



**KIDS MAKE THE DARDEST YOGIS**

Tara Guber, center, at the Accelerated School, in Los Angeles, with, from left: Dasia Salter, Abigail Candanedo, Yoga Ed program director Leah Kalish, Salvador Encino, Melanie Flores, and Patrique Alvior.

VANITY FAIR NOMINATES **TARA GUBER**

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hile schools in Western countries teach children almost everything about the world and nothing about themselves, wisdom traditions from the time of Socrates to the great Eastern traditions have maintained that self-awareness is the highest form of human intelligence. Self-awareness increases self-esteem and determines behavior, perception, cognitive skills, moods and emotions, personal relationships, creativity, and the environments that we create. Our biological functioning and its ability to self-regulate are also intimately related to our moods and feelings.

I have known Tara Guber for more than a decade, and her passion for, as well as expertise in, yoga found full expression when she created Yoga Ed in 2002. Yoga Ed has been designing health-and-wellness-program materials based on the psychological, emotional, and educational benefits of yoga and creative play, and distributing them to children, teachers, parents, and communities around the country and, increasingly, worldwide. With the tools provided by Yoga Ed, self-awareness, self-management, and self-care become the key contributors to lifetime health and wellness. The program began taking shape in 1998 when Tara Guber helped found the Accelerated School, an inner-city charter school

in downtown Los Angeles, where she organized—and funded—a yoga program. She did this before yoga became a household word and when many people still regarded it as just another form of physical exercise and not a discipline that affects consciousness and self-awareness in the depth of our psyches. As more attention is given to the benefits of yoga and more data are collected, many schools will begin adopting these practices.

America is facing a crisis with its youngsters, an epidemic of childhood obesity, teenage depression, and attention-deficit disorders. Pharmacological approaches offer limited benefits with numerous side effects. Many recent studies have convinced scientists that physical fitness and mind-body coordination enhance not only physical well-being but also emotional stability and mental agility. The simple and effective tools offered by Yoga Ed and other yoga programs could prevent our nation from becoming populated with an entire generation of unhealthy adults. According to many surveys, the No. 1 interest in America today is well-being—of the individual, of society, of the eco-system. All of these have their beginnings in the well-being of our children. Healthy children today will create a healthy America for tomorrow. We must congratulate Tara Guber and Yoga Ed for being pioneers in the field of mind-body health for children.

—DEEPAK CHOPRA, M.D.

HAIR: MAKEUP AND GROOMING BY JUANITA LYON; FOR DETAILS, SEE CREDITS PAGE