

President – David Maulsby
 Vice-President – Karen Hamdon
 Past-President – Anita Sielecki
 Treasurer – Erin Michie
 Secretary – Steven Bell

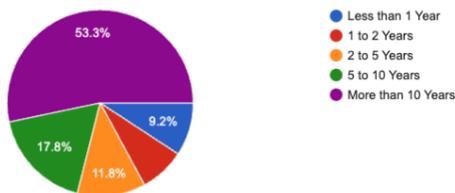
MAL – Calgary – Peter Skirving
 MAL – Banff – Anne Douglas*
 MAL – Red Deer County – Helen Morgan*
 MAL – Edmonton – Melanie Checknita*
 MAL – High River – Colleen Gehrke

Membership

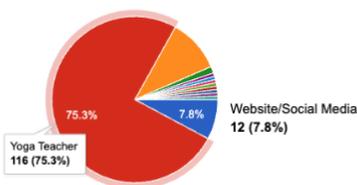
To start, she addressed the reality and context of our situation. Membership numbers are still reflecting losses in 2022 with 1145 current members. Memberships numbers dropped about twice the normal rate at the end of 2021, likely due to the huge blow that Covid dealt to the industry, but they have slowly been climbing back up again. We’ve welcomed in 300 new souls on free Associate Memberships this last year, and 845 have shown their support, dedication, and commitment to the YAA through paid membership, at different levels.



How long have you been a member of the YAA?
 152 responses



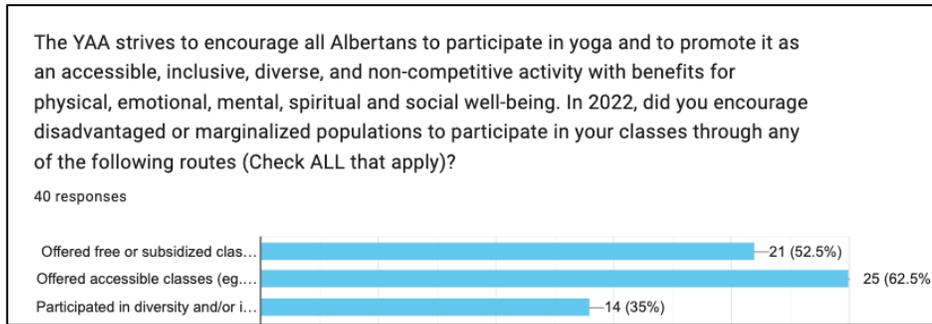
How did you hear about the YAA?
 154 responses



The YAA’s annual survey showed that most of those that responded have been members for over 10 years! And a large majority heard about the YAA through their yoga teachers. We’re working on this social media part to bring more people in, but we can’t tell your students for you, and we need your help with referrals. The future of the YAA depends on us bringing in new members.

Annual Survey

Through all these challenges, dedicated local teachers – our members – are still doing the work. We are teaching smaller classes, offering free classes and subsidies, refining our skills, taking specialized trainings, getting trauma informed, taking diversity & inclusion trainings, learning to navigate technology, offering online and hybrid classes, and finding new and creative ways to promote our own offerings and yoga in general. Survey results of YAA Certified Teachers showed in image below. (Numbers are probably much higher than this.) 137 teachers and students also participated in free trauma informed training offered through the YAA, and there's demand for more.



Technology Upgrades

The YAA has also taken this time to work on building our inner resources and invest in our future. The Board has shown a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and maintained reserves to ensure the sustainability of the YAA through hard times such as this. With these reserves and the help of the successful matching CIP Project Grant from the Govt of AB, we've been investing in marketing and technology to build our ability to reach out to new members and provide high quality services in this fast-changing market. We've purchased new technology to update our systems and improve the quality of our hybrid classes.



Marketing & Communications

We've also been working with Susan May and her team at Intrinsic Design on our marketing, communications, branding, donation campaigns, and a new website with a community connection system, which is all extremely exciting, and all a lot of work! Susan is a professional marketing consultant and a graphic designer who has lots of experience with rebranding and logos. She's also designed several websites for organizations such as Nature Alberta and the AB Art Gallery. The Board has also been working with Susan on Strategic Planning, and we're fine tuning our values, vision and mission statements. We've also hired a dedicated Communications Coordinator, Candace Westeroth, and she's been focussed on social media. (Full reports will be posted on the website.)



**Creative Minds
Illuminate!**

The YAA is getting a new logo! We are lighting up our brand and we're looking to you — our members — for your creative glow.

Send your ideas to yaa@yoga.ca by April 30th

We've commissioned a graphics professional to design a fresh new logo, and we're looking for members input on messaging, symbolism and style. We want a logo that reflects the YAA's values and mission.

The YAA is an inclusive, caring and cooperative community of students and teachers from diverse backgrounds, styles and thoughts. Together, we aim to benefit all Albertans through yoga by providing support for local teachers and equitable access to safe, high-quality classes and training, regardless of circumstance.

Strategic Planning

All of these efforts will serve short and long-term strategic goals such as those outlined here. A special thanks to Rachel Foster who has offered a lot of help with Strategic Planning. All her experience and expertise has been invaluable in these areas.

All this planning is crucial for the future of the YAA. Grant applications are fiercely competitive, so organizations need professional presentations that clearly articulate their visions, missions, and values and these must align with granting agencies. We need to be able to precisely define our goals, our audience, and demonstrate measurable success through our methods, with hard data to back it up.

YAA Strategic Plan Outline (Draft)



1. Elevating yoga study and practice throughout Alberta for well-being and health;
2. Educating and supporting membership, building community & raising professional standards,
3. Promoting inclusion, accessibility, and diversity through charitable outreach, and
4. Increasing our organizational capacity for sustainability and growth.



Feedback Surveys & Program Ratings

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It's my provincial organization

Excellent yoga teachers

Integrity of the program, experienced instructors, inclusive structure

Excellent educational opportunities

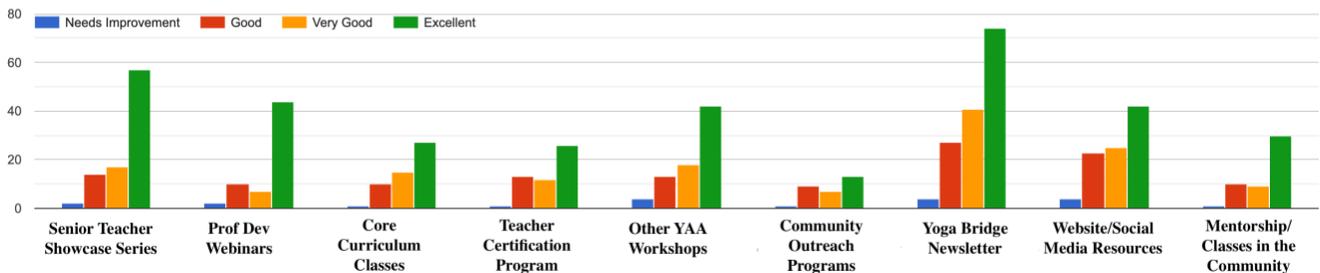
Easily accessible, knowledgeable classes, friendly people

Quality of instruction, calibre of teachers, requirements of teacher training

That's where you come in! You may have noticed some new survey formats lately if you answered our annual survey or attended any of our workshops or webinars lately. Dr. Charmaine Brooks, one of our TTP students, has been volunteering her time to help us redesign surveys, analyze data and gather measurable outcomes. She has a PhD in Education Policy and specializes in these areas.

