

"... contains a wealth of yoga exercises that kids will find fun, challenging and relaxing ... packed with practical suggestions for teachers who want to share their love of yoga..."

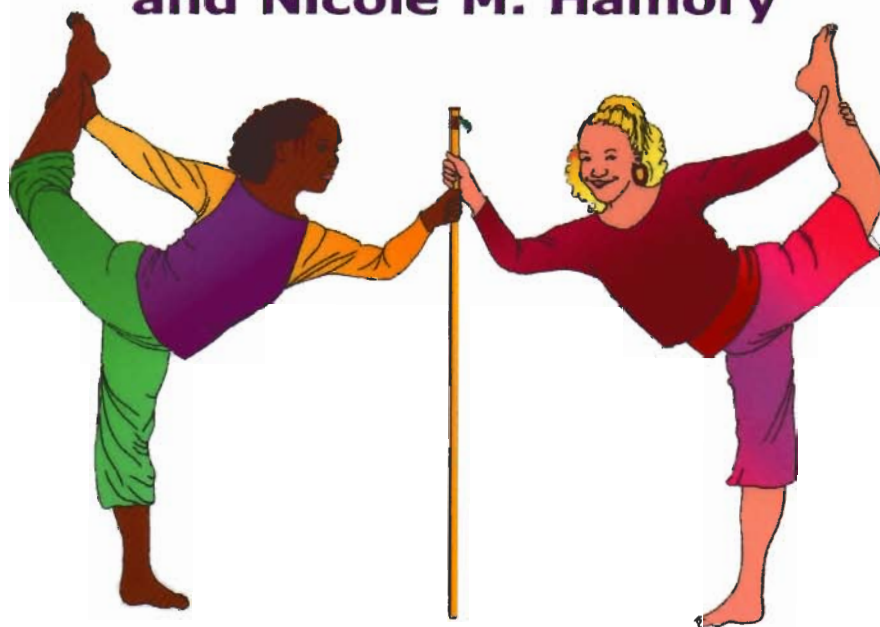
-Timothy McCall, MD; Medical Editor, *Yoga Journal*; Author of *Yoga as Medicine*

# Yoga for Kids to Teens

Themes, Relaxation Techniques, Games  
and an Introduction to SOLA Stikk Yoga



**Yael Calhoun,  
Matthew R. Calhoun,  
and Nicole M. Hamory**



**Illustrated by Carol Anne Coogan**

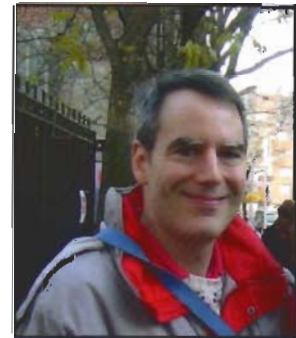
**A**re you looking for a way to have fun with young people while giving them a life-long tool for self-expression, physical and mental health, relaxation techniques, and improved focus? *Yoga for Kids to Teens* is another fun and easy-to-use handbook for you, as a parent, teacher, or young person, to enjoy. The authors of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids* (Sunstone Press, 2006) introduce Nicole Hamory's SOLA Stikk Yoga, a lively approach to yoga for all ages. Find creative games, interactive themes, mind-melting relaxation, five-minute classroom yoga breaks and more.



Yael Calhoun with sons Alex, Sam and Ben Isaac

**Y**ael Calhoun, M.A., M.S., is the Executive Director of GreenTREE Yoga. She is an author and educator, living at the base of the Rocky Mountains in Utah with her family.

**M**atthew R. Calhoun, C.E.Ht., is a certified children's yoga teacher and holds three certifications in hypnotherapy. He is a co-author of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids* and lives in New York.



Matthew R. Calhoun



Nicole Hamory

**N**icole M. Hamory is the Program Director for GreenTREE Yoga and is the creator of the SOLA Stikk Yoga program. She teaches yoga to diverse groups of people and lives in Salt Lake City.

