

A STILLNESS SPACE IN A BUSTLING LIBRARY? SANTOSHA IS POSSIBLE.

Andie Townhouse, AISLE Member

The first time I heard the word *Santosh*, I was quietly sobbing on a yoga mat. My best friend, Julia, had just died of cancer at the age of 49, and I could literally feel the grief stuck in my muscles. My brain was so battered by this kind of pain that movement felt like the only option; the yoga mat was truly the only soft place to land.

Santosh is the Sanskrit term for having enough. In contentment, one can grow beyond what they think they are capable of. When I think of this word, I think about stupid purchases at Target that are semi-forgettable, and how the opportunity to feel gratitude for the deepest parts of who we are is open and available to everyone. Could our young people also go internal in the midst of internalizing so many other things about themselves and the world and be given the means to practice self-care whilst at school? Can we teach gratitude in a way that lends itself to a greater purpose and induces lifetime wellness habits that students can take with them long after graduation? From nutrition lecture, gardening lesson, and gentle yoga poses, to breathing, stretching, and guided meditation sessions - all of these initiatives now have a place here at Clemente during 5th and 6th period lunch.

Our wellness space first came to be with a generous donation from The Community



Our Library is...Growing!

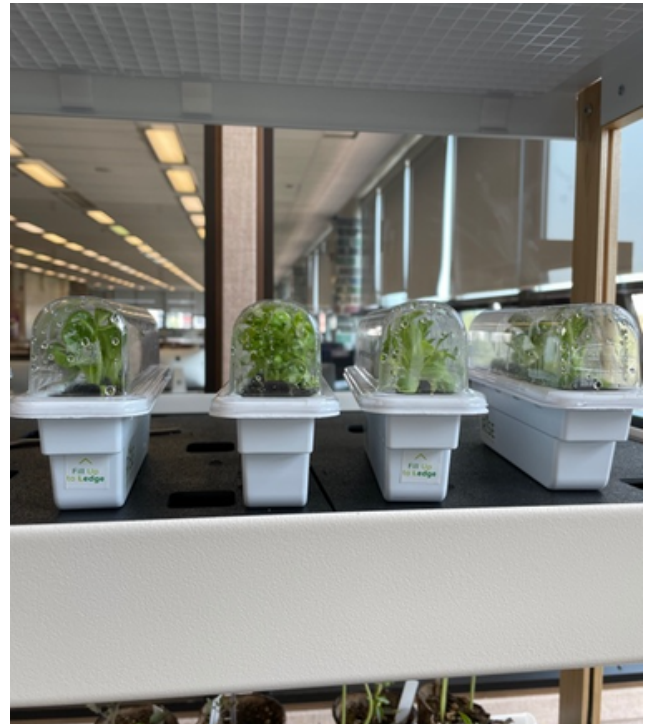
Action Council, or CAC, and in partnership with the PRCC. Two new beautiful RISE Garden Towers are now stationed in the space with a brand-new mentorship from RISE fully established. Since then, a few of us have become “Grow What You Eat” certified food safety and sanitation providers through a CPS professional development workshop; this will enable us to host culinary wellness competitions, such as chimichurri sauces and non-alcoholic mint mojitos. Our soon-to-be established student-led Horticulture Club will be student-focused and standards-aligned to math (*continued on next page*)

("Stillness" continued) and science. Growing these particular herbs will give students a chance to try foods, sauces, and spices they might not otherwise get a chance to experience. Additionally, a brand-new lending library is coming in the Fall of 2022, and will be filled with vegetarian, vegan, and ethnic cookbooks all available to check out for two weeks at a time. These titles will anchor our work to the curriculum and really root down literacy initiatives.

The Clemente Library's stillness space will also welcome Rebekah Marcano Sierra of Define Wellness, LLC. The library made their way to Rebekah because of Hector Perez, our dynamic STLS Director here at Clemente. Rebekah is a corporate wellness trainer and trauma recovery specialist, as well as a published author and busy mom. Her work centers around PTSD and the military, and she has been able to help over 500 veterans at Rush University's Road Home program. Her mentorship will place us squarely on the path to mindfulness-based interventions.

Each month, Rebekah will facilitate mindfulness workshops, in addition to standing and sitting postures for our entire Clemente community. Here, kids can come and decompress from the day, make new connections, and bring their attention back to the present, or a "stillness sit-in." A generous donation of yoga mats was provided by the Boys and Girls Club local area chapter, and a few of Rebekah's guided meditations will be recorded by our lunchtime audio engineering club right here in the library's recording studio for teachers to use in the future as they best see fit. *(Continued next page)*

The first stop for our herbs: the nursery. Our cilantro is thriving.



The space will be multifunctional, multipurpose, and an empowering alcove for kids to connect to their own self-care.

"Stillness" continued) Research shows that participating in any form of movement benefits one's sleep, mood, and focus. Some studies point to yoga programs in schools as benefitting test scores and grades by reducing stress and anxiety and turning down the parasympathetic nervous system (when emotions dominate over "the thinking part" of our brains). The gift of body-mind awareness is lifelong and makes for a more positive school climate, for it's our community that always coaxes us back into the light.

For Further Resources:

[Rebekah's website](#)

[RCCA Instagram](#)

[RCCA website](#)

[Yoga in Schools](#)

[Seven Ways that Yoga is good for our kids](#)

[Breathe For Change Yoga Teacher CPS](#)

[Educator Programming](#)

Andie Townhouse is the Library Director at Clemente High School in Chicago.



Clemente is now a top-ten finalist for a \$100,000+ library makeover (from furniture to lighting to flooring to paint -- a fresh 21st-century culturally responsive take on the space!), and I NEED YOUR HELP! The second step of winning this grant is voting! Voting begins on Monday, August 1st and runs through August 10th. You can vote once a day, and share the link with as many people as you'd like! Every vote for Clemente HS is a vote for each and every one of our students who have never met a librarian before or had a library to go to.

Again, live voting begins on 08/01, so please check back if you can; we are nominee #8:

Vote on Cloud Cuckoo Land Library Makeover Site heartofamerica.org/voting



AISLE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM RESOURCE CENTER

Please check out our new Intellectual Freedom Resource Center. It includes the AISLE Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom, living documents of general resources and title-specific resources, our new reporting form, and contact info for support. You can find it here: <https://sites.google.com/aisled.org/intellectual-freedom/>

If you have any questions about Intellectual Freedom, don't hesitate to reach out to Kristina Weber at intellfreedom@aisled.org.