Program ratings were overwhelmingly excellent. There's a wealth of resources in these survey responses and your feedback and comments will go a long way to help influence others in joining and supporting our cause. Congratulations to Roger Delbaere and Sandy Ayre who each won a new yoga mat from the Annual Survey prize draw and thank you to everyone who submitted responses.

Please rate ALL the YAA programs and services you have accessed and/or participated in (skip over those you have not accessed or participated in.)



Workshops

In person events have finally started picking up again. We offered free yoga at the legislature grounds in 2022 and we've booked the space again on Wednesday, June 21st at Noon. Julie Jeong will be leading the class, and Debbie Spence will be providing the entertainment.

Our regular Yoga in Community series is picking up again despite the great loss of our illustrious leader, David McAmmond. Of course, Anita Sielecki has always been there, behind the scenes, and has had no problem taking up that mantle with grace. Anita's generosity, hard work, and dedication to the YAA and all its members is a shining example of karma yoga in our community. Kavindu, from Mexico, was here last summer and will be coming back in person this July for a meditation and mindful movement retreat, and Richard Miller had been offering his annual retreats online. Monthly Core Curriculum classes have also been very well attended lately.



Outreach



In addition to all the free training we provide for our members, our Outreach Program primarily works to provide free accessible classes in the communities where it's needed most. With the help of grants and our donors – many of you – we've been able to fund up to 10 classes per week at the Edmonton Remand Centre. The inmates really appreciate the classes, and the feedback is quite hopeful. We have also continued weekly classes through the Candora Society, working with primarily low income families with a high percentage of newcomers, indigenous and seniors, weekly classes through various Seniors centres, plus the virtual wellness fair for City of Edmonton employees.

In 2022 we also formed new partnerships with the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society and the ICWA (Indo Canadian Women's Association) and have been offering regular classes at those locations as well. Early this year, we partnered with EverActive Schools and sent a teacher to the Enoch Cree Nation for two weeks, where classes were offered to elementary, Jr High and High School students. We are working with them and hope to plan regular classes starting in the Fall. We've also provided scholarships and subsidies to many individuals needing assistance in these hard times. Of course, YAA Certified Teachers – many of you – also offer regular outreach classes and subsidies on a regular basis, as we saw earlier. Karma yoga is alive and well in our community!

Special thanks to our new Outreach Committee: Anita Sielecki, Scott Jones, Debbie Spence and Nancy Hong, who was helping us with grant writing. Also, thanks to all of you for all you do, in your communities and for the YAA. We're all here because we know the world is a much better place because of yoga, and that change happens one soul at a time. Whether you're a yoga teacher or a yoga student, you spread the wisdom of these teachings and shine that light everywhere you go.

Teacher Training & Certification

Thanks to the TTP & Certification Committee: Anita Sielecki, Beth McCann, Karen Hamdon, Mary LeBlanc, Teddy Hyndman, Neil Haggard, Tammy Richard, and Rachel Foster. These are the people that ensure that our programs have depth, integrity, and credibility, and it's thanks to them that the YAA is regarded across North America for its high-quality trainings. Thanks also to Krista Power, who has been a big help with these programs.

We currently have 22 students in the 200-Hour TTP and 7 students enrolled in our new 100-Hour Immersion Program. Our TTP has started growing again and is receiving excellent feedback, as seen in this Word Cloud.

The Immersion Program uses the same as Core Curriculum Classes as the TTP and is designed for students who want to learn more about yoga but do not want the pressure of having to teach. If you have students or know of anyone who might be interested in deepening their practice, please let them know about this program. There is no fee to enrol in this program except for your Full YAA membership, and all classes are pay as you go.



Core Curriculum Classes & Teaching Skills Workshops

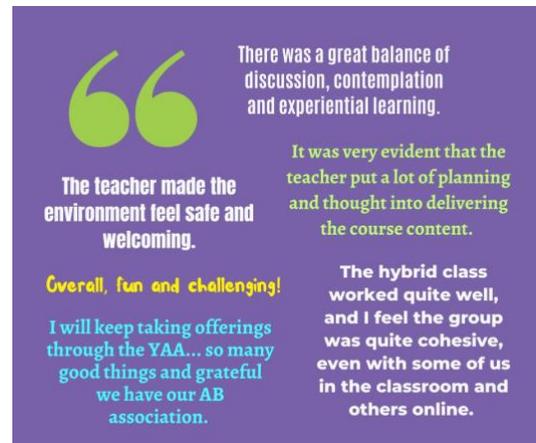
Core Curriculum Classes and Teaching Skills Workshops are being offered in a hybrid format, which works well as it allows us to offer training to students from across the province and allows students the flexibility to choose how they attend. To maintain privacy for attendees and a safe and intimate space for sharing and transformation, recordings are not available for these classes. We have been near capacity for in-person spots the last few trainings, so if you're looking to get in and the class is sold out online, please let us know to put you on a waiting list. If the programs continue to expand, we may need to explore alternate venues for future classes.

“The hybrid Zoom/in person class worked quite well and I feel that the group was quite cohesive even with some of us in the classroom and some others online. I also love that there were people able to attend from as far away as Kelowna and Hinton.”

Core Curriculum Classes are not just for beginning teachers. Hours count towards YAA Equivalency Certification, Recertification hours and all Advanced Training Levels. They help seasoned teachers find deeper integration of what they've already learned, and because they are taught by a diverse variety of experienced YAA Senior teachers, there's a new perspective on the material each time, and always something new to learn.

Some of the reasons students have given for choosing the program include: the integrity of the program, the quality, experience and diversity of instructors, an easy, flexible pace for training and pay as you go costs, and how the length of the program allows time to integrate the information and learn more. Many TTP students cite the mentorship aspect of our program as something that really sets us apart from other programs.

All YAA Senior Teachers in all areas of the province are eligible to mentor TTP students. Mentors set their own schedule and pricing for classes, workshops, and practicum hours and through this long-term mentorship, can engage students at deeper levels, including working toward Advanced Training Levels. Let us know if you have questions and encourage your students to apply, either to the TTP or the Immersion program. You'll find they become lifelong students as they deepen their interest and continue their mentorship through Advanced Training Levels.



Teacher Certification

The YAA now has a total of 225 Certified Teachers:

- 11 at the 200-Hour Level
- 55 at the 300-Hour Level,
- 43 at the 500-Hour Level,
- 25 Intermediate Teachers (750-Hour Level), and
- 91 Senior Teachers (1,000-Hour Level).
- 81 Teachers now have Permanent Certification (at a variety of levels).

