



Newark, NJ • Est. 2009

2025–2026 Community Impact Report

Newark Yoga Movement

Breathing Life Into Community

One Breath. One Child. One Community.



It Started With One Breath.

In 2009, after reading about Newark’s below-state-average high school graduation rates, I wondered whether the self-regulation skills associated with yoga—breathwork, movement, and relaxation—could help. With early support from Newark’s mayor, Newark Yoga Movement was born.

Over the years, our work grew to as many as 170 yoga classes a week.

When COVID disrupted that momentum, as it did for so many organizations, we adapted. Today, in 2026, I am deeply proud of both how far we have come and where we are going.

A new chapter began with the appointment of our Executive Director, Lisa Sorensen. Her experience in communications, wellness, business ownership, and prior service on the Newark Yoga Movement board brings fresh energy and perspective to our mission.

Under her leadership, we are building new partnerships and expanding the ways we bring practical wellness tools to the people and communities we serve.

I invite you to continue growing with us as we build on more than 17 years of movement, mindfulness, and community.

In gratitude,
Debby Kaminsky
Founder, Newark Yoga Movement



Every Community Deserves the Opportunity to Breathe.

For more than 17 years, Newark Yoga Movement has helped people reconnect with themselves through movement, mindfulness, and the simple power of breath.

As I reflect on my first six months as Executive Director, I am filled with gratitude and optimism.

One of the most rewarding parts of this journey has been building new community partnerships that are expanding our reach and deepening our connection to the people and neighborhoods we serve.

This year reminded us that wellness is no longer a luxury—it is essential.

As we look toward 2026–2027, we are expanding our vision by growing community programming, advancing women's wellness initiatives, bringing free wellness experiences into more neighborhoods, and launching Breathe, Then Read™ to help children regulate before they learn.

Our work is growing because our community's needs are growing. Together, we can make wellness more accessible—for every child, every family, every woman, and every community we serve.

With gratitude,

Lisa Sorensen

Executive Director, Newark Yoga Movement



The Next Chapter **Begins Now**

“
**Wellness
belongs to
everyone, in
every space!**”

Who We Are

OUR MISSION

We strengthen individuals and communities by equipping people with practical tools for health, well-being, and self-agency—through breath, movement, mindfulness, and connection.



OUR VISION

A future where every child, educator, family, and community can access practical wellness tools that support resilience, readiness to learn, connection, and healthier communities.



OUR BELIEF

Wellness belongs everywhere—in classrooms, workplaces, parks, homes, and neighborhoods. One intentional breath can become a tool people carry with them.

Where the Need and Our Mission Meet

Stress. Education. Access.

Stress, education, and access are the community realities that guide our work. They shape how Newark Yoga Movement delivers practical tools for health, well-being, and self-agency where they are needed most.



HOW WE CREATE IMPACT

Our Model for Community Well-Being



1. COMMUNITY REALITIES

The challenges our communities face every day.



STRESS

High levels of stress, anxiety and burnout impact mental health and overall well-being.



EDUCATION

Students need support with focus, self-regulation and readiness to learn and thrive in school.



ACCESS

Barriers like cost, transportation and location limit access to wellness opportunities.

2. NEWARK YOGA MOVEMENT

Our evidence-informed approach bringing breath, movement and mindfulness to our community.



**NEWARK
YOGA
MOVEMENT**

BREATH • MOVEMENT • MINDFULNESS • CONNECTION



SCHOOL
PROGRAMS



BREATHE,
THEN READ™



INSTANT
CALM



YOGA
AMBASSADOR
STUDENT LEADERSHIP



EDUCATOR
WELLNESS



WOMEN'S
WELLNESS



COMMUNITY
WELLNESS

3. BUILDING HUMAN CAPACITY

Practical tools. Lasting skills.
Stronger individuals.



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Manage stress, increase resilience and respond with awareness.



MENTAL WELL-BEING

Improve mood, focus, confidence and overall well-being.



PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

Build strength, flexibility, balance and body awareness.



SELF-AGENCY

Tools to make healthy choices, set goals and believe in oneself.



CONNECTION & BELONGING

Strengthen relationships and cultivate a sense of community and support.

4. ELEVATING COMMUNITIES

Stronger individuals create stronger families, schools and communities.



STRONGER LEARNERS

Students are calm, focused and ready to learn and thrive.



SUPPORTED EDUCATORS

Educators have tools and support to stay balanced and inspired.



HEALTHIER FAMILIES

Families build wellness practices that last a lifetime.



CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Neighbors connect, look out for each other and grow together.