*"Yoga for Kids and Teens is a friendly, creative, smiling invitation to take more steps into the journey of yoga. Experience an easy, inspiring, 'five minute yoga break for classrooms' and SOLA Stikk Yoga, useful for all ages, sizes, shapes and abilities.*

*Charming illustrations with an excellent chapter on healing relaxations to poetically "melt-the-mind."*

*—Lilias Folan, Author of *Lilias, Yoga Gets Better With Age* and *The Inner Smile**

*"Too often we forget that Yogis see our world as the 'play' (lila) of a creative and loving Goddess. This book introduces kids to Yoga the way it should be practiced by people of all ages: as a joyous celebration of life. The poses included are both accessible and challenging, the instructions and background information clear and age-appropriate, at the same time warm and inviting. If you teach kids or teens—heck, if you teach adults—this book will be an invaluable resource."*

*—Richard Rosen, Contributing Editor, *Yoga Journal*, Author of *The Yoga of Breath*; Director, Piedmont Yoga Studio, Oakland, California*



\$26.95

ISBN 978-0-86534-686-4



9 780865 346864

# **Yoga for Kids to Teens**

Themes, Relaxation Techniques, Games  
and an Introduction to SOLA Stikk Yoga

by  
Yael Calhoun  
and  
Matthew R. Calhoun  
and  
Nicole M. Hamory

Illustrated by Carol Anne Coogan



# **Praise for Yoga for Kids to Teens**

"Lots of studies show how much we all need to exercise and to reduce our stress. And this is even true for our youngest citizens. Luckily the authors have created a great guide for learning not only yoga poses but also for understanding the deeper truths upon which yoga is based. Highly recommended for teachers of this special age group."

—Judith Hanson Lasater, PhD, PT.

Author of *30 Essential Yoga Poses* and *A Year of Living Your Yoga*.

"Yael, Matthew, and Nicole have crafted a warm, insightful, and playful companion to their previous offering, *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids*. Yael shares her solid background in asana with liberal sprinkles of wisdom and whimsy. Matthew offers kids a lovely glimpse into their inner worlds, giving them skills they can use throughout their lives. Nicole's innovative Stikk Yoga is creative, interactive, and just plain fun!"

—Charlotte Bell, E-RYT. Author of *Mindful Yoga, Mindful Life* (Rodmell, 2007).

"This book should be on the shelf wherever children and young adults gather. Clear, creative instruction offers many opportunities to learn and teach yoga. From meditation and relaxation, slow flow to intense asana, there is much information here."

—Marsha Wenig, Founder, YogaKids® International.

"Whether you are a parent, teacher or youth, you'll love this book because it's so easy to use, filled with fun facts, creative yoga sequences, child-centered techniques, ready-to-use scripts for thematic lessons, with meaningful quotes and questions to ponder. I am inspired by the richness of this text and the authenticity of yoga for kids it expresses such as the importance of breath, body awareness, proper alignment, relaxation, self-discovery and positivity."

—Jodi B. Komitor, MA, RYT, Author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga with Kids* and Founder of Next Generation Yoga.

"Yael, Matthew, and Nicole have given yoga teachers everywhere a great gift and a loving reminder in *Yoga for Kids to Teens*. Through their creativity and lightness of being, they bring the joy back into the practice, reminding us not to take ourselves or yoga too seriously..."

—Linda Sparrowe, author of *A Woman's Book of Yoga and Health: A Lifelong Guide to Wellness* (Shambhala, 2002) and Editor-in-Chief of *Natural Solutions* magazine.

"It is thanks to books like this that the true gifts of Yoga are so readily available to all children. *Yoga For Kids to Teens* shows us ease, teaches us innovation, and leads us into the very heart of Yoga itself. Without watering down the discipline, the authors give the youth of today permission to become innovators and participants in their own lives..."

—D'ana Baptiste, owner of Centered City Yoga in Salt Lake City.

# CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / 14

## I. INTRODUCTION / 17

**The Book / 17**

**What is Yoga? / 19**

**Why Does Yoga Offer Kids and Teens? / 21**

**Imagine That! / 24**

**Where Do I Begin? / 25**

**Challenging Poses and Variations / 26**

**Why We Talk About the Breath / 27**

**Using the Breath To Draw the Group Back In / 29**

**Identify Your Support Team / 31**

**We Already Did This Pose / 31**

**How Should Yoga Feel? / 32**

**Be Yourself / 33**

## II: THEMES AND GAMES / 34

### A. Opening Poses / 34

1. Let's Get Started / 34
  - a. Easy Pose / 34
  - b. Breathing / 35
  - c. Setting Intentions / 35
2. Opening Games / 35
  - a. Make Me Smile / 36
  - b. Keep An Eye Out / 37
  - c. Seasons of Tree / 38
  - d. Back to Breathing / 40

### B. Themes / 41

1. Stack `Em Up / 41
  - a. Mountain Pose / 42
  - b. Rooster Pose / 43
  - c. Side Plank / 43
  - d. Lifted-Leg Side Plank / 44
  - e. Half Moon at the Wall / 45
  - f. Reverse Handstand at the Wall / 46

- c. Warrior 2 to Reverse Warrior 2 / 83
- d. Wide-Legged Down Dog / 84
- e. Wide-Legged Up Dog / 85

**C. More Yoga Games / 86**

- 1. Wobble Alert: Green, Yellow, and Red Alert! / 86
- 2. To Focus or Not To Focus . . . / 88
- 3. Get Pumping / 88
- 4. Keep on Counting / 92
- 5. Flex Time: Butterfly Press / 93
- 6. Yoga Word Finds/Puzzles/Website Contests / 94

**D. Relaxation / 95**

**E. Five Minute Yoga For Any Classroom / 98**

- 1. To Open the Day / 101
- 2. After Lunch / 103
- 3. To Close the Day / 105
- 4. A Study Break / 106

**III: YOGA FROM TOP TO BOTTOM / 110**

**A. For the Teacher: An Unexpected Gift / 110**

**B. Back to Earth: Back Poses / 112**

- 1. Relaxation Pose / 112
- 2. Listening From Head to Toe / 113
- 3. Both Sides (Side Stretches) / 113
- 4. Up and Down (Pelvic Tilt) / 115
- 5. Leg Lifts / 115
- 6. Both Sides II (Side Rolls) / 116
- 7. Fish Pose / 117
- 8. Free Stretch / 118

**C. Belly Poses / 118**

- 1. Belly Breathing / 118
- 2. Belly Laughing / 119
- 3. Belly Smile / 119
- 4. Caterpillar / 120
- 5. Caterpillar Walk / 121
- 6. Cobra / 121
- 7. Half Locust / 122
- 8. Treasure Boat Story / 124
- 9. Boat Pose / 124

#### **D. Sitting Poses: Taking Notice / 125**

1. Listening Meditation / 125
2. Butterfly Pose / 127
3. Star Pose / 128
4. Merry-Go-Round / 129
5. Putting It All Together / 129
6. Butterfly Relaxation / 130
7. Spinal Twist / 131

#### **E. Magic Table Poses: Hands and Knees / 132**

1. The Magic Table / 132
2. Yoga Eyes / 134
3. Down Dog Pose / 135
4. Magic Table 2: Get Off My Back! / 136

#### **F. Stand Your Ground: Standing Poses / 137**

1. Sacred Mountain Pose / 137
2. Find Your Inner Sun / 138
3. Walking Down the Mountain / 139
4. Mountain Pose / 140
5. Sacred Cow / 140
6. Free Style / 141

