

# Mindful Schools

Integrating Mindfulness Into Education

## A Quick Overview

[www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org)



# Our Mission

**Our mission is to integrate mindfulness into education.**

We are a non-profit organization that has taught thousands of educators, social workers, psychologists, and parents from 41 U.S. states and 25 countries how to use mindfulness with K-12 youth, impacting tens of thousands of lives each year.

**By July 2014, we expect to have impacted 300,000+ youth through our work.**



**Learn  
Mindfulness**



**Teach  
K-12 Youth**



**Get  
Certified**

# Our Courses (Available Online and In Person)

## Learn Mindfulness



### Mindfulness Fundamentals

A 6-week online course to build your own mindfulness practice.

★★★★★ (600+ Reviews)

Over 1,000 adults trained from 37 U.S. states and 20+ countries

## Teach Youth



### Curriculum Training

Learn our full K-12 curriculum for children and older youth.

★★★★★ (300+ Reviews)

Over 1,000 adults trained from over 200 organizations

## Get Certified



### Year-Long Certification

An in-depth, year-long training for teaching K-12 youth.

★★★★★ (50+ Reviews)

Retreats, videos, personal practice, monthly mentorship, and a practicum.



# Testimonials

## Mindfulness Fundamentals 4.5/5.0 Stars (600+ Reviews)

"I simply felt it was an amazing experience that has positively changed my life forever. Thank you."

"I have been doing mindfulness for nearly 10 years and have taught for 6 and I still learned many things."

"This affordable, concise, and user friendly course has changed the way I view relationships with others AND with myself."

## Curriculum Training 4.5/5.0 Stars (300+ Reviews)

"I would say out of any professional development I've ever had in 13 years of teaching, I implemented more of what I learned that weekend than any other training I've been to."

"Simple and clear content. Masterful teachers. Every word, expression and movement conveyed useful instruction. Extremely pleasant, grounded with good flow."

"Best. Training. Ever. Thank you!"

## Year-Long Certification 4.5/5.0 Stars (50+ Reviews)

"The deep practice during silence was so important--actually putting practice first is something that I deeply appreciate about the training."

"An incredible and unexpected personal insight along with a renewed sense of purpose and passion to do this work."

"A real community [...] of deeply connected and caring individuals."

"Wow, I know that all 10's seems over the top, but it was an incredible, life-changing experience."

"Excellent trainers and a perfect balance of presentation styles."

## From Educators and Children ([View Video Testimonials](#))

"I had decided this would be my last year teaching until the mindfulness program began at my school. Now I am rededicated to my profession."

– *East Oakland First Grade Teacher*

"We have noticed a number of effects from the mindfulness program... The suspension rate at our school has dropped from 14 last year to 6 this year." – *Lindsey Keener, Lakeshore Alternative School*

"The thing about mindfulness is that when you are going to do something bad, you know it and you can stop." – *Fifth Grader*

## From Foundations ([Read More Here](#))

"As a Mindful Schools funder, we have been delighted with the diverse and balanced skills of the team, as well as their ability to consistently deliver powerful results at very low cost."

– *Joanie Kriens, President, 1440 Foundation*

"The Julia Burke Foundation is proud to be in partnership with Mindful Schools. One of The Foundation's basic objectives is to promote human welfare, coupled with promoting effective and substantive changes in the world. Mindful Schools not only teaches effective changes in the participants, but the lessons learned will affect generations to come."

– *Joy Johnson, Executive Director, The Julia Burke Foundation*

"Every day seems to bring new research evidence for the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness practice, but few studies have examined mindfulness specifically in schools. Mindful Schools is a leader in the field, and we have been impressed by the thoroughness and ingenuity of their approach to program evaluation. On a relatively modest budget, Mindful Schools has carried out scientifically-rigorous elementary school research on the largest scale yet."

