

# Orinda baby food store helps organization collect diapers for mothers in need

By Vera Kochan



Diaper donation bin outside of Square Baby

Photo Vera Kochan

According to Help A Mother Out, a nonprofit organization that distributes donated diapers to institutions and families in need, one in three families struggle to afford diapers, which can cost \$75-\$100 a month. Public assistance programs (such as food stamps) don't help with this basic need and the lack of a clean diaper can affect a baby's health, because they may have to spend extended time in a dirty diaper. Most childcare programs require parents to provide clean diapers. Without clean diapers, babies must stay at home with adult supervision, thereby keeping

the adult unemployed, reducing the family's chances of being financially self-sufficient. Square Baby in Orinda's Theatre Square is teaming up with HAMO to help.

Donated diapers can be placed in the large bin outside of Square Baby on a continuing basis. Katie Thomson, co-owner along with Kendall Glynn, says, "We will accept diapers, pull-ups and baby wipes (in original packaging), new cloth pocket diapers, even partial boxes (unopened sleeves) of diapers and wipes such as those purchased in big box stores." Sizes 4-6 are especially needed, but all sizes

are accepted and appreciated.

Square Baby, which sells baby food aimed at providing "a square meal," has also been involved with donating its products to Family House, a sister organization of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital that provides extended stay to families of children being treated for cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Thomson and her husband, Kevin, Square Baby's marketing director, have taken their two children with them to volunteer at Family House. "We want them to appreciate how lucky they are," Thomson explained.

Patients at Family House can enjoy a variety of healthy baby food such as Mango Coconut Chicken, Salmon Mash, Apple Rosemary Lentils and Peachy Oatmeal, just to name a few.

Square Baby also sponsors a periodic Mom's Night Out at the store where they give away baby meals, swag bags and gift certificates for Baby Boot Camp, a workout class for moms who just had a baby.

With personally developed recipes and all natural ingredients, Square Baby has begun to ship product throughout California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona and most recently Colorado. Thomson states, "We expect to ship to the East Coast next year."

For more information about Square Baby, visit [www.squarebaby.com](http://www.squarebaby.com) or call (415) 273-9756. The Orinda store, located at 2 Theatre Square, suite 112, is open Monday through Saturday from 11a.m. to 3 p.m.

For information about Help A Mother Out, visit [www.helppamotherout.org](http://www.helppamotherout.org).

# The prolific practice of yoga is expanding

By Lou Fancher

As a former professional ballet dancer and physical fitness devotee, I'm always seeking athletic challenges and opportunities. Running, biking, hiking, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and occasional tree climbing began recently to take their toll, so I turned my attention to yoga, an endeavor I thought might be in my future. Reaching out to people in the Lamorinda community, I discovered a

world wonderfully open to multiple generations, inclusive of all gender, race, ethnic and faith identities and, significantly, available to people living on generous or limited budgets.

While not endorsing a specific outlet, a simple Google search revealed yoga available in the East Bay at community centers, local gyms, pilate and dance studios, and specialty spas and boutiques. Private lessons conducted in-home by expert practitioners represent top-price options, while free programs found online, at public libraries (Yoga Storytime for ages 2-5 at Lafayette Library, just one example) or outdoor, in family-friendly sessions held in local parks (Berkeley has one monthly) extend the opportunities. Opening the window to the many techniques available, yoga can be practiced in 100-degree temperatures (Bikram), with baby goats (Yogoat), suspended in the air (aerial) or privately in homes, to name only extremes.

Important especially for novices, yoga honors long-held traditions and in 2018 is practiced and best learned from forward-thinking certified professionals like Bela Watson, a master's candidate at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. Watson is a graduate of North Carolina School of Yoga (now the Shanti Niketan Ashram) and has a degree in fine arts from Florida State University. Diagnosed with cancer that temporarily interrupted her performing and instructional dance career, she turned to yoga for physical rehabilitation. The mind-body connection applied to movement therapy is her focus.

In the United States, Watson says popular yoga trends are specific to each city or town. Addressing the Hatha, Yin, Children's, Vinyasa, Flow and Power Flow styles she is qualified to lead, Watson says people in high income locations prefer approaches that emphasize physical exertion and aesthetics. "In contrast, folks attending in less financially abundant communities appreciate the spiritual as-

pects more. Perhaps it is because people in lower income areas typically hold jobs where physical labor is exhausting and thus come to yoga to quiet the body and mind," she says.

A new trend pairs cacao ceremonies or plant-based medicines with yoga; aiming to achieve greater healing or calming through organic substances combined with focused poses, breath work, meditation and other ceremonial aspects of yoga. Western medicine's goal-oriented, "fix it" approach to health, Watson says, means slower recognition comes to yoga's transformational practices in America than does in India and other Eastern countries and cultures.

Watson's comments notwithstanding, there is good indication that yoga is more mainstream than ever before. At Aegis of Moraga, Life Enrichment Director Tina Laurena says up to 30 residents participate. Offered twice weekly to Assisted Living and Memory Care residents, instructors Esther Jun and Anandi Martinez adapt poses to accommodate 90-year-old bodies and more. "When the residents see chair yoga on their schedule they will ask about it the whole day," says Laurena. "They get excited. When I ask them 'How was yoga?' they reply with a smile and say 'wonderful.' To see them do the poses and focus on their breathing is amazing." Several residents, she adds, report improved moods after the lessons.

Charlie Craig, 17, is a Campolindo High School student and a linebacker and tight end on the football team. He took yoga taught by phys ed instructor Chris Walsh, who completed a YogaWorks 500 Hour Teacher Training Certification program in 2017. "It was a health P.E. requirement needed to graduate, but I took yoga because I wanted something relaxing that seemed interesting." Craig's favorite pose was savasana, also known as corpse pose.

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