



KRIPALU CENTER FOR YOGA & HEALTH CEO ROBERT MULHALL

Founded by disciples of world-renowned yogi Swami Kripalu in Pennsylvania in the 1970s, Kripalu has built a reputation for itself as a field leader in evidence-based holistic education. As it prepares for its full public reopening on August 19, newly elected CEO Robert Mulhall stands ready to guide the organization into a new era of deeper societal impact. In the days before Kripalu welcomed people back on its campus, Mulhall took time to discuss the center’s future, the work that went into reopening the facility, and the way Kripalu helps individuals and communities utilize the practice and wisdom of yoga to create positive change.



What challenges did Kripalu face during the pandemic, and what steps did you have to take before you could reopen the facility? The challenges that we faced during the pandemic made us realize that there was still room to grow and develop. They also inspired us to continue moving forward and continue learning as an organization. As it stands now, we have been open for day guests since July 8,

and we are excited to open up for overnight guests on August 19. We’re very happy to have our guests and student guests coming back, and it feels great to see more bookings every day.

How are you using your resources to effect social change on a larger level? By shifting many of our programs online during the pandemic, we have been

able to greatly increase geographic accessibility. We want to continue broadening our geographic accessibility, but we also want to broaden our cultural accessibility. Keeping that in mind, we have been focusing on insuring that more BIPOC voices are being represented in our work. We’re also taking more of a clear, distinct stand as an organization on

social justice and environmental justice issues. We’re going to be starting a program called the “Activist-in-Residence Program,” where we bring in social justice activists and help them use the resources at Kripalu for their own work. We’re securing funding from donors so we can support those people. In past years, our work has been almost entirely focused on personal transformation. In the world we live in now, we have come to understand that personal transformation and societal transformation have never been separate. If we want to be in the business of transforming the world, we have to be active in both personal and societal transformation. Building on that idea of societal transformation, we also want to work with more vulnerable populations moving forward. We want to be positively impacting all parts of the human ecosystem, not just the people that have the privilege and spare time to visit our center. We don’t want to just be known as a resort in the Berkshires. Everything that we are doing here at Kripalu is centered around trying to create a more beautiful world.

ANASTASIA STANNMEYER

As Kripalu's newly elected CEO, you have taken on a crucial leadership role in the organization at a pivotal time of global change.

Keeping that in mind, what is your vision for the future of Kripalu, and what kind of mark would you like to leave on the organization? I want Kripalu to be really focused on its impact on the world, both on an individual and societal level. In order for us to be able to do that, we have to bring a real sense of purpose and integrity to all of our work. We need to fully embody the teachings that we want to share with the world. To bring that vision to life, we have to have amazing faculty members and fantastic educational programming. We don't want Kripalu to be a place of privilege. Yoga is not just for people who are economically privileged. These ancient practices are the birthright of everyone, and it's important that we remember that and work hard to help people from all walks of life access our programming. Moving forward, I also want to make sure that we are staying true to our values as an organization. For the past 49 years, we've bucked the trends of society. We've embraced a message of mindfulness, awareness of nature, self-discovery, and connection. I think that in the advent of the pandemic, a lot of

people are very hungry for that type of meaningful connection. I want to make sure that the work that I am doing as Kripalu's CEO is helping us reach and serve as many people as possible in an impactful way. The idea is that every person that we serve, help, or teach here at Kripalu then has the chance to go out into society and serve more people. That's why we love our teacher training programs. A great example of the positive impact of our training programs is a woman named Michelle Griffin. She attended one of our online yoga teacher training programs, and she is now teaching yoga to kids and teens in the Bronx. It's just one tiny ripple, but you never know who she's going to end up teaching. Maybe she's teaching the next mayor of New York City. With every teacher that we train, we get to cast one of those ripples out into the greater ocean of human experience, and we get to witness exponential transformative power of yoga take shape in the world. Our goal is to help the Kripalu Center continue to do that type of significant work, so that we can cause enough positive ripples to truly change the field and change the system. ■

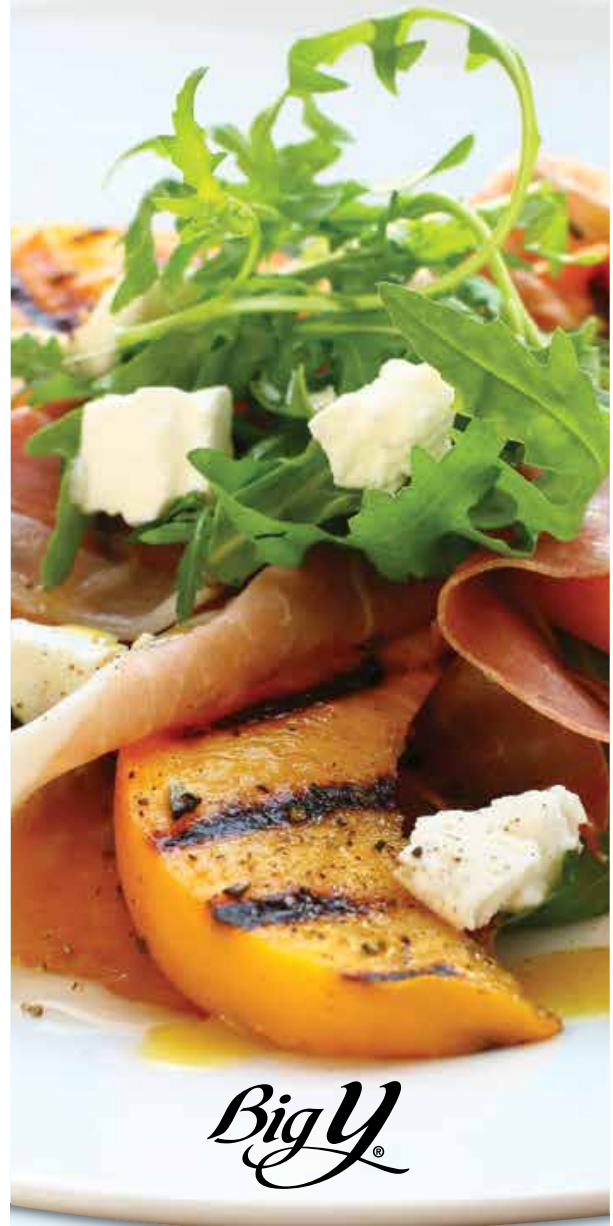
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—BENJAMIN LERNER

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