– *Ken Doane, Senior Program Officer, S.H. Cowell Foundation*



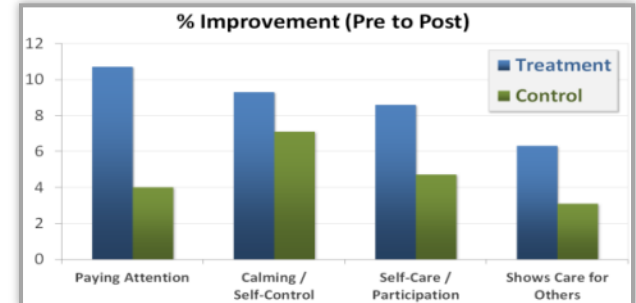
# Recent Highlights



We launched our flagship Year-Long Program, with 85 participants in the U.S. and Europe, and ratings over 90%



Program Director Megan Cowan is the main subject of the film documentary “Room to Breathe”, airing on PBS affiliates nationwide in Fall 2013



We conducted the largest randomized-controlled study on mindfulness and children to date (937 at-risk children in 3 Oakland public schools), showing statistically significant behavioral improvement



Mindful Schools is featured in “Healthy Habits of Mind”, a free online film about integrating mindfulness into education



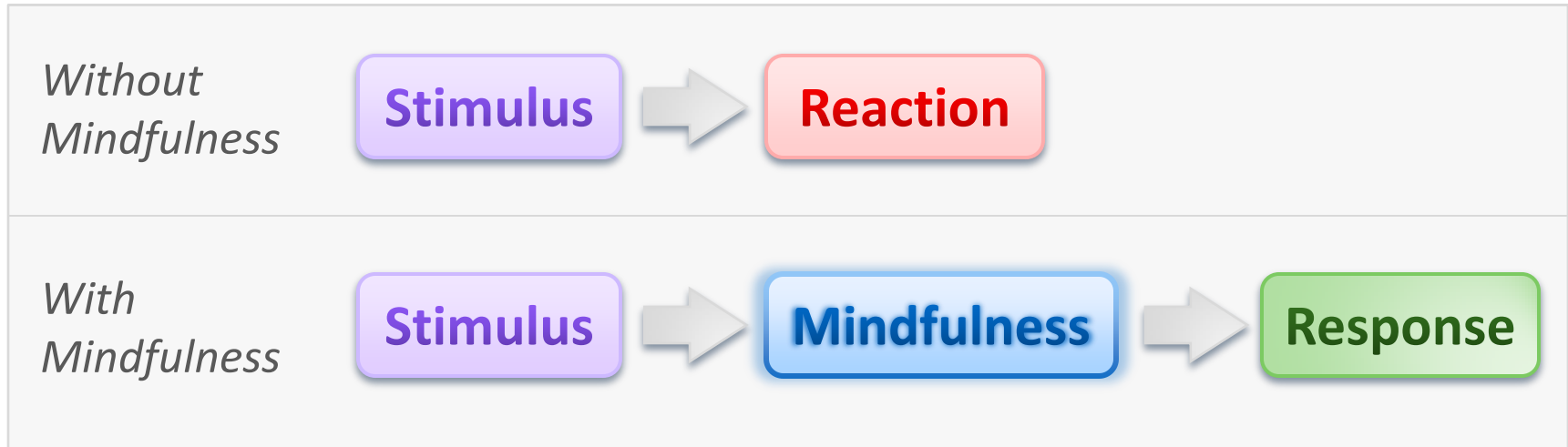
250,000+ web site visits from all 50 U.S. states and 176 countries since Jan. 2009, as well as 11,000+ Facebook Likes



We have surpassed 2,000 graduates from *Mindfulness Fundamentals* and 1,000 graduates from *Curriculum Training*, representing 37 U.S. states and 20+ countries

# A Quick Introduction to Mindfulness

*Mindfulness is non-judgmental awareness of the present moment*



**Mindfulness** creates space...

...replacing **impulsive reactions** with **thoughtful responses**.

