

## Nourish Yourself: Bring on the Beauty!

By Alena Gerst, LMSW, RYT

As the term Yoga translates into a sense of "union", I chose to focus this month's newsletter on Beauty, as a response to what, for some of us, can feel like a cold and dark winter once the holidays are over. That being said, I'd like to share one of my favorite beautiful things I experienced this season, which was going to see Handel's Messiah at Carnegie Hall. I'd never seen it performed live, and I was a little stunned to discover upon opening my program that it is 3 hours long! While I'm a bona fide performance art lover, in general I don't want to sit through *anything* for 3 hours. Yet there was something moving about sitting in that majestic concert hall with a full orchestra, a chorus of 200 voices, and a wildly talented lineup of musicians, to say nothing of the music itself...I was riveted. I don't think I moved the entire time except for breathing, and when it was over, I jumped out of my seat clapping, and yes, crying. I'll never forget it.

All of this is to say that feeling good is not just about nutrition and exercise as we're commonly led to believe, but about all of the other things we feed ourselves. The following quote is by Prince Charles. I came across it years ago, and I've always wanted to share it:

"The state of our health reflects the food we eat, the exercise we take, the water we drink, the air we breathe and the quality of our housing and sanitation. I believe it also extends to our social needs and circumstances-- the need to belong to a community, the need for meaningful work and daily purpose. The need in our lives for dignity and kindness, for self respect, for hope and, above all, for harmony and, dare I say it, beauty."

As we continue on our journey into 2011, I hope that you will be able to notice the many pleasurable moments in your life and bottle them up. Or at the very least, start by noticing one each day, whether it is something singularly momentous, or something quiet, part of your every day routine. The simple practice of this awareness is yet another way to bring the power of Yoga, or Union, into your life.



**Alena Gerst, LMSW, RYT**, is a licensed social worker and certified yoga teacher. She provides private yoga instruction, and individual and group counseling. Additionally, she facilitates mind-body workshops and educational seminars on reducing stress and promoting relaxation. She currently provides mind-body counseling in an outpatient wellness center at NYU Langone Medical Center, and yoga therapy on an inpatient general medicine and oncology unit at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City. For more information, visit [www.yogalenatherapeutics.com](http://www.yogalenatherapeutics.com) and [www.IWDwellness.org](http://www.IWDwellness.org)