Certifications Awarded Since Last AGM (Sept 2022-May 2023)

Initial Certifications

YAA-TTP Students Graduated

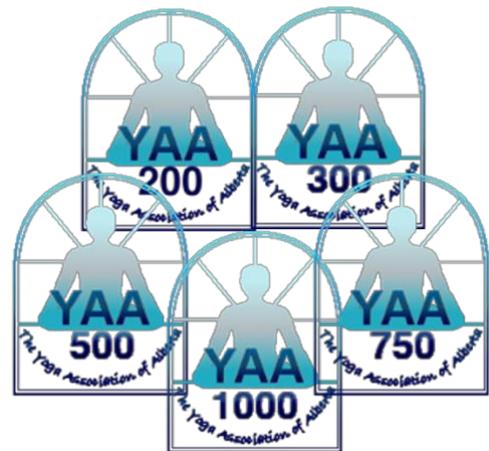
- Tara Simpson (Lacombe) – 300 Hour Level
- Natalie Mercier (Edmonton) – 200 Hour Level
- Gaylene Borgstede (Edmonton) – 500 Hour Level

Equivalency Certifications

- Paula Fayerman (Calgary) – Senior Teacher Status 1,000 Hour Level
- Scott Jones (Edmonton) – 200 Hour Level
- Sharon Lauzon (Edmonton) – 200 Hour Level
- Lauren Murray (Edmonton) – 200 Hour Level
- Leah Balding (Edmonton) – 200 Hour Level
- Elaine Sampson (Chestermere) – 200 Hour Level

Permanent Certifications

- Trish Robbins (Calgary) – 300 Hour Level
- Marina Locke (New Zealand) – Senior Teacher Status 1,000 Hour Level
- David Wilson (Edmonton) – Senior Teacher Status 1,000 Hour Level



Treasurer's Report

Our treasurer, Erin Michie, and our member auditors: Lynnda Sharp and Culley Schweger Bell reviewed the year's detailed transactions and David Maulsby and Peter Skirving reviewed the presentation of these documents for clarity.

Re the financial statements, please remember that the revenue in 2021 was artificially high because we had two investments mature, we received special one-time grants due to Covid, and at the same time expenses were down because we were restricted from offering in-person outreach programs. Over 2022 and 2023 this "windfall" was and will be spent on outreach programs and will contribute to a net loss for each of the next two years, as expected.

We're very fortunate and thankful to have the SPAR operating grant, also from AB Gov't, Ministry of Culture, and the City of Edmonton CIOG operating grant for 2022. The CIOG had their funding cut back to ¼ of what it was before, so they had to change their eligibility requirements to focus on organizations that have a city-wide scope. Since our scope is provincial, that won't be available to us in 2023. SPAR funding has still not been announced.

In 2022 the YAA was awarded a Government of Alberta (Ministry of Culture) CIP Grant with a prescribed allocation of funds (to go towards a new website, social media management, marketing and branding, technology upgrades, software, and support). It is a matching Grant, meaning the YAA must contribute funds equal to that amount towards the project. We are committed to spending the remainder by the end of February, 2024, or the YAA must pay back the unused, unmatched portion of the CIP grant to the Ministry. So, most of those expenses will show up in 2023, although the Grant was allocated here in 2022. The YAA expects the Project will continue as planned, using up the full amount of the grant before the deadline.

We are working on finding other suitable grants. They are few and far between right now and therefore highly competitive.

Your generous donor support has been very much appreciated and I want to thank you all for donating. Donations were high in 2022 due to the David McAmmond Memorial Fund, so I'm sure he's smiling about that, even though he never seemed to want to smile for pictures! Donor funds were also matched in the latter part of the year by the SPAR grant matching program, which was very helpful to bring up donation numbers, but these numbers were not dispersed until 2023, so won't be seen until next year's financial statements. The fund matching program is now over, so we'll have to find new and creative ways to fundraise in the future as there is much work to be done!



S-t-r-e-t-c-h Your Donation

Right now, we have an amazing opportunity to **double every donation** made to the Yoga Association of Alberta — but only for a limited time!

The Government of Alberta's [Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation \(SPAR\) Fund](#) is currently **matching donations, dollar for dollar**. This is a chance for us to bring our outreach programs to twice as many people in underserved populations. Every donation will touch twice as many lives. Every dollar will do twice as much good!

But this is a limited-time program. It expires **August 30, 2022**, or when all allotted matching funds are spent. Please donate today to make sure we can achieve the maximum potential benefit from this program.

Re the Balance Sheet, note that members' equity includes money committed for the CIP matching project grant, as well as dollars meant to be spent on 2023 Outreach programs, which has been our focus already this year. At this point, the YAA financial position is firmly in the black. Full financial statements available to members on request.

The YAA has established a Sustainability Reserve Fund in recognition of the role that unexpected events may have on its operations and the funding environment in which non-profit organizations operate. The YAA believes that this reserve is necessary due to the nature of its operations which relies on funding from government grants, memberships, donations, and sponsorships that are vulnerable to changes in economic conditions; government support that is vulnerable to changes in the fiscal status and program priorities; as well as other global, national, or local states of emergency that may arise. The YAA believes that this reserve fund is prudent, in that future conditions might cause unanticipated declines in revenues or increases in expenses, and that the financial impact may be funded from the Sustainability Reserve Fund. By maintaining a reserve fund, the YAA has prudently and responsibly ensured that it is able to meet its commitment to members and the public, as it has done for the past 47 years.

Social Media Report 2022



Prepared for:
The Yoga Association of Alberta
Board of Directors

Overall Goals

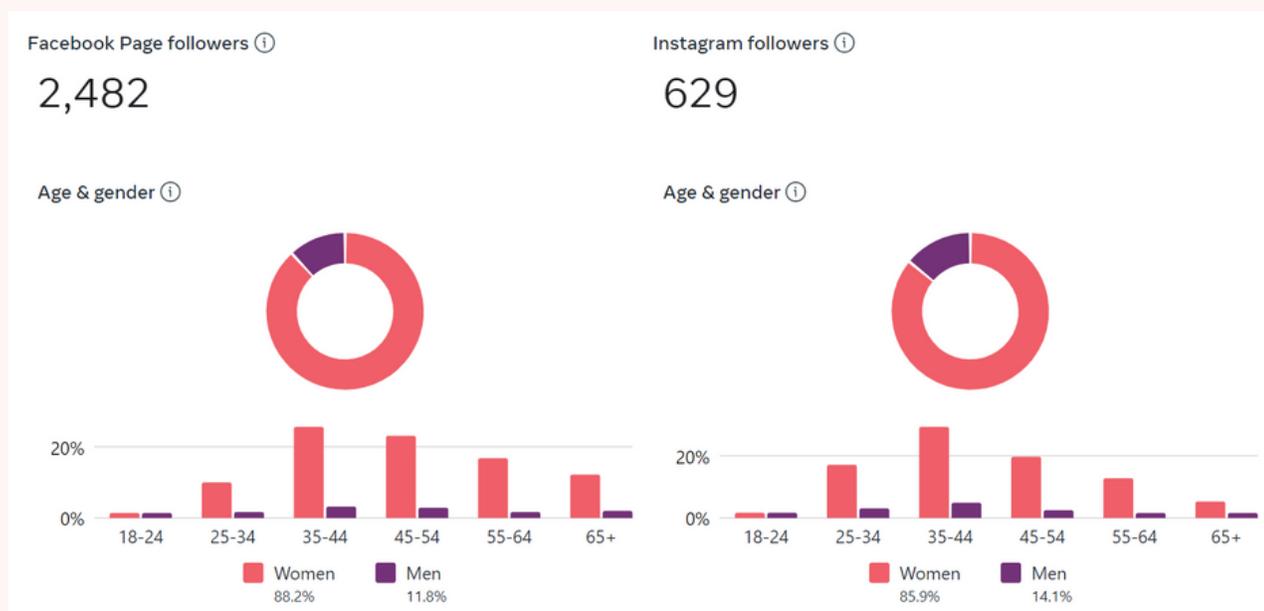
Use social media to:

