



State of Utah

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**Department of
Workforce Services**

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August 1, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to support Green Tree Yoga's grant application to offer trauma informed yoga trainings for refugees. Green Tree has been providing trauma based yoga trainings at the Refugee Education and Training Center, Department of Workforce Services for refugees and staff. The purpose of the Refugee Education and Training Center is to build a bridge to success for refugees in our community through collaboration, coordination and service delivery. Our mission is to energize, educate and empower refugees to achieve their dreams through quality services offered in a collaborative resource-rich environment.

We support the development of two 'train the trainer' webinars that we could use with our staff, both as review and to train new staff in the yoga for trauma program and the simple stretching for pain management program. We have used both programs, and the addition of a 'train the trainer' kit would allow us to reach more people as staff changes and as a staff refresher.

We would also like to support Green Tree request to continue our successful program to train refugee women community leaders to take the program to their groups. Because the women were so excited about the program, we would like to run two trainings in the following year, providing stipends to the participating women. The short video in Green Tree's final report contains testimonials from these women.

The trauma sensitive yoga curriculum offers by Green Tree is a great tool to help refugees manage stress, enhance physical wellbeing and empowers refugees to achieve their goals. I urge your thoughtful consideration of their grant application to help us continue the partnership to provide this impactful service for refugee communities.

Sincerely,

Lam Nguyen, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Therapist Supervisor



International Rescue Committee
221 South 400 West P.O. Box 3988
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
TEL +1 801 328 1091
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Rescue.org/slc

August 6, 2019

Sorenson Legacy Foundation
6900 South 900 East, Suite 230
Midvale, Utah 84047

To the Sorenson Legacy Foundation,

Please accept this letter of support in behalf of Green Tree Yoga's application to provide trauma-informed yoga training to the staff of the International Rescue Committee in Salt Lake City. These staff members work with newly-arrived refugees and other vulnerable populations in our community who have experienced significant trauma in their lives.

As a refugee resettlement agency in Utah, the International Rescue Committee resettles as many as 600 refugees each year from war-torn countries each year and provides 24 months of case management services to approximately 1,200 individuals at any one time. The level of trauma among many refugees is quite high, and both staff and clients would greatly benefit from Greentree's programs. Greentree's efforts with survivors of PTSD and other trauma-related conditions in our community have seen great success, and expanding these opportunities to IRC's refugee clients would greatly enhance their journey of rebuilding their lives here in Utah.

IRC supports Greentree's development of two 'train the trainer' webinars to be used training modules for IRC staff, including yoga for trauma and pain management. Both programs have been successfully used by IRC staff with materials previously funded by a Sorenson grant. A 'train the trainer' model would allow IRC to refresh current staff and train new employees.

I encourage your consideration of Greentree Yoga's application to expand the reach of its trauma-informed yoga programming and look forward to partnering with them to enhance the wellbeing of refugees in Utah.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalie El-Deiry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Natalie El-Deiry
Executive Director

May 20, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Green Tree Yoga (GTY) with their request for funds to continue the trauma-sensitive and pain management yoga program serving communities of refugee background. This program fills a unique and vital gap in support services for displaced people -- those who have been forced to leave their homes due to political, economic, or other emergency disasters, and do not normally have access to the emotional and physical benefits that yoga can provide.

I first came in contact with Yael Calhoun and the great work of GTY when I served as director of University Neighborhood Partners, a department of the University of Utah with the purpose of bringing together university faculty, students, community agencies, and residents to offer programming that develops community capacity and overcomes many economic, linguistic, and social barriers. Over the years, GTY and UNP along with the College of Social Work have partnered on a variety of programs serving displaced populations locally. About 5 years ago, we began brainstorming about how to take the success of these programs locally to vulnerable populations still living in forced migration globally. Additionally, we wanted to develop programs that are culturally sensitive and can be implemented with non-native English speakers in ways that are sustainable? We hoped that what we were learning locally would inform the global work and vice-versa.

In 2015, the partners began a pilot program using the curriculum and the materials developed by GTY for teaching trauma-sensitive yoga inside refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border and this year, we will begin the pain management yoga program in Ban Mae Nae Soi and Mae La camps. There are still 150,000 people living in 9 refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border. Many families who are divided with family members here in Salt Lake City and other US locations, while grandparents, aunts and uncles continue to live in the camps. These camps were established about 35 years ago, as the Karen and Karenni communities fled the conflict and persecution in Burma. The living conditions in these camps are difficult and malnutrition continues to be the #1 problem in these communities. There is significant trauma from the war experiences and from living in harsh conditions that keep people separated from their families and communities. There is also much physical labor necessary just to do the daily chores of carrying water and wood, rations, etc. Through the Bridging Borders program, <https://continuum.utah.edu/features/bridging-borders/> teams of faculty, students and professionals work inside these camps annually providing valuable trainings in a Train the Trainer model. The addition of the GTY Yoga programs has been powerful in these settings, as it is a healing practice that can be used with all ages and people varying abilities. The success of this program represents several years of work as Yael and colleagues worked on different approaches with local communities of refugee background and incorporating their feedback all along the way.

GTY has adapted program design to incorporate cultural considerations to ensure successful implementation that can be benefitting a broad range of populations. Most importantly, GTY is an organization that is making a positive difference in the lives of individuals in our community and globally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemarie Hunter".

Rosemarie Hunter, Ph.D., LCSW
Associate Professor
Director, Bridging Borders
College of Social Work
University of Utah



August 13, 2019

Dear Members of the Sorenson Legacy Foundation Board,

Utah Health and Human Rights (UHHR) lends its strong and enthusiastic support for the proposal submitted by Green Tree Yoga for their "train the trainer" webinars.

UHHR is a nonprofit organization located in Salt Lake County, whose mission is to promote the health and wellbeing of the world's torture survivors. UHHR provides highly-specialized and culturally competent mental health, medical, case management, and legal services to men, women, and children who have endured torture.

UHHR has partnered with Green Tree Yoga to provide many training opportunities for our team (to use with our clients) as well as self-care strategies to avoid burnout. Our staff and clients have greatly benefited from the services that Green Tree Yoga provides.

We strongly support the development of two 'train the trainer' webinars that we could use as training modules for staff, both as review and to train new staff in the yoga for trauma program and the simple stretching for pain management program. Both programs have been used by our staff with materials previously funded by a Sorenson grant, and a 'train the trainer' program we could use would allow us to reach more people as staff changes and as a staff refresher. We also support a teacher to come lead staff yoga at lunch to minimize the effects of burnout and secondary trauma.

We hope that you will give your most serious consideration to supporting this worthwhile organization, as it is sure to have a significant impact on the refugee community in Utah and the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community at large.

Sincerely,

Heidi Justice
Executive Director

Board of Directors

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