



Laughter Flash



SPRING- A TIME FOR HOPE AND ACTION

Alexa Fong Drubay, CMT and Director of LY USA

Hello fellow Laughter Yogis and Laughter Yoga Enthusiasts,

It's the **Year of the Rabbit** in Asian tradition and many of us are impatient to start hopping forward onto new green Spring pathways. We're looking forward to longer sunlit days and more opportunities to share the joys of laughter with others in our communities. Let's raise our arms and bloom with laughter!

Isn't it great as we emerge from the long covid pandemic that so many of our zoom laughter groups have continued to thrive, and our in-person laughter clubs and gatherings have begun to pick up steam again. It's such a release and wonderful feeling to laugh more either way! With a growing mental health crisis, our laughter work is all the more important. During the pandemic we experienced a virtual laughter club boom. More people have been exposed to Laughter Yoga now and testimonials abound! The energy that we feel whether online or in-person, and the power laughter has to connect us is undeniable. Our laughter movement is growing throughout the world.

March 13th marks the **28th Anniversary of Laughter Yoga**. It's so inspiring to think about that first laughter club of the Kataria's and how it has evolved! This laughter wave has spread across the globe. What a gift and how wonderful to be part of this community! Thank you to the Kataria's for sharing their brainchild with us!

Please forgive my exuberance with this larger-than-usual (20-page!) newsletter but excitement is in the air! This issue is chock full of good stuff. Lots of "goodies in our basket"!

Feeling a bit overwhelmed these days? **Cynthia Paris** shares with us her prescription for dealing with life's challenges when you feel like you are "in the weeds".

We are also excited to share news about a new LY USA classroom project. Meet the **Educator Relief Squad** and find out how you can get involved. Imagine introducing more laughter to K-Grades 4 (and beyond!) and how this could help improve teaching, learning and all of our lives!

There are countless ways to use Laughter Yoga. In our **SPOTLIGHT ON!** section, we are highlighting the work of seven very dedicated laughter yogis in our LY USA community. It's so much fun to learn how different folks are applying their laughter skills. Impressive and inspiring.

Whatever you do, whether for self care, freelancing in your community or beyond, we are ALL working for the greater good and it's a beautiful thing to be part of this LY world. Thanks to all of you beautiful practitioners who are reading this.

We look forward to laughing with you soon and please, reach out and let us know what you are doing. There's strength in numbers, and the more we can collaborate, the more effective we can be in spreading laughter yoga across this great country.

Laugh & Bloom, ho ho ha ha ha *Alexa*

Alexa for Team Laughter Yoga USA

SPRING 2023 EDITION

Newsletter Highlights

A Message of Hope &
A Call to Action

Cynthia Paris
on Overwhelm
Laughter

**Spotlight On! 7 Laughter
Yogis doing excellent
community work**

Meet the **Educator Relief
Squad** to the rescue!
LY Awareness and LY
Blasts in the classroom

Poetry Corner
Calendar of Events



*Happy Anniversary
Laughter Yoga
International*

www.laughteryogausa.org



OVER WHELM LAUGHTER



Cynthia Paris, CLYT

Current LYUSA Board Member & Volunteer

Founding Director LYUSA

Director, Team COA & Laughing with Cynthia

<http://coaprograms.org/>

lyusa.cynthiapolis@gmail.com

Hello Laughter Family,

March is here as we prepare this newsletter. Is it warm where you live? Cold? Snowy? Hot? Rainy? Dry? This time of year, depending on where you live, it could be anything. We all live in such different places with different lifestyles. We do have in common a desire to be happy. Wherever you are, I wish you this happiness.

Did you know March 3rd is "I want you to be Happy Day?" Planning for my Laugh Blast zoom session, I discovered this holiday and realized it fit perfectly here. As LY practitioners, we want our clients, each other and ourselves to be happy. This path to happiness is what we live, what we believe, what we share, what we offer. We share this path to happiness through Laughter Yoga and its complimentary modalities.

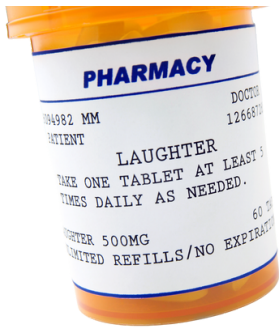
We talk about the benefits, the history, the why, the research and point to all the success stories we have had. Because it works. Dr Kataria and I founded Laughter Yoga USA because we both know it works. Still, I continue to test it in my real life just to be sure. (pause for big, open mouth laugh here)

It's our choice to laugh and feel good, no matter the situation.

When I was living in my basement at the start of the pandemic, I decided to keep laughing every day, no matter how frustrating things would become.

Despite being physically alone most of the time, laughing during those days infused energy and joy deep within. My body felt happy and light. Everything is as it should be.

As for many of you, my overwhelming and seemingly never-ending challenges keep bringing what feels like the opposite of happiness. Fear, pain, anger, grief- all the emotions that pull me into a darker place. At times the misery was so strong, I could not see any light. I am fortunate and so grateful to be alive, yet so much pain keeps weighing me down.



Choosing to laugh when I surely did not find anything the slightest bit funny, has kept me feeling genuinely happy.

Earlier, I mentioned living in my basement. Mistakes were made when a few weeks before Covid lockdown, a complete tear out and reconstruction of my house began. A 3-month project became a year and a half, living in basement, hotels, rentals, and hospitals. Nearly immediately after completion, pipes burst causing flooding and need to move out and repeat the process.

Sometimes when the frustration would overcome me, I would shake my finger and anger laugh at an imaginary contractor. Louder and louder, I would burst my attempts to be mad and laugh at the same time. Anger-laughing has become one of my favorites as I cannot stay angry very long. Once it gets going, I end up laughing about it. There was plenty to be upset about happening in my life.

Just during the pandemic days, more than a few medical things happened: I had major abdominal surgery; repeat septic shock; severe seizures; falls and unbearable headaches. During all that I was hospitalized 8 times; had breast cancer surgery 3 times and eventually a double mastectomy. Because it was the pandemic, I was alone most of the times in the hospital.

It didn't seem all that bad – I'm an LY professional after all. It became a bit of a game to see what I could do without pain. Could I smile? How about a slight giggle? An actual laugh? Oops, that was too much, an inside smile will have to do. Every test, procedure, new machine became a toy or a game to play. Sometimes I made jokes at really inappropriate times, other times I just smirked and imagined loud laughing. As much as I hated the pokes, the prodding, the stitches, the pain- silliness was something just for me to cope.