1. Raise awareness of the YAA's mission and vision.
2. Increase participation in the YAA's programs and services.
3. Raise profile of YAA and establish the organization as a leader in yoga, yoga teacher training and support.

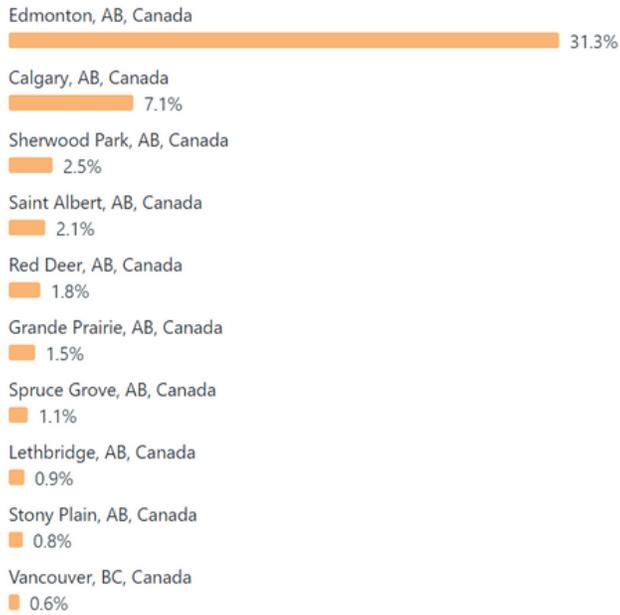
Audience Research

YAA current audience is:

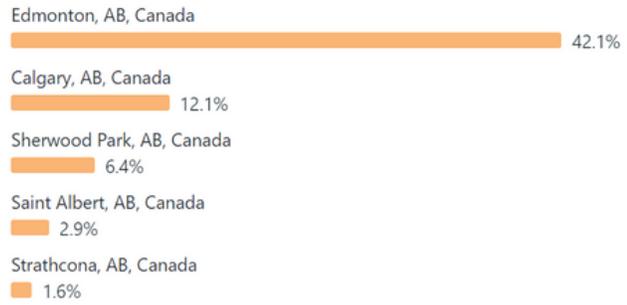
- Women
- Age 25-65+, majority are 35-54
- Living in Alberta, mostly in Edmonton



Top cities



Top cities



Analytics: Facebook & Instagram

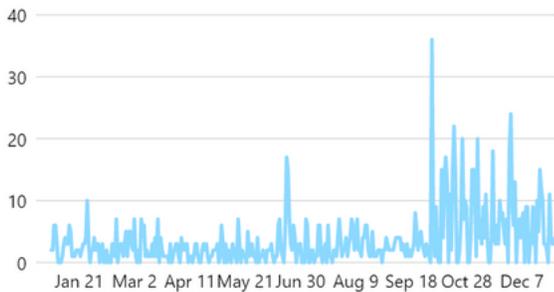
January - December 2022

Page and profile visits

Export

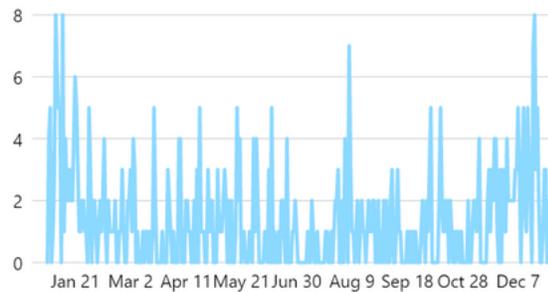
Facebook Page visits

1,316 ↑ 76.2%



Instagram profile visits

506 ↑ 13.7%

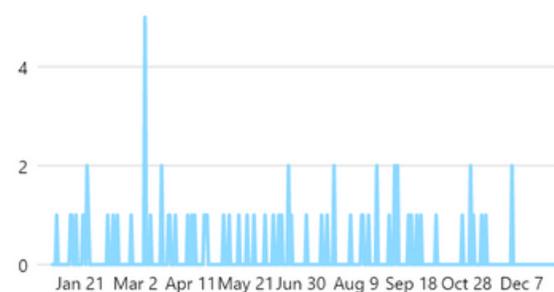


New likes and follows

Export

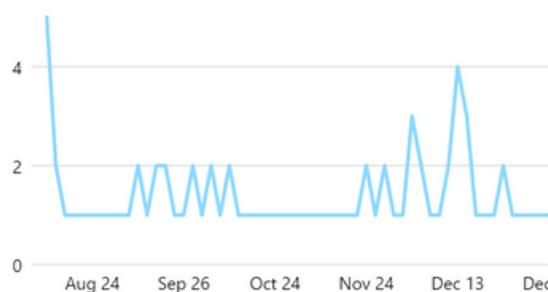
Facebook Page new likes

70 0%



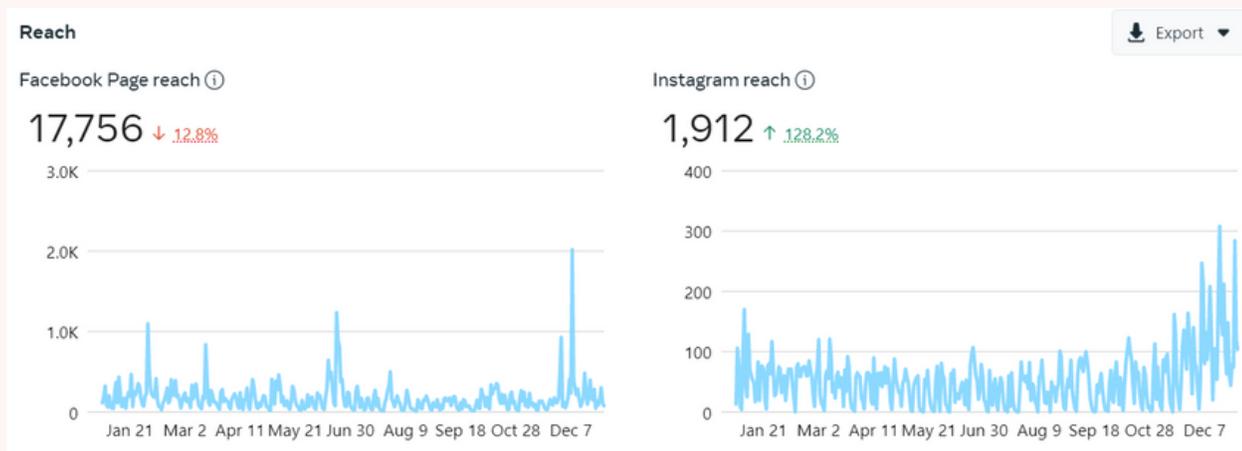
New Instagram followers

79



Analytics: Facebook & Instagram

January-December 2022



Highlights:

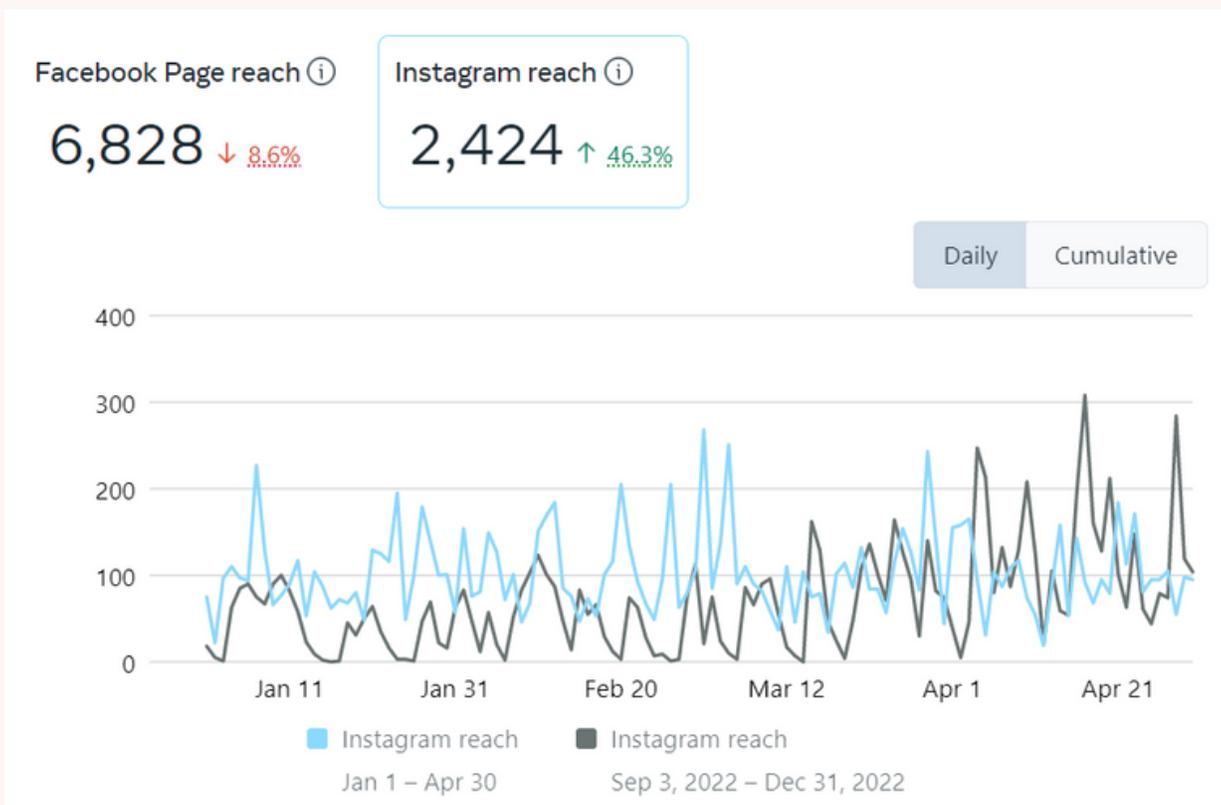
- Profile page visits are up on both Facebook and Instagram. This is where people can find more information about the organization and/or see other posts you have created.
- New likes and followers are holding steady. It is likely that the same small audience is seeing your content, rather than a brand new audience, which would increase your followers more quickly.
- YAA's Facebook reach is down YoY, but Instagram reach is up over this same period.

The drop in Facebook reach is not unusual in 2022, and could be due to a few factors:

- In 2021, Facebook algorithms were different, potentially allowing further reach without paying for it.
- In 2021, people spent more time on social media due to the pandemic restrictions, thus more people available to engage with your content.

Analytics: Facebook & Instagram

January-April 2023 v. September-December 2021



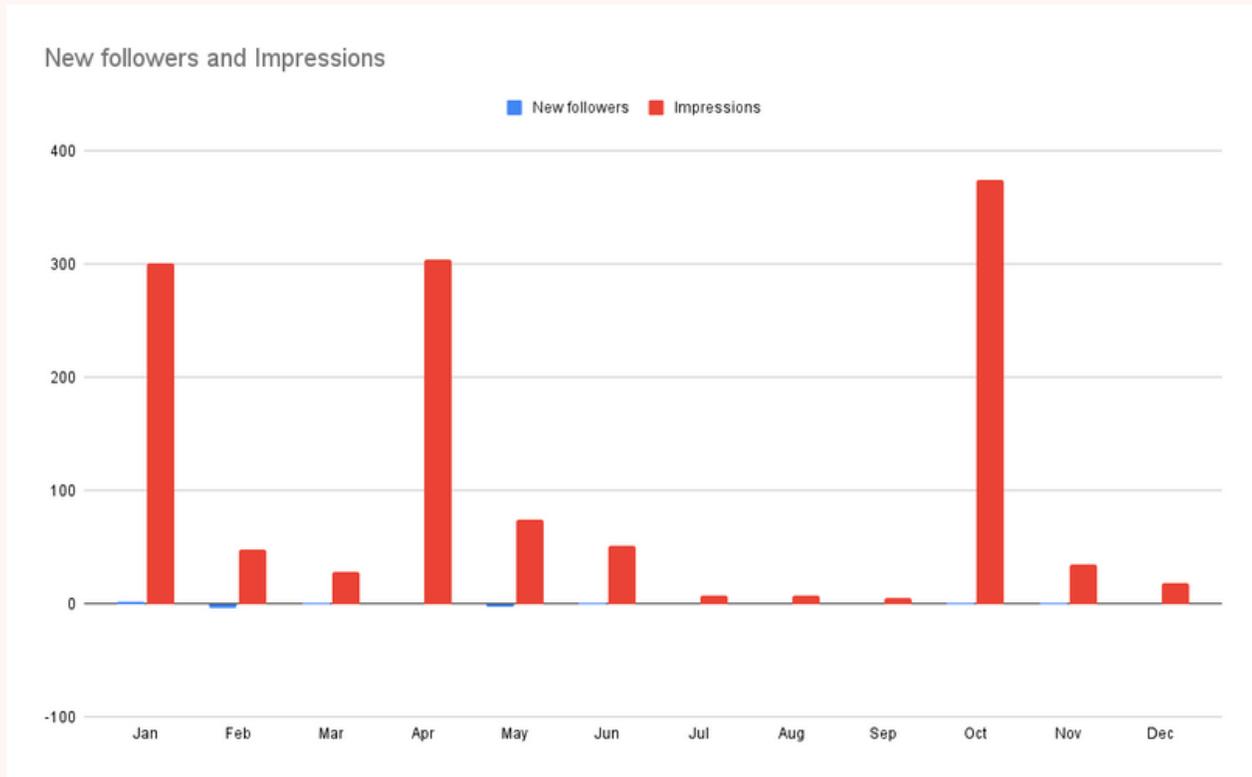
2023 Goals
Reach: 20,000
Followers: 2,550