A MORE RESILIENT NEWARK

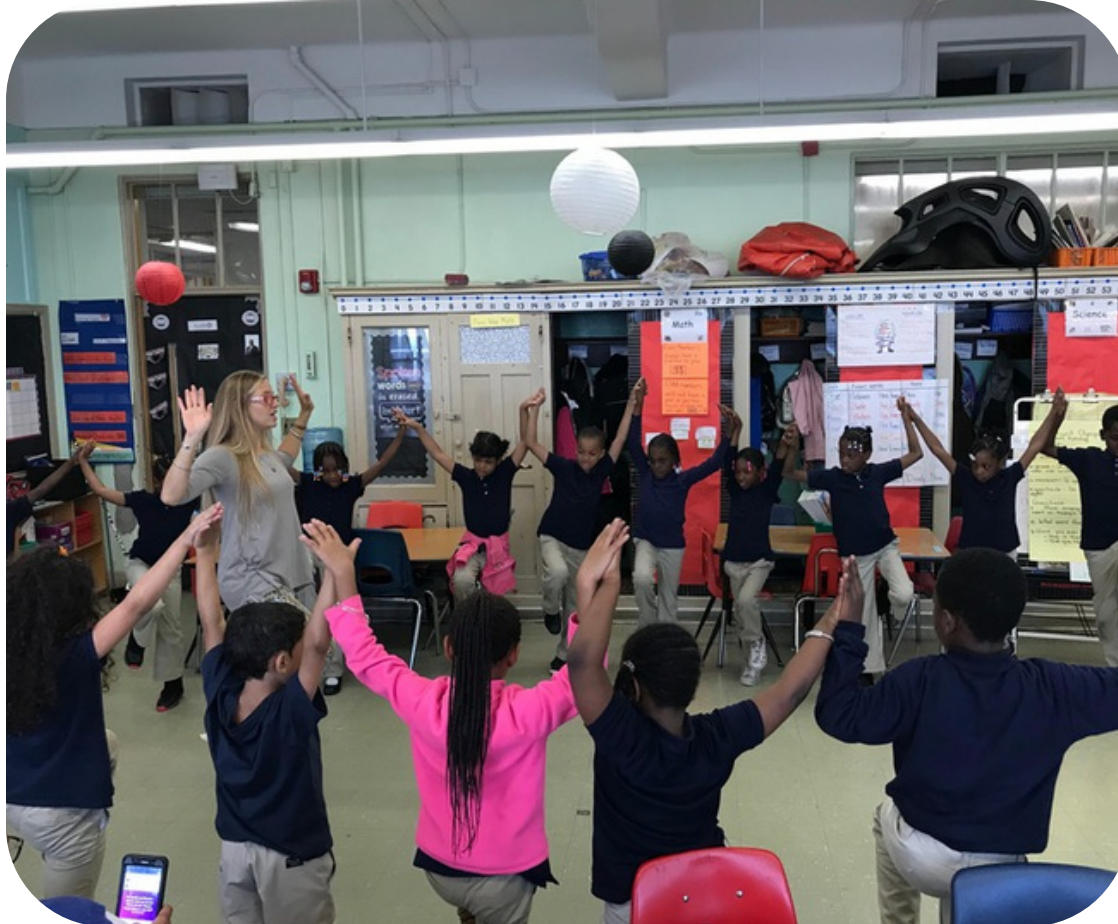
A healthier, more compassionate city where everyone can thrive.

Three Pillars. One Purpose.

Guided by community need, these three priorities focus our work today while building a healthier, more resilient tomorrow.

SCHOOLS

- Deepening school-based wellness, student self-regulation, and educator support.



COMMUNITY

- Expanding free, accessible wellness where people live, work, learn, and gather.



INNOVATION

- Advancing Breathe, then Read™, women's wellness, and new ways to scale practical wellness tools.



Where We Meet **People**

”

**We meet people
where they are—**

”

**—not where we
expect them to be.**

NYM Signature Programs

Early Childhood Wellness

1,000 young children received more consistent exposure to breath, movement, and mindfulness as Pre-K/Head Start programming expanded from one session per school to three.

DEPTH: 3× the program exposure • 1,000 people-hours

Professional Development

Educator wellness and professional development help school staff experience and apply practical regulation tools while supporting their students.

REACH: 6000 educators since inception • +38.4% year over year



Instant Calm

Simple breathing strategies give students and educators practical regulation tools they can use during the school day—in moments of stress, transition, or distraction.

AGENCY: A 3-minute tool designed to be used anytime, anywhere.