#### **G. The Flow / 142**

1. A Sense of Flow / 142
2. Flow and Glide / 142

#### **H. Final Relaxation / 143**

### **IV. SOLA STIKK YOGA / 145**

#### **A. Introduction / 145**

1. History of SOLA Stikk / 145
2. The SOLA Stikk / 146
3. Creating a SOLA Stikk / 146
4. Holding a SOLA Stikk / 147

#### **B. The SOLA Stikk Practice / 147**

1. SOLA Salutation A / 147
  - a. Letter Y Pose / 147
  - b. Lowering Letter Y Touch Down / 148
  - c. Squatting Letter Y Pose / 149
  - d. Saddle Pose / 149
  - e. Tall Suspension Bridge / 149
  - f. Tic Toc Letter Y / 150

2. SOLA Salutation B / 151
  - a. Power Pendulum Pose / 151
  - b. Flag Pole Pose / 152
  - c. Reverse Warrior Pose / 152
  - d. Folded Letter X Pose / 153
  - e. Folded Letter X: Upside Down Pull / 154
  - f. Wide Suspension Bridge Pose / 155
  
3. Balancing Series / 155
  - a. Tree Pose / 155
  - b. Drawbridge Pose / 156
  - c. King Dancer Pose / 156
  - d. Number 4 Pose / 157
  
4. Partner Poses / 158
  - a. Trusting Squats / 158
  - b. King Dancers / 159
  - c. Superman and Peter Pan / 159
  
5. Floor Work / 160
  - a. Paddling / 160
  - b. Pete's Pretzel / 161
  - c. Happy Baby / 161
  
6. The SOLA Circle / 162
  - a. The SOLA Circle / 162
  - b. The Pointed Crown Press / 162
  - c. The SOLA Tree and SOLA Leg Fence / 163
  - d. Number 4 Pose / 164
  - e. Rockette's Kick / 164
  - f. SOLA Stikk Weave / 165

**REFERENCES / 166**

**SANKSTRIT PRONOUNCIATIONS / 167**

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR / 169**

**RESOURCES / 172**



# I. INTRODUCTION

One's mind, once stretched by a new idea,  
never regains its original dimensions.  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

## The Book

This book expands the kids' yoga developed in our first book, *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids: Fun Flexibility and Focus* (Sunstone Press, 2006), while it also introduces the new "Five Minute Yoga Classroom Break" and the energizing SOLA Stikk Yoga. Many people now want yoga ideas for 'tweens and teens, so this book addresses a wider audience, as we include youth to young adults and have added "Challenge" sections. Our purpose is to share ways to give people yoga as a life long learning tool and to expose them to a wonderful way to make themselves both emotionally and physically stronger.

This book has three sections, each reflecting the individual author's unique style of teaching and asana practice. Each of us invites you to create your own yoga practice by weaving together different sections to meet the needs of your group—whether it be kids, teens, high school athletes, or people with special needs.

1. The first section contains new themes and yoga games developed by Yael in her teaching of kids' yoga to diverse populations in a variety of settings: schools, libraries, shelters, and summer camps. The themes are interactive and sure to keep everyone's attention as they move and laugh their way toward a good yoga practice. Yael develops themes based on a topic in which everyone has an interest—their own bodies. Sharing yoga in this way keeps the yoga dynamic and interesting for all ages.

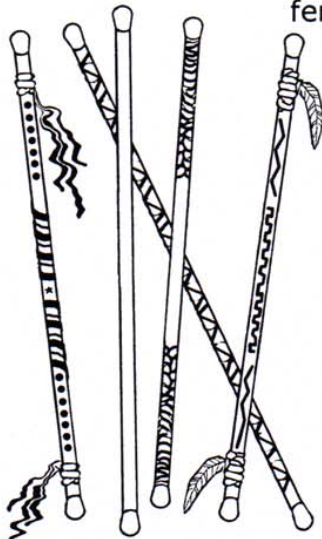
This section also introduces the "The Five Minute Classroom Yoga Break", a section requested by teachers both as a classroom management tool and to help them meet some state PE requirements. It is designed for use in grades K-12. A CD is also available: *Yoga for Kids and Classroom* (Greentree Yoga, 2008)



2. The second section of the book offers more of Matthew's "mind/body" yoga games, meditations and relaxation exercises. Integrated into a yoga journey, poses are used to invite meditation and healing into a practice. Youth comes with a supple body and open mind. A major benefit of yoga is to teach us to release the mental and physical stress and tension of modern living. To teach a young person to learn with a relaxed mind and body is to offer a gift that can last a lifetime.



