



HISTORY STATEMENT:

The Holistic Life Foundation, Inc. was incorporated on December 19, 2001. Planning, brainstorming, and development began in May of 2001. On March 5th, 2002 we began our first program which was an after school program at Windsor Hills Elementary School. In the first year of our after school program we taught students yoga (which includes asanas, pranayama, and meditation), gave them a healthy snack of fresh fruit and fruit juice, tutored them, then took them to the gym for supervised recreation, mostly basketball, for the remaining time. We started off with fifteen (15) male fifth grade students and at some points during the school year that number rose to as high as 23. Our average daily attendance was 84.2%. We sent progress reports to the students' teachers every three (3) weeks to see what type of effect, if any the program was having on the students. The progress reports measured the students' overall demeanor, academic performance, attention span, and positive peer interactions. An average of 71% of the students had their scores increase, 23.3% had their scores remain the same, and less than 1% (.7%) had their scores decrease in each category. We decided to focus on yoga for health because it is a holistic way to solve many problems. It helps heal the mind and body, while balancing the emotions. During school many of our students have to deal with distractions from their peers, sugar-filled snacks, confrontations with teachers, and for the most part, a true lack of physical activity. Yoga creates a venue to address these tribulations. The breathing techniques (pranayama), yoga postures (asanas) and meditation Holistic Life teaches the student, can each have a different positive affect on them. Pranayama is performed to help control the breath. This induces calmness in the students; helps increase concentration, along with increasing lung capacity. The asanas provide a physical workout. They require steadiness to perform. They assist with generating focus and discipline of the mind and body. Meditation helps center students and aims to withdraw the senses, controlling the mind regarding sensory objects, which are a major source of distractions in class. Students are aided in peacefully and calmly resolving conflicts with their peers and teachers, and managing their anger, through the tranquility attained while practicing yoga.

During the summer of 2002, Holistic Life performed workshops for summer camps around the city, including the Regeneration Project and Camp Kuumba. Holistic Life participated in the After School Institutes National Conference, several students from our after school program performed a yoga demonstration during the closing ceremonies of the event. Holistic Life also formed a partnership and relationship with Red Bud Farm, an organic farm in West Virginia, and Woodberry Crossing, a leaning farm in Parkton, Maryland. We received our tax-exempt status on August 6th, 2002.

In the fall of 2002, Holistic Life formed partnerships with more after school programs around the city of Baltimore. We taught yoga classes for the students at Paul's Place Outreach Center, Kids on the Hill, and the Living Classrooms Foundation. We also started our first adult classes at two sites, one in West Baltimore the other in Ruxton.

2003 started off with one of our staff members becoming a certified Master Gardener and three of our staff members becoming Advancing Youth Development (AYD) certified. We also completed and copyrighted our yoga physical education curriculum.



We re-started our after school program again, this time it was hosted by the Druid Hill YMCA. We continued the program with the same core group of students from the first year, adding several new ones. The yoga physical education curriculum was piloted at Southern High School and Lake Clifton-Eastern High School. Our environmental advocacy work began to increase, with an Earth Day tree planting and worm composting bin programs in the spring, and a community garden and vegetable garden in the summer. Along with an overnight camping trip for our students. We partnered with the Robert W. Coleman Community Organization to organize community clean-ups, design and plant a community garden, raised statues, and began the planning for a mural. We continued to build more partnerships teaching yoga classes for the students at area Catholic Schools, and the South East Youth Academy. In May we facilitated a yoga workshop for the for the Baltimore City School Boards physical education meeting. Over the summer in 2003, we taught yoga classes for the students at St. Veronica's and the House of Mercy's summer camps. The students at House of Mercy enjoyed the class so much that we taught a class for their parents. We also held our inaugural "It's All Good in the Hood" summer basketball tournament at Cloverdale on July 19th. This tournament had over 100 participants and was a fundraiser and marketing tool for our organization. We finished off the summer doing a workshop at the After School Institute's National Conference, the workshop covered yoga, holistic health, diet, and environmental education. In the fall we re-started our after school program. We taught yoga classes for the students at the South East Youth Academy, Living Classrooms, and Clayworks.

In 2004, we began teaching a series of adult classes at Belvedere Towers, taught yoga classes for students at the Hamden Family Center, and the Woodlawn Library after school program. We were interviewed on the Larry Young show on WOLB and spoke at Friends School's collection. We are currently developing a basketball game fundraiser with 92Q and the St. Francis Academy.