2023 Goals
Reach: 8,000
Followers: 725

Analytics: Twitter

January - December 2022



2022: 71 followers
GOAL for 2023: 150 followers

2022: 1255 impressions
GOAL for 2023: 8,000 impressions

Strategy and Rationale

Our strategy since November 2022, has been to achieve:

- standardization of look and feel of posts
- diversity in type of posts (i.e. images, videos, reels)
- increase in number of posts across platforms

This has resulted in an increase in followers and engagement over time.

Current Challenges

There are two big challenges that the YAA is facing:

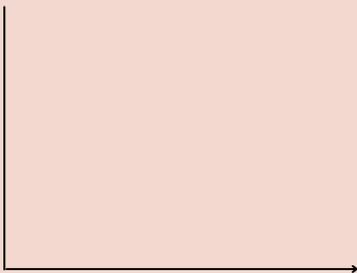
- Growing your following and engagement organically (without paying for boosting/advertising) is the biggest challenge for any organization on social media.
- Creating interesting and engaging content that meets the needs of the organization, but also resonates with the audience that exists on your social media channels.

Where do we go from here?

Recommendations:

- Facebook: Budget dollars (\$25/month) towards boosting posts or advertising on Facebook, in order for our content to reach and grow our target audience.
 - Curating other people's content to increase engagement.
- Instagram: Focus on reels (short form video) rather than static posts.
 - Storytelling - teacher tips for other teachers? Bios of volunteers? Day in the life?
- Twitter: Increased number of posts per week, in line with other platforms.
 - increase follows for other local and similar organizations
 - re-tweeting great content to build our following.

Content Samples



Professional Development Program
For Yoga Teachers | Yoga & Grief w/ Sandy Ayre



Teacher Training Program/Upgrading
Core Curriculum | May 6 | w/ Neil Haggard



“

**The more inner space
you have,
The less outer space
you need.**

Beth McCann, YAA Senior Teacher

Content Samples



Yoga Teachers!
Find out more



Yoga Props
All about Mala Beads



Happy Earth Day!





MARKETING AND COMMS SUMMARY REPORT

2022 YAA ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has seen a lot of important foundational work, optimization of how we communicate with our audiences, and a systematic improvement in the tools we use to be more effective and reduce the amount of manual overhead for YAA staff.

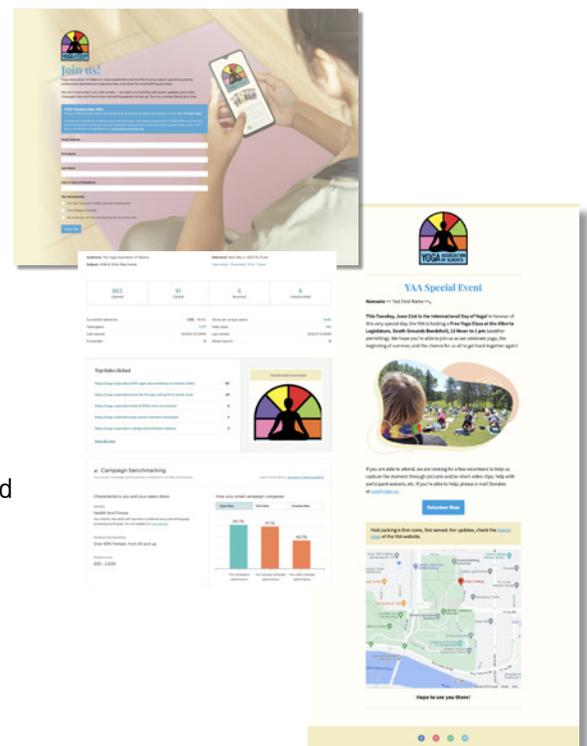
In late February of 2022, the YAA engaged a Marketing and Communications team to assist with goals outlined in our strategic objectives. The team includes marketing, graphic design, writing, and IT and web development support.

A comprehensive audit of all marketing materials was conducted to assess what assets YAA has in play: which of them can be leveraged to use for specific initiatives, which of them need to be edited/corrected to better match our current direction, and where there are holes where we need resources but none exist. An audit of the current website was also conducted and improvements applied to address immediate needs.



In May we conducted a Strategic Planning session to get a current snapshot of where the association is, and what our objectives are for the next 3 years. We engaged the board in a comprehensive discussion where insights from diverse viewpoints were pulled together into a comprehensive list of priorities. This list was then further refined and organized into a framework with four main goals (more about this in the ED's Report).

Communication with our members is a crucial component of everything we do, and e-mail communication is an effective tool for YAA; it not only leverages our member mailing list in a direct way, but is very effective and cost-effective. In May of 2022 we shifted from using Outlook to Mailchimp, which gives us faster, more reliable delivery, a much richer visual experience for readers, and analytic insights into how our emails are being received that we never had available to us before.



Our mailing database currently sits at 1,637 recipients and we consistently have exceptionally high open rates on all emails. Industry-standard open rates for e-newsletters hover around 21%, but YAA emails consistently achieve open rates of greater than 60%! We are also actively communicating with members and the public via social media seeing growth in those audiences and good engagement. Both e-news and social media have been a big part of our member renewal drive, and will feature prominently in our ongoing promotions to grow our membership.

In November we turned our attention to the YAA Brand. A clear, consistent brand is foundational in every forward-facing piece of communication. We conducted two sessions with the board where we completed a SWOT analysis and used that snapshot to inform an investigation of our core values. The board put forward a comprehensive set of values from their broad experience which were then consolidated down into a final set of three values that we agreed were not only important to the group, but that YAA should also be able to demonstrate and live more fully than other organizations in the sector.