Join Cynthia's *Fast Blast Laugh*
Wednesdays & Fridays in March & April
9:15 AM Central 15-20 min - all welcome

[Zoom room link-](#)

**What's Cynthia's
favorite LY exercise?**



Right now I'm obsessed with 2-arm weight lifting.
 Seated in chair - start from chest up
 (or if standing start from bent over)
 Slowly, lifting up—
 Haaaa haaa haaaa
 Then finally arms up above head & a burst celebration of laughter!

The double mastectomy was like hitting a wall at 100mph. I was dropped off at the front door lobby, no one was even allowed in the building. Then wheeled up to surgery. Not in their wheelchair, but in my own. Another thing had happened during the pandemic, brain damage that caused me to be in a wheelchair. In the hours and days after surgery, the emptiness I felt was echoed in the aloneness. Nurses were in short supply and I seldom saw an actual person. No family or friends could visit. No one to wipe my tears or tell me it will be fine. There was no one to even hold my hand.

So, I held my own hand, and laughed at how silly it looked. Then I reached out and pretended to shake someone else's hand and gently laughed again. It physically hurt and I wouldn't recommend doing it. Emotionally, I needed it. The laughter connected me to the Laughter Family I knew was out there laughing too. I kept smiling and imaging myself fully laughing, a deep and hearty belly laugh. In my mind, I was strong and roaring with laughter. And I genuinely felt happier and less alone.

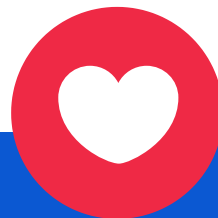
There are more medical problems that I can't even recall. Somewhere, a billing department has kept track and soon will send yet another payment due letter. Sometimes I open one of these bills and laugh a big hearty laugh. Pointing to it and showing it to an imaginary Laughter Yoga group while I laugh and laugh. Each one brings in a deep breath and calm.

Life continues with both wonderful things that make it easy to laugh and the not so wonderful things that challenge our resolve to choose to laugh.

What is the secret to the path of happiness? Simply choosing happiness. I like to say "Breathe happy, Laugh happy, Think happy, Move Happy, Be happy" All of these are linked, choosing one impacts the others. We have the tools in Laughter Yoga, we can apply them to our own frustrations and sufferings. At first it might feel impossible. Begin by simply imagining the Laughter Family laughing with you too.

Laughter & Love,

Cynthia



[Click on this to watch
Cynthia laughing at the hospital](#)



BREAKING NEWS

We are on a mission
to bring Laughter Yoga
into the classroom

MEET THE EDUCATOR RELIEF SQUAD

Cathy Grippi, CLYT

HELP WANTED!

During the last few years, we have all experienced more stressful challenges to every aspect of our lives and our children are feeling it! Reports of depression and worse abound among our youth here in the US. We know that LY programs for schools have been successfully developed in India and Japan. Here in the 'west', LY has made only small inroads in schools.

To address this, LY USA has formed the "Educator Relief Squad" to provide Resilience Resources to Educators here in the US. We are Cathy Grippi, Neeta Merchant, Marina Herrera, Hillary Willett & Alexa Fong Drubay.

Among other benefits, Laughter Yoga pro's know that energizing laughter exercises can be confidence boosters, team builders, compassion creators, empowering and of course - stress relievers. We know that these states of being enhance creative thinking and more. Because we know our practice can help teachers manage their stress, are confident that a Laughter Yoga practice can provide a multitude of benefits for students, we are in the early stages of discussion and development of a curriculum that laughter yogi's can bring to schools to help reduce the effects of the stress of modern life.

What we envision so far:

Classrooms, entire schools, starting their day with a short LY session, allowing the staff and students the opportunity to breath, stretch and laugh together with the intension of bringing everyone's focus to the task at hand, learning.

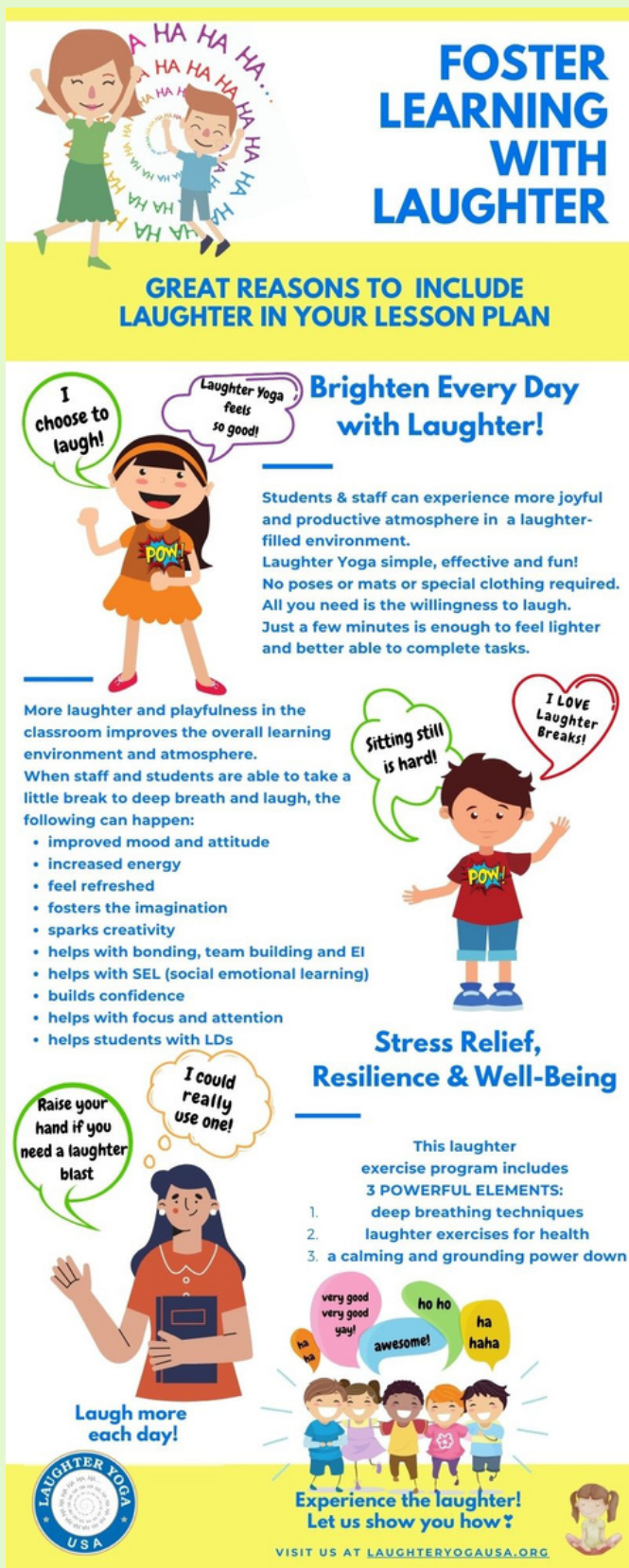
Imagine equipping teachers with Laughter Yoga skills that can infuse the classroom with laughter whenever they feel the need for break to change the energy in the room.