3. The third section brings us back to energizing yoga, as we proudly and happily introduce the all new and engaging SOLA Stikk, developed by Nicole to add support and artistic expression to a practice. Nicole thought of using a stick as a yoga prop as she was cross-country skiing in the Rocky Mountains one winter's day and began to use her ski pole to do some yoga stretches. The SOLA Stikk was developed to help people hold poses longer, find intuitive alignment, and deepen their stretches. The SOLA Stikk can also serve as an individual totem, or an artistic expression of qualities or values one wants to incorporate into everyday life. SOLA Stikk yoga is a wonderful approach to engage every age and ability level—from kids to high school athletes to people with physical or emotional challenges. SOLA is an acronym for (S) Self-awareness, (O) Observation, (L) Love and (A) Acceptance. SOLA Yoga is program developed by Nicole during her years of teaching yoga to college students, youth at risk, cancer survivors, and male and female prisoners.



**SOLA Stikks**



**SOLA Stikk Trusting Squat**

## **E. Five Minute Yoga in Any Classroom \***

*The right word may be effective,  
but no word was ever as effective  
as a rightly timed pause.*

*—Mark Twain*

Yoga can be used to create a short break in a classroom of students from elementary to high school—although Yael also uses yoga breaks in her college lecture (not yoga) classes. We were asked by schools to develop “Five Minute Yoga” breaks to offer teachers a way to meet some state’s physical education requirements and to help improve the classroom learning environment. Having students become familiar with a short flow helps ease those challenging transition points of any school day. By repeating the breaks each day, they become both an energizing and calming routine.

Yael worked many years as a classroom teacher and knows the dynamics of a school day. She also uses two minute yoga breaks when doing programs on other topics in her children’s schools. For example, when doing a holiday program for 100 first graders or presenting science fair topics to fifth graders (both one hour programs), she would break up the program with two minutes of standing yoga every time kids got fidgety.

\* Available on CD by Green Tree Yoga.

### **Yoga as a Classroom Management Tool:**

A yoga break gives the students a tool to take with them to use at home or in other classes. Yael had a fourth grader in an after school yoga class who came running in one day, saying, “What was that yoga pose you said we could do when we were feeling stressed in class?” She had not remembered the pose, just that yoga was a tool to help her. And keep in mind that these yoga breaks will make you, the teacher, feel better too.

Use these yoga breaks as a tool for both you and your students to:

- ◇ Calm down
- ◇ Perk up
- ◇ Focus and concentrate
- ◇ Relieve stress
- ◇ Be more positive about learning
- ◇ Smile!

### III. YOGA FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

*I am my own laboratory.*  
—Lilias Folan

#### A Yoga Journey

The guided text in this section and the playful approach make it easy and fun to weave relaxation into any energizing practice. Focusing on meditative aspects of yoga as well as the release of tension during the poses may bring happy benefits to a yoga class. The yoking of doing and feeling in a variety of ways make the user-friendly scripts in this section widely adaptable to your group needs.

Many years ago, standing on a New York City bus during morning rush hour, I overheard an argument between two women who had accidentally bumped each other. Each was seized with the belief that it was the other's fault. One, who seemed to feel that the other woman was looking down on her, began proclaiming her mastery of yoga, and said she could bend her body all the way backwards. The other woman seemed to think she was crazy. The yoga practitioner turned to me for some reason, for support. Whatever I muttered, and I don't remember what it was, struck her deeply and she said, "You're saying you have to have a flexible mind, too, as well as a body." It seemed like a moment of enlightenment.