Yoga Ambassador Program

Students practice leadership by modeling breath, movement, mindfulness, and healthy self-regulation within their school communities.

SELF-AGENCY: Moving from participation toward leadership.

Move Through Newark

Free community wellness experiences that bring movement, mindfulness, and connection directly into Newark neighborhoods.

ACCESS: Wellness beyond the classroom.



Rest & Reset

Restorative yoga and sound experiences that create intentional space for rest, reflection, and renewal.

RESTORE: Supporting mental and emotional well-being.

Evidence-Based. Community-Driven.

STRESS

***SCIENCE SAYS**

Controlled breathing, mindfulness, and movement can help reduce stress and support emotional well-being.

OUR RESPONSE

We teach practical tools—including breathwork, movement, and mindfulness—that support regulation, resilience, and self-agency.

EDUCATION

***SCIENCE SAYS**

Students who can better regulate attention and emotions are better prepared to engage in learning.

OUR RESPONSE

Instant Calm, Yoga Ambassador, educator wellness, and Breathe, Then Read™ provide practical regulation tools that support readiness to learn.

ACCESS

***SCIENCE SAYS**

Health is created where people live their everyday lives. Community-based health promotion can expand participation and access to wellness practices.

OUR RESPONSE

We bring free wellness into schools, parks, residential communities, faith organizations, and neighborhood gathering spaces—reducing cost and transportation barriers.

***See last page for sources**



Total cost of yoga per class

Compare what you pay to access yoga.

Newark Yoga Movement
Community classes

FREE

Accessible yoga for everyone.
Meeting our community
where they are.



Total cost of yoga (\$ per class)

Based on memberships or class packages

● Average cost per class ● Typical range



High-End Yoga Studios

Monthly memberships
\$150–\$220/month

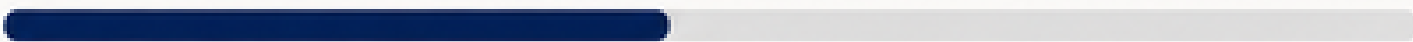


\$25.00
(\$20–\$37)



Local Gyms

Memberships with yoga classes
\$60–\$120/month



\$12.00
(\$8–\$18)



Boutique Yoga Studios

Class packs or memberships
\$100–\$165/month

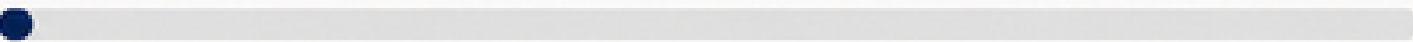


\$18.00
(\$13–\$25)



Newark Yoga Movement

Community classes
FREE



\$0.00
(FREE)



Newark Yoga Movement removes financial barriers
so more people can breathe, move and thrive.



Increasing access. Building community.
Creating lasting impact.

Growth With Intention • FY 2025–2026

SCHOOLS

3,031 Child Participations
+11.4% YEAR OVER YEAR

16,907 People-Hours
+14.4% YEAR OVER YEAR



COMMUNITY

1,510 Adult Participations
+141% YEAR OVER YEAR

2,683 People-Hours
+105% YEAR OVER YEAR



EDUCATORS

263 Educator Participations
+38.4% YEAR OVER YEAR

413 People-Hours
+23.3% YEAR OVER YEAR



WE GREW SCHOOL, EDUCATOR & COMMUNITY IMPACT, TOGETHER

CHILDREN +11.4%

COMMUNITY +141%

WHY ACCESS MATTERS

21.7%
OF NEWARK RESIDENTS UNDER 65 ARE UNINSURED

23.4%
OF NEWARK RESIDENTS LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

50.7%
OF NEWARK RESIDENTS ARE WOMEN

These figures show the scale of the community we serve and reinforce the importance of free, neighborhood-based opportunities for movement, stress management, connection, and well-being.

Free community wellness complements—not replaces—medical care.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts: Newark city, New Jersey.



**“Once I did yoga
before a test and
then all my stress
went away.”**

— 3rd Grade Student
Newark Public Schools

Voices of Impact

“Yoga is my favorite time in school.”

– 3rd Grade Student

“What I learned about yoga is that I could spend about 15 minutes doing yoga so I can spend the other 1,425 minutes of the day peaceful and relaxed.”

– 8th Grade Student

“I wish we could do yoga in every school across the world. Students need these tools to stop and focus on their own well-being. By bringing yoga into school, we are giving our students an extraordinary gift.”

– Maria Paradiso
Executive Director, Link Community Charter School

“These five minutes save me fifty minutes in the classroom.”