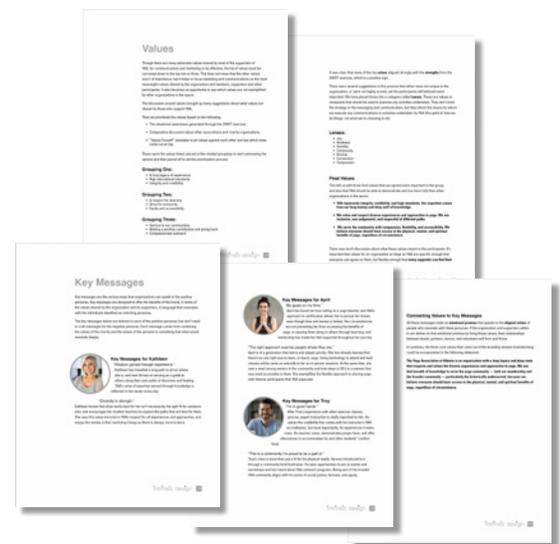
- *YAA represents integrity, credibility, and high standards. Our expertise comes from our long history and deep well of knowledge.*
- *We value and respect diverse experiences and approaches to yoga. We are inclusive, non-judgmental, and respectful of different paths.*
- *We serve the community with compassion, flexibility, and accessibility. We believe everyone should have access to the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga, regardless of circumstance.*

There was much discussion about what these values meant to the participants. It's important that values for an organization as large as YAA are specific enough that everyone can agree on them, but flexible enough that every supporter can find their own way to live those values.

We then created personas which are fictional representations of the types of individuals that are the "best fit" for the brand. These are the people that are looking for the emotional promise that YAA delivers.

Key messages were drafted for all personas, and a final core values statement was drafted.

In summary, the three core values that came out of the branding session brainstorming could be encapsulated in the following statement:



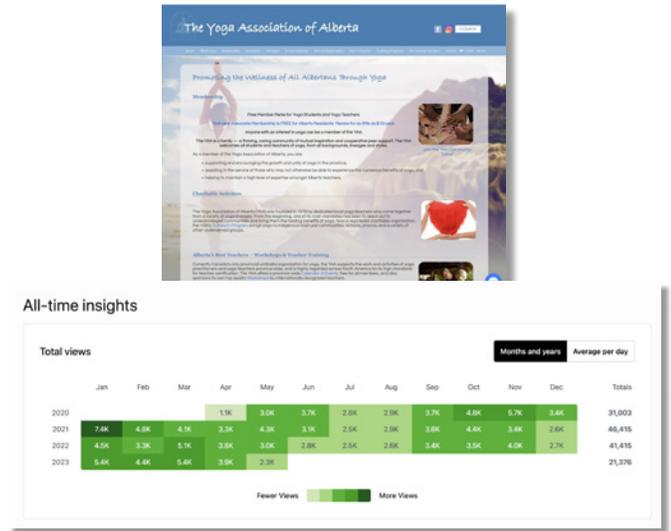
The Yoga Association of Alberta is an organization with high standards, a long legacy, and deep roots that acknowledges, respects and values the diverse experiences of and approaches to yoga. We use that breadth of knowledge to serve the yoga community, both our membership and the broader community, taking special care to reach the historically underserved, because we believe everyone should have access to the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga, regardless of circumstance.

This work is informing a rewrite of the Vision/Mission/Values for the association. This work is well underway, and expected to conclude within the next couple months.

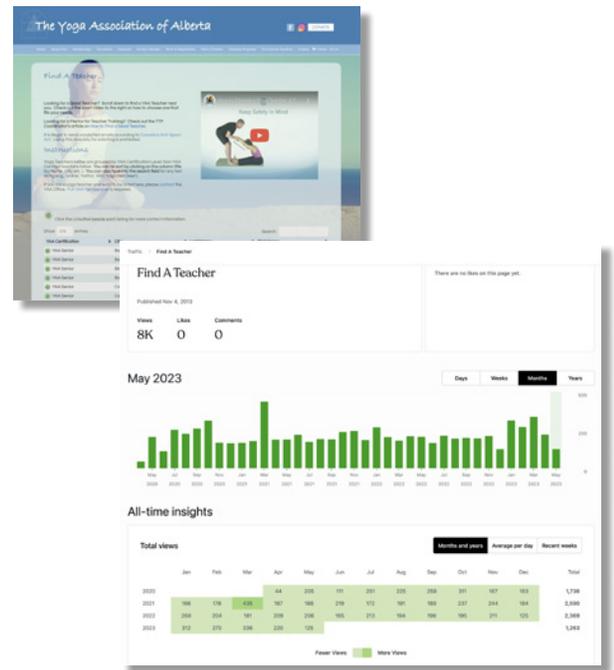
From the insights gained in the branding sessions we have undertaken a visual rebrand of the YAA. This will result in a refresh of the logo and a visual toolkit to give the YAA a consistent look for all external communications. This process is ongoing, and we have recently completed a call for feedback from the membership soliciting their ideas and impressions on our YAA identity. A new set of logo drafts informed by this feedback will be going to the board for their consideration in June.



The website has been a major area of focus this year. The current website was in urgent need of software updates, security improvements, and repairs. The website welcomed over 41,000 visits in 2022. This is down 5,000 visits from 2021 though that is to be expected as the website was being used to fill in for in-person events during the pandemic and is still higher than 2020 levels. Areas of the site that saw the largest volume of traffic included membership renewal, workshops and training (the Senior Teacher Showcase and Trauma-Informed Training being the most popular), and the Find a Teacher Directory. The Directory saw steady traffic every month of the year with its highest activity in January and lowest traffic over the summer months, giving year-round exposure to our teacher members.

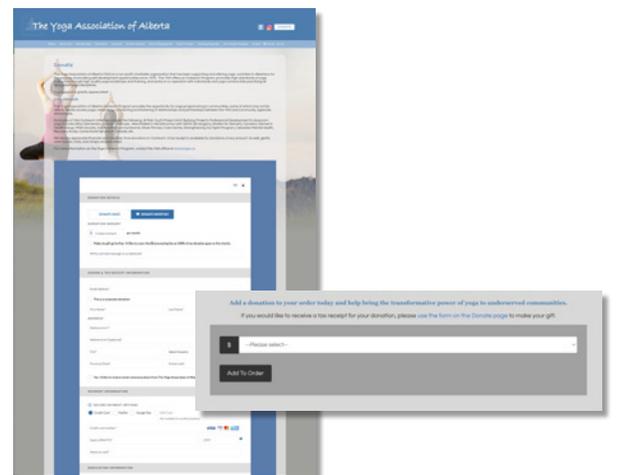


Ultimately, the goal is to completely rebuild the website, but a functioning website is a necessity, and the attention given to the current live site was critical. To move forward with the new website build, a needs assessment, software solution comparative review, and work plan have been conducted and approved. The new site will be a more feature-rich online community space for members and will have numerous new resources built into it that better serve members and automate certain processes to reduce administrative burdens on YAA staff.



Site content rewrites are underway, and the site design and development will proceed once the new visual identity is completed and approved.