So how can this vision become a reality?



top left to right: Hillary, Alexa, Cathy, Marina and Neeta





Rack cards such as these, provided by LYUSA to hand out to our educator contacts.

Getting new programs into schools takes a bit of sales and a structure educators can evaluate and adopt. Creating a blueprint for Laughter Yogi's to follow will be key to creating a 'wellness curriculum' these institutions can adopt.

This will provide LY leaders an easier pathway into the educational system to lead programs and possibly encourage teachers to become laughter leaders.

We feel encouraging and empowering the teaching staff to consistently use some simple Laughter Yoga exercises to connect, energize or calm their students throughout the school day will be a win for all. Our goal is to help create a positive and productive teaching environment by infusing the school day with little laughter blasts.

We at LY USA are working to create a program to share the benefits of LY in schools by

1) Developing/offering online workshops specifically for educators to learn more about LY benefits and practices.

2) Developing guidelines/curriculum specific to the US school system to help LY pros share this info with educators and providing teaching materials.

3) Provide ongoing support and exchange of feedback to constantly improve and to expand this program. LYUSA will put educators in contact with local LY professionals.

We are in the early stages of discussion and development and wish to encourage laughter yogis with educational experience and contacts in the school system to reach out to us to share your thoughts.

Please send your thoughts to

CathyGrippi@LaughterYogaVenice@gmail.com

Cathy Grippi leads a highly successful outdoor laughter club at Centennial Park in Venice, FL
[For more info click here](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON!

Larry O'Brien, CLYL

Providence, RI

oblarryob@gmail.com

www.providencelaughterclub.com



Larry shares on preparing
for Zoom sessions for
AARP and running his
laughter clubs.

"Living with varied
challenges will NOT stop
me from laughing!"

Hello Larry! (LOB)

LYUSA: What does your previous life look like pre LY? What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become a Laughter Yoga professional?

LOB: I worked as a technical recruiter (head hunter) for engineers and mgt. people for 35 years. I was diagnosed with MS in 1978 and 15 years ago I began tiring more easily and decided I wanted to do something good for myself and tried Laughter Yoga. I loved it from my first experience. I became a leader because Rebecca Foster invited me and tailored a training to fit my needs.

LYUSA: Do you run a regular laughter club? If so, how long have you been running it?

LOB: Yes, zoom laughter since 2015, give or take. The club is fun and gives me a chance to laugh and be creative/spontaneous.

LYUSA: Besides your laughter club activities, what else do you have in the works?

LOB: I am currently working on a project with the RI AARP chapter. I am excited to lead my first session (a 3 episode pilot project) for them in March. It's part of the Healthy Living series.

LYUSA: What do you find most satisfying about being a laughter yogi?

LOB: The way it makes me feel and sharing that feeling with others. This has been a real revelation to me. I have become less abrasive and less caustic. I discovered the “high road” and have become more gracious. My wife is very supportive and thinks this LY has been really good for me.

LYUSA: What is your favorite LY exercise?

LOB: Imagine a story that is so funny you are trying to explain it but you laugh so hard, all you hear are laughter sounds with occasional words. (For example: “I have to ha ha ha ha, tell you, hee hee, ho ho ho, incredible, ha ha ha.....”) That’s such a fun exercise and after practicing it, you feel so good. It’s such a release.

LYUSA: How has the LY helped you personally? Has it changed you in any way? How has the laughter helped you personally and how have you helped others with your skills?

LOB: 55 years ago I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Sometime around 2000, I joined a support group and was exposed to laughter therapy. It was a lot of fun and I laughed so hard, but when we went back the woman had given up on her meetings. Anyway, now after learning more about Laughter Yoga, unconditional laughter is more satisfying than relying on laughing at jokes. I sought out Laughter Yoga and found Rebecca Foster, who became my trainer and friend. It's a great form of exercise for me, and laughing with the elderly and/or the sick has been good for me. I recently visited a friend on his deathbed; when he saw me he whispered, "Larry, laugh."

LYUSA: How have you made an impact in your community?

I think that when people see me leading from my wheelchair that it sends a message: “Hey if he can laugh, then I can laugh too! “ I know I have laughed with some people who really needed to.

LYUSA: If you could choose someone to ride the elevator with and to introduce to LY and end up laughing with, who would that person be?

LOB: I would love to meet my meditation guide, Prem Rawat. I don’t know what we’d talk about, but it would be a blissful elevator ride!

LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

LOB: Making more laughter available to more people.

LYUSA: Thanks for your dedication to LY and inspiring us to be the best we can be, despite daily challenges. You show us the power of laughter!

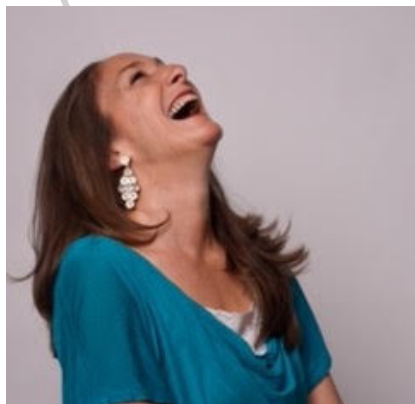


Carla H. Brown, CLYT

Santa Cruz, CA

livingfromjoy@gmail.com

www.livingfromjoy.com



"Through many years of working with the practices of joy, laughter, grief support and emotional regulation, my specialty is supporting and empowering people who have gone through, or are going through challenging experiences, to learn how to acknowledge and tend to the painful, suffering parts, while being open to learning how to integrate joy and good feelings. Awareness and willingness are the key components to any kind of change. Joy and laughter are inherent in all of us. After a lifetime of unconsciously practicing fear, worry and negativity, it takes time to unlearn and relearn something new. I love encouraging and motivating people to embrace joy even in the midst of the hardness! Remember that the Lotus is born from the mud, the butterfly from the goo. Each one of us is a beauty just waiting to unfold!"

Hello Carla! (CHB)

LYUSA: Can you share with us some of the work you were engaged in pre LY?

CHB: I have a background in Early Childhood Education, with a degree in Social Sciences/Psychology and worked as a life coach with 5,6 & 7 Graders at a private school. I also work as a Drug & Alcohol counselor, am a Yoga Teacher and certified Yoga and SEL instructor.

