



**Healing Circles: Advanced Cancer Support Training Program  
March 18-23, 2014  
Commonweal, Bolinas, California**

This program is specifically designed for yoga teachers and other professionals who wish to support those dealing with cancer and others facing life-threatening and/or chronic illness. This unique and intensive program will support participants to conduct Cancer Support Retreat Days, weekly cancer support classes, and other group and individual classes and support for cancer patients in their local areas.

Through HYF's collaboration with the Commonweal Cancer Help Program over the years and our desire to serve more people (and their partners) living with cancer, we began conducting day-long Cancer Support Retreat Days in 2009. While we have known for many years what a positive support the tools of yoga can be for those dealing with cancer, the success of our day-long retreats inspired us to pilot this training program so that other trained yoga teachers and other professionals around the country could gain the confidence and specialized skills and information to best support and safely teach those facing cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Our hope is that graduates of this program will take these skills back to their own communities to increase the impact of support for people living with cancer around the country.

**Purpose:**

- to provide yoga teachers and other professionals with knowledge, tools, resources, and practical experience in how to safely work with and support people living with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses;
- to train and support these teachers/therapists to start up specialized classes and day-long retreats in their own areas, either in collaboration with other health care centers or independently, using the resources available to them in their own communities;
- to provide mentorship and support to teachers working to implement these classes/programs in their own areas, and build a local network of support.

**Training Details**

**March 18-23, 2014: Residential training retreat at Commonweal in Bolinas, California**

**Cost: \$1,875**

This cost covers the complete training and all accommodations and food at Commonweal.



**Check-in** at Commonweal Pacific House is **Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> between 1:00 pm and 2:30pm. The program will begin promptly at 2:45 pm on Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and end by 2:00pm on Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Location and accommodations:**

Commonweal is located on a beautiful 60-acre site at the edge of the Pacific Ocean in the Point Reyes National Seashore. There are walking trails, beach access and a sauna available. Each participant will have a private bedroom with shared bathrooms. Depending on the final registration, there may be one or two cases where participants may share a room, with 2 single twin beds.

The price of the training includes your lodging and three gourmet vegetarian meals per day, as well as tea and snacks. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions or concerns. Our amazing chef, Claire, will do her very best to accommodate special requests.

You may arrive as early as 12:30 pm on Tuesday, March 18th so that you may settle into your room and the surroundings. **Please make sure you have lunch before arriving or bring a lunch with you.** We will begin the program at 2:45 pm, and will have snacks available in the afternoon. Please try to make your travel arrangements so that you are able to get your own lunch, arrive in time, and get settled before the start of the program. The program will end after lunch at 2 pm on Sunday, March 23rd.

**Travel/Airport:**

Commonweal is about an hour north of San Francisco. You can fly into either Oakland or San Francisco airport. Please let us know if you need recommendations for transportation up to Bolinas. Once up at Commonweal, you will not need transportation to get anywhere until the end of the program.

Once your registration and deposit are received, we will send more detailed information on logistics, directions, schedule and what to bring. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. For more information on accommodations and the Commonweal site, please see [www.commonweal.org/retreat/](http://www.commonweal.org/retreat/)

**Curriculum:**

- **Cancer physiology and cell pathology (What is cancer?):** An introduction to some of the physical realities of dealing with cancer, impacts and side-effects of many common treatments, and contra-indications.
- **Living with Cancer:** The realities of living with cancer and how to

best support those with cancer in your lives and in your community.

- **Adapting the tools of Yoga:** Specific modifications and adaptations of many of the tools of yoga in support of healing for those facing a cancer diagnosis, including asana postures, breathing practices, meditation, stress-reduction and relaxation techniques.
- **Healing Circles:** An introduction to (and experience of) supportive healing practices and exercises including healing circles, sacred objects, creating sacred and safe spaces, expressive movement, the expressive arts and their application and use in small group settings.
- **Nutrition and Healing Foods throughout the cancer experience:** An introduction to supportive and healthful eating habits, common and easy “anti-cancer” foods and spices, and the importance of feeling nourished in both body and soul.
- **Group Process:** Practical and experiential exercises for facilitating a safe, supportive group process to explore and express authentic feelings.
- **Intentional Healing:** based on Michael Lerner’s “little book” of the same name, this session will explore the four pillars of integrative healing and implementing an integrated approach to health care. I
- **Pain and suffering/Death and dying:** An introduction to resources, research, and insights for support on each of these topics.
- **Case-studies and practicum** for participants to practice and share ideas and new skills, and receive constructive feedback in a supportive and caring environment.
- **Building a network of support and collaboration in your community:** Practical guidelines for exploring and discovering resources in your own area and possible ideas and models for building a network of cancer support resources.
- **Ongoing support, community and mentorship:** We are working on developing a series of webinars as part of our follow-up support and ongoing mentoring for participants in addition to online resources.