—Matthew Calhoun, New York City

#### A. For the Teacher: An Unexpected Gift

Teaching is a wonderful way to learn something. In my early 20's, I had a job in an after school program, creating learning projects for inner city children. After a few months of creating games and projects to teach reading, math, history, and whatever else seemed needed, I thought we might try yoga, which I learned from Lilias Folan's Public Television show, *Lilias, Yoga, and You!*

When I presented our first yoga project, *Be a Bridge!* my body was much more flexible than usual. The shift in my focus away from myself and my performance improved my performance—the first unexpected gift I received from sharing yoga.

# REFERENCES

- 1) Folan, Liliias. *Liliias! Yoga Gets Better With Age*. Rodale Press. 2006. p. 7.
- 2) Desikachar, T.K.V. *The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice*. Inner Traditions. 1999. p. 5.
- 3) Bell, Charlotte. *Mindful Yoga, Mindful Life: A Guide for Everyday Practice*. Berkeley: Rodmell Press. 2007. p. 16.
- 4) Iyengar, B.K.S. *Yoga: The Path to Holistic Health*. New York: Dorling Kindersley Limited. 2001. p. 21.
- 5) Hatfield, Elaine, and Cacioppo, John. *Emotional Contagion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1993.
- 6) Lasater, Judith Hanson, Ph.D., P.T. *30 Essential Yoga Poses*. Berkeley: Rodmell Press. 2003. p. 7.
- 7) Fraley, Barbara and Arthur Aron, "The Effect of Shared Humorous Experience on Closeness in Initial Encounters," *Personal Relationships* 11 (2004) pp. 61-78.
- 8) Goleman, Daniel. *Social Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books. 2006. pp. 44-45.
- 9) Rimer, Sara. "Less Homework, More Yoga, From Principal that Hates Stress." *The New York Times*. October 29, 2007.
- 10) Website for GreenTREE Yoga: [www.greentreeyoga.org](http://www.greentreeyoga.org).
- 11) Jenkins, Lee. "A Twist on Preparation Wins Converts". *New York Times*. February 12, 2007.
- 12) Mohan, A. G. *Yoga for Body, Breath, and Mind*. Boston: Shambhala. 1993. p. 31.
- 13) Farhi, Donna. *The Breathing Book: Good Health and Vitality Through Essential Breath Work*. New York: Henry Holt Company. 2003. p. xvi
- 14) Payne, Larry, Ph.D. and Richard Usatine, M.D. *Yoga Rx: A Step-by-Step Program to Promote Health, Wellness, and Healing for Common Ailments*. New York: Random House. 2002. p. 38
- 15) McCall, Timothy, M.D. *Yoga as Medicine: The Yogic Prescription for Health and Healing*. New York: Bantam Books. 2007. p. 30
- 16) Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. 2002. p. 126-127.
- 17) Lasater. p. 11.
- 18) Goleman, Daniel. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*, New York: Bantam Books. 2007. p. 44.
- 17) Payne. p. 29.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND THE ILLUSTRATOR

### Yael Calhoun, M.A., M.S.

**Y**ael is the Executive Director of GreenTREE Yoga, a nonprofit committed to presenting yoga as a life-long tool for physical and emotional health to young people and adults in a variety of settings, including schools, camps, senior centers, clubs, correctional facilities, and shelters. Yael has studied and practiced yoga for over 15 years. In addition to teaching adult yoga, she also teaches yoga to youth and young adults at shelters, summer camps, boys' and girls' clubs, to the disabled, and wherever she is invited.

Yael's education includes a B.A. from Brown University, as well as a Master's Degree in Education from Southern Connecticut State University and a Master's Degree in Natural Resources Science from the University of Rhode Island. Her job experiences include teaching in the classroom, both at the college level and the primary school level, working as a municipal environmental planner, and teaching yoga. Yael also is the author of almost a dozen books.

Yael is the co-author of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids: Fun, Flexibility and Focus* by Yael Calhoun and Matthew R. Calhoun (Sunstone Press, 2006), a book Liliias Folan calls the "Best children's yoga book on the market today. Excellent descriptions, delightful illustrations." Judith Hanson Lasater says it is "an inspiring and upbeat book that will not only charm children but also educate and support their teachers."