What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become a Laughter Yoga professional?

CHB: I first discovered Laughter Yoga in 2008 when I was a new transplant in Texas, and having a hard time finding a way to connect with positive people or any joy. I knew that I needed to laugh, because laughter and humor had always been a way for me to intercept my negative thinking. I looked online and found a radio program on Laughter Yoga. I listened to it for 10 minutes and did the exercises. It was very triggering for my mind, but my body was overjoyed with the experience of more oxygen, movement and playfulness, and less anxiety and stress hormones.

After that short session, I ended up smiling more and feeling lighter all day, and easily engaging with people I'd never met. It opened me up and brought me back to life! I had found a gold mine!

LYUSA: Do you run a regular laughter club?

CHB: I have been running laughter clubs since 2009, in Lubbock TX and now Santa Cruz CA and Online. Four years running a club in Texas. Ten years running clubs in California, three of those years running a club online (since the pandemic).

In-person-11 years. Online - 3 years

LYUSA: Besides your laughter club activities, do you laugh with other groups?

CHB: Yes!!! LOVE to laugh with other groups! Professionally - I have lead laughter sessions with seniors, children, highschoolers, university students, teachers, doctors and nurses, garbage truck drivers, hospice, alzheimer's, dementia and Parkinson's groups, cardiac clinics, women's business networking events, Satellite kidney dialysis units, Napa County mental health dept, churches, choirs, women going through cancer treatment, Lions, Kiwanis, YWCA conventions and many, many, many groups. Personally - I take the time to laugh with other online groups, like the folks (Dr K et. al.) in India online regularly. Keyem on Fridays, Calgary Laughter Yoga, Linda Leclerc, Laughing Ginger, Francine, Cynthia Paris, Malaysia, Germany and France...many many groups. I love it all!

LYUSA: Any special news in your LY life recently?

I won the American Laughter Championship 2022. In July I fractured my upper arm and have been healing from that major surgery. Getting ready to come back out into the world soon. Teaching lots online.

LYUSA: Congratulations on winning the American Laughter Championship, very exciting!

Glad to hear that you are healing from that injury. What do you find most satisfying about being a Laughter Yogi?

CHB: It's so fulfilling to lead laughter yoga sessions for people of all walks of life and all ages all over the world. I love that Laughter Yoga can be done virtually or in person to help alleviate, reduce, or eliminate anger, loneliness, anxiety, comfort with loss, pain, depression and more. We love the interactive wellness benefits we receive every time that we are facilitating a session, it feels so amazing every time. Most importantly, laughter yoga allows the opportunity to experience the present moment and access joy and the feeling of happiness, even in the midst of the hardships of life.

LYUSA: What is your favorite LY exercise?

CHB: Opening Your Heart Laughter

LYUSA:How has the LY helped you personally?

Has it changed you in any way? How have you helped others with your skills?

CHB: Laughter Yoga has helped me on so many levels. First of all, when I was first introduced to it, it got me breathing again (I was an anxious breath-holder). Over the years I've noticed that the practice of laughter yoga has helped me to befriend living in my body, and supporting healing patterns of trauma in my body. It also supported my nervous system to process the grief of my mother and my best friends passing, as well navigating the pain of my broken arm last year. There are so many things I could say about how laughter yoga has supported and changed me. I now have automatic nervous system programming in my body to laugh when I get stressed or things get hard. The laughter liberates all kinds of fear and worry and also gets me breathing again. It has helped me to navigate so many challenges. With the years of laughing, I have become less stressed out and more joyful and resilient. My sense of humor has increased and my serious side is mostly on a permanent holiday. I am more joyful, more often.

For instance, my recent surgery from my broken arm... Many people would feel depressed, dejected, frustrated... Of course, I am going through the same things that other people go through with this kind of an accident and surgery, though I have a positive attitude and there's more space in me to navigate the hard things.

Professionally, I have used Laughter Yoga with so many different people from all walks of life. One woman wanted me to be her doctor after just one laughter session, because she felt better than she had in years. Others have released tears that have been locked inside for decades, laughing, crying and reopening their hearts. In every session there are always people who have healing and transformation. It's my very favorite part! I am dedicated to offering sessions that support healing, growth, transformation and expanded joy and delight! Laughter is an automatic upgrade to feeling better in the body.

I lead three classes a week, one is a Laughter club, and the other two are called The Joy Reboot, where we practice Laughter Yoga, integrated with feeling joyful in the body, through different breath, movement, sound and mindfulness techniques. Just today I had a woman tell me that, though she was only able to participate for 20 minutes, she was surprised to feel "SO much better afterwards!" (her words)

Whenever I offer Laughter Yoga it always seems to benefit people. Although many are skeptical (due to years of thinking, and no laughter), once we start laughing, loving and breathing people feel the change and recognize they haven't been breathing deeply or moving enough. They learn that they've normalized depression, worry and fear, their body locked in seriousness or fear...and after the laughter session the results are always the same, "I feel so much better!" Makes me so happy! That's why I keep doing this, it brings me so much joy!

LYUSA:How have you made an impact in your community?

CHB: I have volunteered for nine years, supporting women with cancer using Laughter Yoga. I have brought Laughter Yoga into forums for healing, therapeutic movement and mindfulness. We have brought Laughter Yoga to the park in Santa Cruz (led by 3 of my students) along with the weekly in-person Laughter club hapoening for many years before the pandemic.

I have led many Laughter Leader trainings, in-person and online, to empower people to keep spreading joy and cultivating unconditional laughter.

At one point, we held a session at a local museum as a human cultural experiment, a flash mob of Laughter Yogis laughing through the crowd at a festival. It was a hit, and we got everyone in the museum laughing along with us!

As things begin to open up more, I plan to approach some of the local first-responders and offer laughter for stress relief and mental health. It's a high stress job and I want them to know they can laugh it off.

LYUSA:If you could choose to be stuck in an elevator with someone you'd like to introduce LY to and to laugh with, who would that person be?

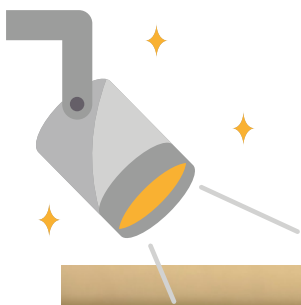
CHB:Julia Roberts

LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

CHB: I dream about traveling around the world, introducing laughter, movement and breathing to a wide variety of people. Like a world laughter and wellness road trip. I dream of bringing more Laughter Yoga to TV and radio and supporting people to alleviate stress and connect to each other through Joy and laughter, instead of bonding through negativity.