## Staff:

**Chelsea Harper**, MA, BC-DMT, NCC, RYT founded Moving to Balance in Portland, Oregon, in 2005. She has worked professionally with children, teens, adults, and families in therapeutic and educational settings since 1997. She received her master's degree in [Dance/Movement Therapy](#) with a Minor in Counseling Psychology from [Antioch New England Graduate School](#) in 2003. In 2005 she became registered at the advanced national level as a board-certified dance/movement therapist and certified as a National Certified Counselor, and in 2006 she became a Registered Yoga Teacher. Her experience as a participant in the [Commonweal Cancer Help Program](#) and later, the Commonweal practitioner training, helped her to realize her passion for supporting people to discover new perspectives on healing. She has developed dance/movement therapy and other creative arts programs in various community settings, from domestic violence shelters to preschools to an adolescent eating disorder clinic. Diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer at age 35, she is passionate about supporting young cancer survivors and their families to live well despite cancer.

**Kate Holcombe** is the Founder and Director of Healing Yoga Foundation and serves as the primary yoga teacher of the Commonweal Cancer Help Program. Kate began her Yoga education in 1991 with TKV Desikachar in Chennai, India and is a certified KHYF Teacher Trainer. She teaches individuals and small groups with an emphasis on healing, applying the many and varied tools of Yoga to support and empower individuals in their own health and personal transformation. She has been working with Commonweal since 1998 and joined the Cancer Help Program staff in 2007.

**Rebecca Katz**, MS, is the author of *One Bite at a Time: Nourishing Recipes for Cancer Survivors and their Friends (Second Edition)* and the award-winning *The Cancer Fighting Kitchen: Nourishing Big-Flavor Recipes for Cancer Treatment and Beyond*. She holds a Masters of Science degree in Health and Nutrition Education, and received her culinary training from the Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts. Rebecca is the Executive Chef for Food as Medicine and Cancer Guides, sponsored by the Center for Mind Body Medicine, and is a visiting Chef and nutrition educator at Commonweal's Cancer Help Program in Bolinas, California.

**Michael Lerner** is the President and co-founder of Commonweal, a health and environmental research institute in Bolinas, California. Founded in 1976, Commonweal has ten major programs that contribute to healing ourselves and healing the earth. He is the co-founder of the Commonweal Cancer Help Program, a weeklong residential program for cancer patients that achieved national recognition when Bill Moyers featured it in his award-winning PBS series, *Healing and the Mind*, and the President of the Smith Farm Center for the Healing Arts in Washington, D.C., which offers the Cancer Help



Program on the East Coast. He is a co-founder of Health Care Without Harm, the campaign for environmentally responsible healthcare, and the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE), an international partnership of individuals and organizations seeking to raise the level of public and professional dialogue on the impact of the environment on human health. He directs The New School at Commonwealth, which convenes conversations with people working to encourage awareness of the deep interconnectedness of personal and planetary health. Lerner is the author of *Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer* (MIT Press). He received a MacArthur Prize Fellowship for contributions to public health in 1983.

**Shell Portner, RN, BSN** is an Oncology Nurse Navigator and the Creator of the Cancer Survivorship Program at the John Muir Health Cancer Institute. Although a nurse for many years, it was after her own diagnosis of cancer that Shell directed her professional energies on supporting others recovering from the effects of treatment. Shell embraces a holistic centered approach to healing, focusing on the recovery of body, mind and spirit. Shell has been teaching the course “Living Well Beyond Cancer” at the Cancer Support Community since 2008, and works with patients and caregivers through the Cancer Institute and individually in private practice. In addition, Shell writes for a variety of publications on cancer survivorship and has consults with hospitals and clinics to establish post-treatment services for patients.