Two new features to facilitate donations have been set up for the new website, and leveraged onto the existing site to yield immediate benefits: a new addition to the checkout in the online store makes it easy for buyers to add a donation to their purchase while they are already conducting a transaction, and the donate page now has an integrated CanadaHelps donation form built right into it (the "donate" page also has link to it added to the header of all pages on the site for one-click direct access). Integration of CanadaHelps has also helped us to greatly reduce the amount of manual labour in issuing tax receipts, ensures all donors are promptly thanked for their gift, allows us to track donors and donations, and facilitates monthly giving.



Work has also been done to collect testimonials from our Yoga Outreach participants and instructors and those first-hand statements have been leveraged into a series of visual storytelling pieces that were used as part of our year-end donation drive demonstrating the impact of the work YAA in the community.

We are excited to finally be hitting a point where we will be actively out in the community, in person, and we will have updated outreach materials prepared to grow our mailing list and membership through these in-person events.

Materials are being developed to hand out at these events – we'll have a new brochure and bookmark giveaway item with current information that appeals to a wide audience – and our volunteers will be prepped in advance to help convert inquiries into membership sign ups.

With this foundational work largely completed, we look forward to taking on new initiatives to reach our strategic goals in the new year!




The Yoga Association of Alberta (YAA) aims to bring the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga to all Albertans. We provide equitable access to safe, high-quality classes and training, and support for local teachers.

We are an inclusive, caring, and respectful community that welcomes students and teachers from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and approaches to yoga. Whether you're interested in trying out yoga for the first time, you're looking for a teacher, or you've been practising for years, the YAA welcomes you!

The Yoga Association of Alberta (YAA) is a registered charity and non-profit, founded in 1978. We believe everyone should have access to the healing benefits of yoga, regardless of circumstance.

This vision is made manifest through outreach programs that bring yoga to traditionally under-served communities that might not otherwise be able to access yoga, including rural and Indigenous communities, schools, prisons, low-income families, newcomers, and more.

We look forward to being part of your yoga journey!
780-427-8776
yaa@yoga.ca
Percy Page Centre
1759 Great Road
Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6

celebrating international yoga day with a group meditation and live music on the Alberta Legislature grounds.

yoga.ca




Free First-Year Membership

Wherever you are on your yoga journey, you can elevate your experience through your connection with our vibrant and engaged YAA community.

All Albertans are eligible for a YAA Associate Membership, free for your first year. Renew for as little as \$10/year or upgrade for even more benefits. Associate Member benefits include:

- Free live-streamed online classes showcasing YAA Senior Teachers twice a month. Try out a variety of styles and teachers from all over Alberta.
- Access to workshops, free professional development webinars, and other professional support for yoga teachers.
- Access to high-quality yoga props, supplies, books, and an extensive yoga lending library, free to all members.
- A subscription to the digital version of our 'Yoga Bridge' magazine, filled with informative and enriching articles, news, and a calendar of yoga events across Alberta.

Visit yoga.ca/membership to receive your free first year!

"Yoga is the journey of the self, to the self, through the self"
— B.K.S. Iyengar

Deepening Your Connection — YAA Teacher Training Program

For those aspiring to deeper understanding and expertise, the YAA 200-hour Teacher Training Program is recognized across Canada for its high standards, integrity and credibility. The 200-hour Immersion Program covers the same core curriculum for those who want to learn, but are not intending to teach.

We also offer Advanced Training Levels at the 300-hour, Intermediate (750-hour) and Senior (1000-hour) levels. The Equivalency Certification Program recognizes previous qualified training for upgrading credit.

Visit yoga.ca/training to learn more about how we can support you on your path.

Find a YAA-certified instructor near you with our online yoga.ca/ Find-a-teacher

Editor's report

Prepared by Dave Downing, volunteer editor, Yoga Bridge for May 27 2023 YAA AGM

I'm Dave Downing, volunteer editor of the Bridge since September 2020. I work with an editorial board of five YAA members - Donalee Campbell, Kim Fraser, Judith Mirus, Anita Sielecki and Debbie Spence. Thanks to all of you for your help and encouragement over the past several years. And thanks also to our contributors, without whom we would have a thinner and much less interesting newsletter.

The Yoga Bridge newsletter is, together with the website (*yoga.ca*), a consistent means of communication with members of the YAA. It is published three times a year (spring, winter and fall) and distributed by mail (bound paper copies) and email (.pdf versions) to about 1,200 recipients. Its primary purpose is to share perspectives on various approaches to yoga and allied fields.

Since 2010, over 300 original articles and several reprints have been published on many topics that cover a spectrum of topics under yoga, meditation, holistic health and related subjects. Poetic and photographic submissions are featured in many of the newsletters.

An important function of the newsletter is to highlight the YAA's acclaimed yoga teaching and certification programs. Outreach has been and continues to be an important aspect of YAA's focus on service to the community and a number of articles summarizing the outcomes of service to local communities and the prison system have been published. A community events calendar provides members with an opportunity to let others know of courses, trips and other venues for augmenting their education and experience.

The YAA communicates administrative news of interest to members such as the highlights of annual general meetings and messages from the president and executive director. Finally, the YAA advertises yoga props and other products of interest to readers on the back page of the newsletter.

Highlights of 2022-23:

- Fall 2022 to Spring 2023: 26 articles were printed in three issues (Fall 2022, Winter 2023, Spring 2023).
 - The Fall 2022 newsletter included two inspirational articles on yoga in our golden years in the *Member's Musing* section. Feature articles included; a moving account of one yogini's journey through serious health challenges, a description of a little known (to at least the editor) but highly important physiological system; a deeper awareness of oneness through meditation; some practical approaches to meditation; and the value of yoga practices in dealing with trauma. A summary of the Spring 2022 AGM is included with this issue.
 - The Winter 2023 newsletter included feature articles on yogic perspectives on death, on mindfulness, and on personal transformation through life in an ashram. The sage pose was the topic for an article in the ongoing series *Learning about Asana*. A new experiment, the "TTPearls" series, included an article on a YAA-TTP student's introspections upon reading the Bhagavad Gita. The *Member's Musings* section included a teacher tribute to Fr. Joe Pereira and an account of how the neti pot helped alleviate breathing difficulties. The *Outreach* section highlighted the benefits of yoga as experienced by community members in an Edmonton community centre, through classes provided by the YAA outreach program to support under-served communities.
 - The Spring 2023 newsletter began with a review of the past and a vision for the future from our President, David Maulsby. Feature articles included: the benefits of yoga in dealing with irritable bowel syndrome; the role of dreaming in yoga practice; and working with judgments through yogic self-awareness practices. Two *Outreach* articles included the importance of being gentle with ourselves and a first responder's perspective on yogic healing of self and others. The *Member's Musing* section included an account of how one person's perception of yoga practice has changed over decades. Helen Eshpeter, a longtime and beloved member of YAA was remembered through a previously published teacher tribute.

The YAA encourages members to share their experiences with other readers through articles, book reviews, poems, drawings, and photographs. Submission guidelines and deadlines for the spring, fall and winter newsletters are provided at <https://yoga.ca/newsletter/>



The newsletter keeps me engaged with different approaches to yoga than the ones I usually focus on, and exposes me to new ideas and ways of thinking about my own practice.