LYUSA: Thanks so much for sharing so much about your laughter practice and experiences of how you can go deeper, reinventing and fortifying yourself through the laughter!





Bill Cohill, CLYL (BC)

Port Hadlock, WA

bgcohill@gmail.com



How LY helped me process my grief and also how it kept me from feeling lonely and isolated during the pandemic.

Hello Bill! (BC)

LYUSA: What did you do before Laughter Yoga?

BC: I worked in Int'l Business, managing cargo transports for global companies. Now that I am retired, I have found Laughter Yoga!

LYUSA: What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become a Laughter Yoga professional?

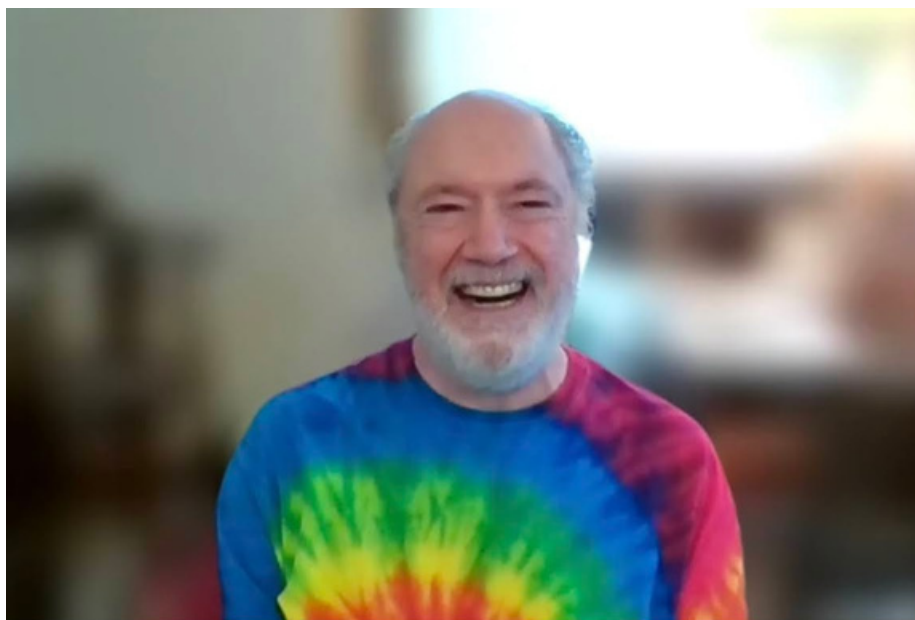
BC: Wanting to get more JOY in my life! I lost my wife 8 years ago and I was depressed for 5 years. I knew I needed to find more joy in my life. Laughter Yoga helped me in the healing process with my grief and elevated my mood. Right at the time I was reemerging from the darkness, COVID hit and I was isolated by myself. With the help of my new laughter family on zoom, I did fine. I read Dr. K's book and listened to his DVD and decided I wanted more laughter in my life. So I also took the 30-day laughter challenge and it made a real impact. I held myself accountable and joined online laughter clubs. There was no club in my area so I decided to become a laughter leader so I could gain experience through zoom clubs and then launch my own in-person, community club in Port Townsend, WA.

LYUSA: What do you love most about laughter clubs?

BC: I love the fun and wonderful connection to all of the people at laughter clubs. During the pandemic it was mostly on zoom and I even laughed with Master Trainer Luis Gomez' group from Mexico City. Luis asked me to take over leading his club one day and since I don't speak Spanish, I ended up miming the exercises and guess what? Participants loved it! What an experience!

LYUSA: Do you laugh with other groups as well? If so, please mention the groups you have laughed with.

BC: I love attending other zoom laughter clubs- my two favorites are Cynthia Paris and you!



LYUSA: What is your favorite LY exercise?

BC: "Lion Laughter" is one of my favorites because it's so outrageous, so unexpected and we get the added benefit of it being cleansing for the thyroid.

LYUSA: What do you find most satisfying about being a laughter yogi?

BC: Bringing joy to other people. Participants have told me that it has improved their sense of humor and that they are so grateful for the stress relief, the release.

LYUSA: How have you made an impact in your community?

BC: I am looking forward to working with cancer and depressed patients, as well as others that could benefit from Laughter Yoga.

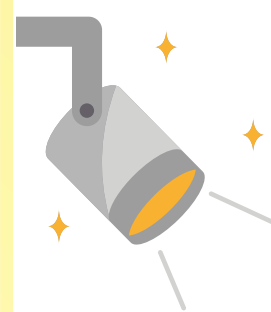
LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

BC: To laugh with you in person!

LYUSAlexa: As you mentioned to me earlier, you have 62 first cousins in MD and DE areas. That's not too far from PA. Let's try to make it happen this year! But actually, which group (who you haven't yet laughed with) do you dream of laughing with?

BC: I am dreaming and planning to do Laughter Yoga with the United Nations General Assembly and talk about world peace through laughter. Dr. Kataria and Cynthia Paris will be there and we are all hoping you will make it too. I could not get an "official" time slot for us to address the entire Assembly, so we will have a mini Laughter Club in the elevator laughing all day long with all the delegates!

LYUSA: What a great idea! We love your enthusiasm! Thanks for all you do, Bill!



Doug Savage, CLYL (DS)
a.k.a. "Doug the Sailor Man"



Doug laughing from his houseboat

Marion, Massachusetts
56sailaway@gmail.com

**The joy of running
a community
laughter club**

Hello Doug! (DS)

LYUSA: Tell us a bit about what type of work you do and where you live?

DS: I am currently working as a yacht rigger and living at a boatyard in Marion, Massachusetts. I have been living on my boat for the past 10 years. My boss encourages my laughter work and I am known around the boatyard as the laughter guy and it is not uncommon for fellow boat workers to laugh when they see me or yell, "very good, very good, YAY!"

What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become a Laughter Yoga professional?

DS: Someone told me that they thought I would be good with Laughter Yoga. I did some research and decided to give it a try. I found the Hamakers through my research and have been trained by the best. I wanted to learn how laughter is the best medicine. I believe that laughter has always been healing for me. I want to share this.

LYUSA: Do you run a regular laughter club? If so, how long have you been running it?

DS: I reopened my weekly class in November of last year. My initial opening lasted a bit over one year. The closure was brought on by Covid, The word is getting out and classes are good. I enjoy setting up the hall and preparing for the session. Laughing in person is the best. I have recently opened up weekly laughter sessions in person.

LYUSA: Besides your laughter club activities, what else do you have in the works?

DS: I have begun sessions at a local senior residence. This is at least monthly, possibly more. I was recently written about in the local paper and within the same week did a phone interview with a local radio station.