– Educator using Instant Calm

“Yoga helped me in my anger problems.”

– 5th Grade Student

“We’ve noticed students are much calmer. The energy at the school is more stable. Breathing gives students another route instead of overreacting or becoming overly anxious.”

– Principal Gearhart
Newark Public Schools

Why Wellness **Can't Wait**

Every day, students and educators walk into classrooms carrying invisible challenges.

Stress, anxiety, distractions, grief, and uncertainty can make it difficult to focus, connect, and learn.



School Impact: From Access to Agency

01 LINK | DEEPER PARTNERSHIP

+83% PARTICIPANT WELLNESS HOURS • +41% STUDENT REACH

2026–27: expanding to weekly yoga for every class.

02 SCIENCE PARK | SUSTAINED INTEGRATION 4 YEARS OF SCHOOLWIDE WELLNESS

953 students • 10,206 people-hours

Yoga remains integrated through PE and athletics.

03 BRANCH BROOK | SELF-AGENCY IN ACTION PARTICIPANT → LEADER

24 students • 240 people-hours

By spring, students were beginning to lead poses themselves. Renewed for 2026–27.

04 ROSEVILLE | DEEPENING ACCESS

+50% WEEKLY PROGRAMMING

336 students • 2,016 people-hours

Weekly yoga expanded from 4 to 6 hours, allowing every class to participate separately and extending programming to 5th grade.

GROWTH IS MORE THAN A BIGGER NUMBER
Expansion • Consistency • Renewal • Self-Agency

+141%

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
624 → 1,510 adult participations

2,683 people-hours
+105% year over year

Wellness Beyond the Classroom

BRICK CITY SOLSTICE

150 ADULTS
450 PEOPLE-HOURS

A shared community experience
centered on movement, mindfulness,
and connection.

MORE WAYS TO ACCESS WELLNESS

Neighborhood wellness
Prenatal yoga
Workplace wellness
Women's gatherings
Health fairs
Virtual classes



GROWING OUR IMPACT—TOGETHER



SCHOOLS

DEEPEN WHAT WORKS

Expand consistent school-based wellness, educator support, and proven partnerships.

COMMUNITY

BRING WELLNESS CLOSER

Grow free neighborhood programming and explore a consistent community wellness space.

INNOVATION

BUILD WHAT'S NEXT

Advance Breathe, then Read™, women's wellness, and new ways to scale practical wellness tools.

Breathe, then Read™



An NYM innovation designed to help students regulate and prepare for literacy instruction.

Five minutes of guided breathing can create a calmer transition into learning.



BREATHE → REGULATE → READ → GROW

5 MINUTES of guided breathing.

A calmer transition into literacy instruction.

A repeatable regulation practice students can carry forward.





The Investment Opportunity

Deepen consistent school-based wellness, educator support, and student self-regulation.

Partnership turns access into lasting impact.

SCHOOLS

Expand free neighborhood wellness and bring practical tools closer to where people live and gather.

COMMUNITY

INNOVATION

Advance Breathe, then Read™, women’s wellness, and new approaches that can extend NYM’s impact.

PARTNERSHIP

Invest alongside NYM through philanthropy, sponsorship, institutional partnership, and community collaboration.





“What I learned about yoga is that I could spend about 15 minutes doing yoga so I can spend the other 1,425 minutes of the day peaceful and relaxed.”

— 8th Grade Student

Imagine what’s possible when every child has that opportunity.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Partner • Volunteer • Give • Advocate

newarkyogamovement.org

SOURCES & REFERENCES

Evidence supporting the Science Says sections and Newark community data

STRESS

Fincham,G.W., et al. (2023)

Effect of breathwork on stress and mental health: A meta-analysis of randomised-controlled trials. Scientific Reports, 13, 432.

Pascoe, M.C., Thompson, D.R., & Ski, C.F. (2017)

Yoga,mindfulness-based stress reduction, and stress-related physiological measures: A meta-analysis. Psycho-neuroendocrinology, 86, 152-168.

EDUCATION

Durlak, J.A., et al. (2011)

The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. Child Development, 82, 405-432.

ACCESS

Nickel,S.,&von dem Knesebeck, O. (2020)

Effectiveness of Community-BasedHealth Promotion Interventions in Urban Areas: A Systematic Review. Journal of Community Health, 45, 419-434.

World Health Organization

HealthySettings. Health promotion framework emphasizing the everyday settings in which people live, learn, work, and gather.

NEWARK COMMUNITY DATA

U.S. Census Bureau

QuickFacts:Newarkcity,New Jersey. Source for the community indicators presented in this report.