Yael enjoys life at the base of the Rocky Mountains in Salt Lake City with her husband, Patrick A. Tresco, and their three sons, Sam (13), Ben (12), and Alex (11). They love to ski, mountain bike, hike, and kayak and are learning to rock climb.

### Matthew R. Calhoun, C.E.Ht

**M**atthew R. Calhoun is a certified children's yoga teacher and holds three certifications in hypnotherapy. He created yoga programs for children at the Chicago Yoga Institute, and at Onward Neighborhood House, a settlement house for inner city children and teenagers. He is a practicing Certified Ericksonian Hypnotherapist, working with clients

individually and in groups. He uses yogic techniques such as breathing, body awareness, movement and meditation to facilitate relaxation and an openness to healing communication, combining these techniques with alternative healing modalities such as hypnotherapy and Therapeutic Touch. He has taught physicians at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University Therapeutic Touch and mind/body communication for use with their patients.

The many groups he has served include disabled people, low-income single mothers, stressed-out social workers, people with substance abuse histories, people with HIV, homeless people and elderly people dealing with anxiety and depression. In 2004, he started a Healing-Group at the One-Stop Wellness Center in New York. In 2001, he was honored as an outreach practitioner by Healing Works in Manhattan for generosity of spirit. Matthew is the co-author of *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids* (Sunstone Press, 2006).

### **Nicole Hamory**

**N**icole's introduction to Yoga began after an intense relationship with her body as a Division I rower. Her body was riddled with pain, injury and discomfort. Yoga quickly became a physical healing tool as well as a spiritual necessity. Nicole began teaching yoga to current and former Olympians (members of the National Rowing Team) and the Northeastern University Crew in Boston before moving to Utah.

Nicole is the Program Director of GreenTREE Yoga, a nonprofit committed to presenting yoga as a life-long tool for physical and emotional health to young people and adults in a variety of settings, including schools, camps, senior centers, clubs, correctional facilities, and shelters. She created SOLA Stikk Yoga (patent pending), a style of yoga that incorporates a stick to enable a person to hold poses longer, balance and find proper alignment. The stick is also an artistic expression piece as people create their own "totems".

Nicole has studied and practiced yoga for the past 10 years. She is a certified D'ana Baptiste yoga instructor, with a strong influence and trainings from Baron Baptiste, Ana Forrest and Anusara Yoga (Adam Ballenger). Nicole currently teaches in a variety of settings in the Salt Lake City area: at colleges, schools, ski resorts, juvenile detention centers, the men's jail and women's prison, and the Huntsman Cancer Institute. She also teaches many classes for the disabled in a variety of settings and works with Women Beyond Cancer. In addition, Nicole

brings yoga to her weekly high school rowing team as part of their cross training (Utah Junior Crew).

Nicole's education includes a B.A. from Rutgers College in Elementary Education and American Studies, as well as coursework toward an M.Ed. in Marriage and Family Therapy program at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. Her passions include developing and teaching motivational wellness programs for youth-at-risk and college students. In her spare time, Nicole loves to do anything in nature with friends, family and her beloved dog, Laszlo.

### **Carol Anne Coogan**

**C**arol Coogan is an artist, illustrator, graphic designer and writer. Carol has over twenty years of commercial creative service experience and fine art exhibition. She writes and illustrates a weekly newspaper column called the *Backyard Naturalist*. Other books illustrated by Carol Coogan are *Create a Yoga Practice For Kids* by Yael Calhoun and Matthew Calhoun (Sunstone Press, 2006), *2008 Magical Almanac* and *2009 Magical Almanac* (Llewellyn Publications), and *Way of Water* by Lee Welles (Chelsea Green). Carol has also published a first year compilation of her newspaper column, *Backyard Naturalist*, which she wrote and illustrated.