LYUSA: What do you find most satisfying about being a laughter yogi?

DS: My greatest enjoyment is seeing how much fun others can have by just plain laughing. I recently overheard a wife telling her husband how good she felt after our session and that she really felt a lot less stressed. That kind of response for me is so fulfilling.



LYUSA: How has the LY helped you personally? Has it changed you in any way? How has the laughter helped you personally and how have you helped others with your skills?

DS: LY planted a seed in me that continues to grow. All I need to do is laugh. LY has also allowed me to spread the joy of laughter. I frequently will just laugh. Co-workers will now laugh randomly. LY has allowed me to feel 'lighter'.

LYUSA: How have you made an impact in your community?

DS: I have been impacted by sharing laughter. The word is picking up steam and more are attending. I was recently featured in a news report. [In the news](#)

LYUSA: What is your favorite LY exercise?

DS: Lion Laughter because it's so expressive and always gets people laughing. Hands down, guaranteed they're going to laugh because it's goofy and fun. I also introduce music like the theme song Popeye the Sailor (because I am a sailor!) and we laugh and pretend riding horses to the Lone Ranger theme song.

LYUSA: If you could choose to be stuck in an elevator with someone you'd like to introduce LY to and to laugh with, who would that person be?

DS: Such a funny person you are.....to be honest it would not matter who it was.....anyone would do.but, perhaps my grandmother.

LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

DS: My goal is to continue building up interest in Laughter Yoga such that in a few years I could run laughing sessions more frequently.

LYUSA: Thank you Doug, for your commitment to Laughter Yoga and for brightening your community with laughter.

Clara Magallanes (CM) - CLYL

Brownsville, Texas



As a busy mom of three, psychotherapist and laughter leader, Clara shares more about Laughter Yoga with her clients and in the classroom.

Hello Clara! (CM)

LYUSA: Are you leading LY sessions in English and Spanish?

CM: Yes, I am bilingual. I am a US citizen and I grew up in Mexico, but I have lived in the United States for over 20 years. I'm bilingual 100% and my LY sessions at this moment have been mixed, where I do it in English and translate as necessary depending on the participants. I will soon be doing full LY sessions in Spanish as I plan to do sessions at senior day care facilities where 100% of their clients are Hispanic.

Do you feel that there is a great need in the hispanic community?

CM: Definitely. Being Hispanic myself, I know that we, as a culture, love humor. We find humor even in sad situations and it is in fact a way to cope with realities that are far from ideal. However, even though laughter is a coping mechanism used by us (Hispanics), being able to laugh without making fun of or without humor is something that is unheard of. I believe that we need to promote LY with the Hispanic community and give them the opportunity to experience laughing without humor or jokes, and finding the same benefits! Also, in my area, the majority of the population is Hispanic, and I have noticed that as many grow older, they might find it harder to find the humor in every day life as they used to. For this reason, it is my goal to begin a LY Club or do sessions with seniors at adult day cares and hospitals.

LYUSA: Do you run a regular laughter club? If so, how long have you been running it?

What do you like about running a laughter club? In person or on zoom?

CM: Aside from being a psychotherapist and having my private practice, I service a private elementary school as well. I do LY in person about once a month with students from 1st grade to 6th grade and they love it! I go to their classrooms and we do a session together. About one or 2 students in few classrooms have been a bit shy about doing the exercises in front of everyone, but they laugh when others laugh, because laughter is contagious! As a matter of fact, this past week I went to a classroom to do a lesson about kindness and as I was leaving, the students asked me to wait as I approached the door. They said to please not leave before they "flossed their brains"! So we did the Mental Floss together and I loved it! I especially like it when the more serious teachers join in and open up to laughter... just hearing everyone laugh out loud makes me very happy!

LYUSA: Besides your laughter club activities, what else do you have in the works?

CM: My immediate goal is to begin the LY Club in Spanish with the senior community at adult day cares and nursing homes and I already have 2 potential places to work with. I would love to have a LY Club at children's hospitals so that children and their parents can join. This can be in person or online (or both).

LYUSA: What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become a Laughter Yoga professional?

CM: Before I learned about Laughter Yoga, I knew that laughter does wonders for our health and mental state. Personally, I unwind and destress at home at the end of the day by watching some sort of comedy, whether it's a movie, a show, a comedian, or just something simple that I can laugh and relax with. When I learned about Laughter Yoga, I immediately wanted to know more about it, so I looked it up. At the beginning, it didn't make much sense to me to think that one could actually laugh without humor being involved, but knowing that laughter is healing and reenergizing, I decided to try it out. After a few exercises during my certification training, I was amazed at how it was actually possible to laugh without humor and to actually get all the benefits from it. After the first half of the training with Mayra Reyes, I felt joyful, reenergized, happy, and wanting to learn more! I felt like I had discovered a hidden gem and I just had to share it with everyone!



claramagallaneslpc@gmail.com

www.claramagallanes.com

LYUSA: What is your favorite exercise?

CM : At this moment, my favorite exercise is the credit card bill laughter ha-ha-ha! Because I think that it's necessary to help people during these tough times we are going through collectively, as the economy recovers post COVID. My other favorite LY exercises are those that involve different sounds and movements, like the Milkshake Laughter, the One Meter Laugh, and the Aloha Laughter.

LYUSA: What do you find most satisfying about being a laughter yogi?

CM: I love to teach others how to laugh and be able to find joy - regardless of the situation they're in. I believe Laughter Yoga is a life changer and every time I do a session with a group, I end up feeling happy and reenergized myself, so it's always a win-win!

LYUSA: How has the LY helped you personally? Has it changed you in any way? How has the laughter helped you personally and how have you helped others with your skills?

CM: Honestly, laughter has always come easily to me, but I notice that every time I do a LY session, it's even easier ha-ha-ha! Laughter has helped me to not take things so seriously. It helps me cope with stress and worries, helping me to have a more positive attitude and mindset, and it helps me find joy even when times are tough. Regarding how it has helped others, I have received feedback after having sessions with adults, and they've shared (with a BIG smile), that it improves their mood, making them feel happy and relaxed. Some have shared that learning to laugh at difficulties or stressors will help them in their lives. Being able to help others and make a positive impact in their lives is the best reward I can get. I've also received feedback from children after our class session and when they approach me in the school hallways to ask me when we will be having our next LY session in their classroom, which tells me they really like it!

LYUSA: How have you made an impact in your community?

CM: First of all, I have made other mental health professionals aware of the existence and benefits of Laughter Yoga. I recently did a pro-bono presentation for Tip of Texas Counselor Association, and they shared that they had heard of LY, but didn't really know what it was about. When they learned the benefits and experienced the session themselves, they shared positive feedback based on how they were feeling after the session, and expressed how they believe LY can help their clients/students too. I'm also doing in person LY sessions for the community at a nearby county's behavioral health organization. The organization focuses on underage drinking, binge drinking, marijuana & synthetics, and prescription medication misuse.

I've done Laughter Yoga with adults, teenagers, and kids too. I have my private practice, where I have used LY with my some of my clients who would benefit from it. I also serve a private school, where I see every classroom twice a month. I work with children ages 3 up to 12 or 13 y/o. I choose different lessons for the week and include LY sessions along with other counseling topics. LY in the classroom is about 30-45 minutes long and I've noticed that the favorite exercises for students vary depending on their age. The youngest students really enjoy LY exercises that keep them moving, while the older ones like exercises that are funnier (like the milkshake) or based on activities/experiences that they can cope with (friendship issues/difficult assignments or tests), so I sometimes create exercises to help them cope with different things. I also do LY with educators and their students, and my goal is to do LY at school assemblies with all students at once. I plan on expanding LY with the rest of the school community along with the nearby parish.

LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

CM: I would love to become a LY Teacher Trainer and train LY Leaders, so that we can expand the benefits of LY and bring laughter, healing, and joy to the community. My ultimate LY dream would be to be able to actually travel to India and be at a Laughter Yoga training with Dr. Madan Kataria.

LYUSA: If you could choose to be stuck with someone in an elevator to share laughter with, who would that be and what exercise would you have them try?

CM: It would probably be the Dalai Lama. It seems to me like he has a great sense of humor, so I'd have him try the hearty laughter with me or I would create a new exercise where we pretend to touch the numbers on the elevator by saying aeee... aeee... aeee... and then we pretend to fall by lifting up our hands in the air and laughing ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! I think this exercise would ease the stress of being stuck in an elevator, which is not fun at all!

LYUSA: Thanks so much for sharing details of your wonderful work with us and here's to an even brighter future with Laughter Yoga!





Lauren & Alik Colbert, CLYTs a.k.a *The Laughing Lovebugs*

Ewing, New Jersey (LL)

www.laughinglovebugs.com
laughinglovebugs@yahoo.com



Hello Laughing Lovebugs! (LL)

LYUSA: What are your work backgrounds?

LL: Alik holds a position as a Journeyman Carpenter from Local 253 of the New Jersey United Brotherhood of Carpenters. Lauren holds a position as a Senior Community Program Specialist for the NJ Department of Human Services at the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

LYUSA: What sparked your interest in Laughter Yoga and why did you decide to become Laughter Yoga professionals?

LL: Workplace stress. After attending our first Laughter yoga session together we experienced a life changing inner transformation and we were eager to delve in, learn more, and become certified laughter yoga practitioners. We wanted to spread awareness about the benefits of laughter yoga and encourage people to participate in doing something that not only feels good but it good for them. We got into this work because we have a passion to empower, inspire, enlighten, and awaken the inner joy within every human we interact with...

LYUSA: Do you run a regular laughter club? Who else do you laugh with?

LL: We run our current laughter club every Wednesday, since 2020. It is awesome to lead a human connection experience with the vibration of joy. We enjoy "laughter clubhopping" to fellow laughter yogis virtual laughter clubs. We have held sessions for public and charter schools in various cities/states, as well as workplace LY sessions for corporations like Google, Microsoft, PayPal, Amazon, eBay, Paramount, 1800 Flowers, and more!

LYUSA: Besides your laughter club activities, what else do you have in the works?

We are excited to share LY at NY BUILD Expo 2023 - Festival of Construction. We are thankful with this wonderful opportunity to provide LY at "the largest construction and design show for NYC and the Tri-state area at the Jacob Javits Center, and set for the biggest edition yet."

LYUSA: What do you find most satisfying about being a laughter yogi?

LL: It's so fulfilling to lead laughter yoga sessions for people of all walks of life and all ages all over the world. We love that LY can be done virtually or in person to help alleviate, reduce, or eliminate anger, loneliness, anxiety, comfort with loss, pain, depression and more. We love the interactive wellness benefits we receive every time that we are facilitating a session, it feels so amazing every time. Most importantly, LY allows the opportunity to experience the present moment.

LYUSA: What is your favorite LY exercise?

LL: Greeting Laughter works great for us and serves as Ice Breaker when introducing people to a LY exercise. The waving, the eye contact while laughing - we instantly connect. And even in instances where meeting again, participants appreciate the opportunity to reconnect. It is simple and effective, yet adds instant levity.

LYUSA: How has the LY helped you personally? Has it changed you in any way? How has the laughter helped you and others?

LL: Laughter yoga has ultimately transformed our entire life. It has helped improve our quality of life overall; we have evolved along our personal growth journey, improved ways to manage stress, and we help others to feel good and release stress with laughter. We help others to feel comfortable with emotions and connecting with others through the universal language of laughter.

LYUSA: How have you made an impact in your community?

LL: We moved to Central New Jersey and shortly thereafter the pandemic started, however as restrictions lifted we were able to share about laughter yoga to a local senior center, families that have lost loved ones due gun violence and shared at events with moms demand action organization. We have provided laughter yoga for children at the local public library and adults at local worship communities.

LL: Recently we shared a laughter yoga demo at Princeton Community works conference. We continue to share laughter yoga at community events expanding our reach to as many people as we can.

LY USA: What was one or some of the most fun recent LY session(s) you led and why?

LL: (Not quite a LY session however, Recently, we shared laughter at a NYFW show. The amazing designer was Bohn Jsell: a Black-owned Resort Wear Clothing Brand in NYC, specialized in made to measure clothing for the modern women. Their destination wear has been seen in Macys, Hudson's Bay and has been featured in magazines like Vogue Brazil and Cosmopolitan. After the show, we had an opportunity to briefly meet the designers, introduce them to laughter yoga and shared laughter yoga exercises with the designers as well as a few of the models that were part of the show. It was well received and one of the models commented that LY would be a good way to help with nerves for models to laugh it out . It was a good time and memorable experience for us.

LYUSA: We saw you on social media too, for Starbucks. Congrats!

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CnUkOi5vRWD/>

LL: Yes, that was so much fun!

LYUSA: What do you think about Laughter yoga in schools ?

LL: We want to explore opportunities to discover the school wide improvements that can be possible if a school implemented laughter yoga in their curriculum. Both the school staff and students both can use laughter exercises to ease stress in the classroom, to use as social emotional learning activity, and much more. This school population is dear to our hearts as Alik's mother is a retired schoolteacher. We think that if she had the opportunity to use laughter yoga in her classrooms it would have helped to reduce stress, burnout, and just overall created a positive school environment for all.

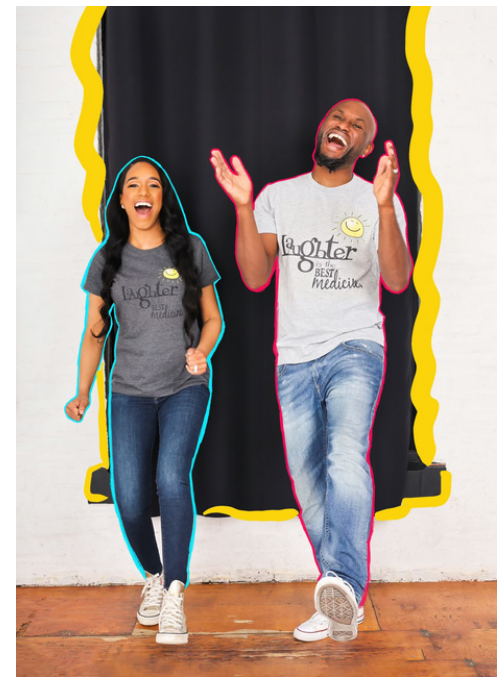
LYUSA: What do you dream about doing with Laughter Yoga?

LL: We set an ongoing intention to ensure that anyone that we engage with benefits as a result of feeling better. We want to excel and become financially prosperous so that we can serve at a high level. Our ultimate dream is to expand our reach to provide our services both nationally and internationally. We want to travel the world and build relationships with others all while encouraging and uplifting others with laughter. We dream of eventually opening a retreat center- Laughing Lovebugs Land: A place where people can experience the power of laughter and receive the gift of joy!

LYUSA: If you could choose to be stuck with someone in an elevator to share laughter with, who would that be and what exercise would you have them try?

LL: Dr. Marian Croak, Vice President of Engineering at Google. This phenomenal woman is a prolific inventor in the voice and data communication fields, with over 200 patents to her name! She is best known for developing Voice Over Internet Protocols (VoIP), technology that converts your voice into a digital signal, allowing you to make a call directly from a computer or other digital device. We are just two of the millions of people who benefit from her amazing inventions every day. We watched an awe- inspiring you tube interview of Dr. Croak and loved that she sees the importance of connecting with students, and anyone on a path of learning, to open their minds to possibility. She believes that there is no "try" too big. It would be a DREAM to meet her and work together to help connect her with children through laughter yoga and introduce them to the opportunities and joys of STEM. As mentioned earlier one of our favorite LY exercises to try is Greeting laughter...it feels so amazing for us to even imagine what laughing with her. It would be a wonderful experience!

LYUSA: Thank you for your engagement and for sharing your laughter journey with us!



Laughter Club Registries

Laughter Yoga International
[Worldwide Laughter Club Registry Link](#)

Link to the facebook group page, created by Cynthia Paris
[Laughter Yoga Zoom Group-Laughter Social Clubs](#)



Welcome and Thank you to Jamal Washington, CLYL, for becoming our new IT/tech volunteer! Laurel, MD

www.urjoygym.com/



Got admin skills?

We are seeking a volunteer to help with our membership registry.

Got organizer skills?

Help us plan an in-person LY USA event!

Contact Alexa at

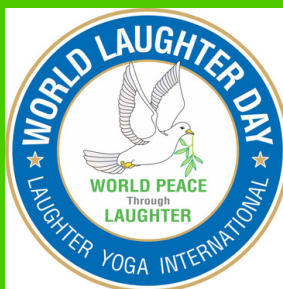
lyusaalexa@gmail.com

for more details.

Upcoming Laughter Events

March 13
Laughter Yoga's 28th Anniversary

May 7
WORLD LAUGHTER DAY 2023
List your WWL Events on our site!



visit our website to find out upcoming LYUSA workshop dates

- Educator Relief Squad here we come!
- LYUSA zoom Update Reunion Sharing & Celebrating our successes!

October 16-20
Indian LY Conference

BREAKING NEWS

LAUGHTER YOGA WORLD CONFERENCE

NASHIK, INDIA

MONDAY 16 > FRIDAY 20
OCTOBER 2023

5 DAY EVENT

SAVE THE DATE

AND CANCEL ALL YOUR APPOINTMENTS!! HAHA!

A portrait of a smiling man with a bald head, wearing a blue shirt and a grey jacket. He has a circular logo on his jacket.

LY USA zoom Workshops

Official LY USA T-shirts!



Looking to spruce up your LY wardrobe and to support LY USA? Consider gifting yourself or a loved-one a special t-shirt.

They come in a variety of styles, colors and sport the LY USA spiral or logo on the back. Look cool leading your next session and proceeds from your purchase goes to funding ongoing projects at LY USA.

<https://www.bonfire.com/store/laughter-yoga-usaorg/>



POETRY CORNER



A Laugh

Ripley Dunlap Saunders

A laugh is just like sunshine,
It freshens all the day.
It tips the peak of life with light
And drives the clouds away.
The soul grows glad that hears it
And feels its courage strong;
A laugh is just like sunshine
For cheering folks along.

A laugh is just like music,
It lingers in the heart,
And where its melody is heard,
The ills of life depart;
And happy thoughts come crowding
Its joyful notes to greet;
A laugh is just like music
For making living sweet!

Why Don't You Laugh

Unknown

Why don't you laugh, dear boys,
when troubles come,
Instead of sitting 'round so sour
and glum?
You cannot have all play,
And sunshine every day;
When troubles come, I say, why
don't you laugh?

Why don't you laugh, dear girls?
'Twill ever help to soothe
The aches and pains.
No road in life is smooth;
There's many an unseen bump,
And many a hidden stump
O'er which you'll have to jump.
Why don't you laugh?

Why don't you laugh?
Don't let your spirits wait;
Don't sit and cry because the milk
you've split;
If you would mend it now,
Pray let me tell you how:
Just milk another cow!
Why don't you laugh?

Why don't you laugh, and make us
all laugh, too,
And keep us mortals all from
getting blue?
A laugh will always win;
If you can't laugh, just grin -
Come on, let's all join in!
Why don't you laugh?

LY USA Membership Update

For the time being, our membership drive is on hold. We are seeking a volunteer to handle memberships and grants. In lieu of pursuing new memberships or renewals, those seeking to make donations of any amount, can do so on our website. We are grateful for any support, which will still help to finance programs to support new leaders with community projects and for programming of upcoming educational workshops and events. [Click this link to make a donation.](#)