Our curriculum helps this space grow, enabling new, wiser responses that improve:

- Attention
- Emotional regulation
- Empathy
- Learning
- Conflict resolution

# How Mindfulness Helps in School

- It teaches students to **pay attention** to whatever is being taught, **making all other school programs more effective**
- It **enhances the impulse control** of students and teachers, **improving classroom management and emotional regulation**
- It **reduce stress** for students, teachers, and administrators, **facilitating teaching and learning**
- It **builds community** and an important link between school and home, **supporting children and their families**
- It provides students with **a lifetime skill: an internal compass to make good decisions** in the moment they are needed
- It is **low-cost and easy to replicate**.

[Click Here to Watch Video Testimonials](#)



Janette Hernandez  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REGION 2  
Oakland Unified  
School District



Jeanette MacDonald  
PRINCIPAL  
Franklin  
Elementary School



Theresa Jaffrey-Clark  
5TH GRADE TEACHER  
Community United  
Elementary School



Lori Uno  
1ST GRADE TEACHER  
Community United  
Elementary School



Methinee Thongma  
1ST GRADE TEACHER  
El Dorado  
Elementary School



Giovana Otfinowski  
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST  
Franklin  
Elementary School

# The Evidence Behind Mindfulness

- Mindfulness affects brain function by integrating the brain stem, limbic system, and prefrontal cortex (Siegel 2007). This has several benefits:
  - **Reduced stress.** Stress shuts down the hippocampus, the brain's memory center. Chronic stress in children has been proven to reduce working memory function as adults. (G. Evans & M. Schamberg 2009)
  - **Emotional regulation.** Fewer mood disturbances and ability to handle high-stress environments. (Arch 2006, Brown 2003, Jha 2010)
  - **Elevation of positive emotions and outcomes.** Improved brain function, sense of well-being, and immunity to sickness. (Davidson 2003, Fredrickson 2008)
  - **Impulse control.** The ability to delay gratification may predict SAT scores, social and cognitive competence, educational attainment, and drug use. (Mischel et al. 1989)
  - **Academic achievement.** Improved academic performance and executive function, which is strongly correlated with academic performance. (Benson et al. 2000, Flook et al. 2008, Biegel & Brown 2010)
- Thousands of research studies have been published on the benefits of mindfulness.
- Mindfulness has been used in the medical world for 33 years. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, presented a benefit for Mindful Schools in 2012.
- It is increasingly used in the corporate world (Genentech, Google, Yahoo!, etc...) with compelling results. (Pierce 2011)

**Education is the next logical frontier for mindfulness.**



# Our Research

In the 2011-12 school year, we conducted the **largest randomized controlled study** to date on mindfulness and children (**937 children and 47 teachers in 3 Oakland public schools**)

[See Figure 1 at right]

This study is notable for its size, the at-risk population served, the fact that no students nor teachers were excluded, and for the statistically significant behavioral improvements we found (See Figure 2 below).

[\[Click here for full presentation\]](#)

## Oakland Crime Map

Oakland had 2,487 crimes over *just 3 weeks* (Nov – Dec 2011)

Public Schools in Our Study:

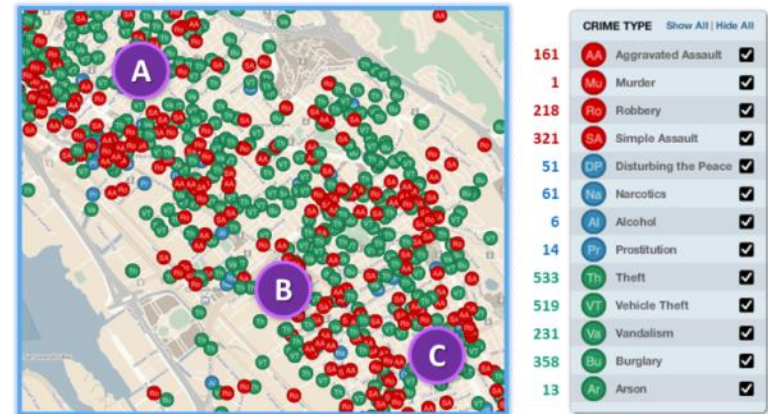


Figure 1: High Crime Surrounding the Schools in Our Study

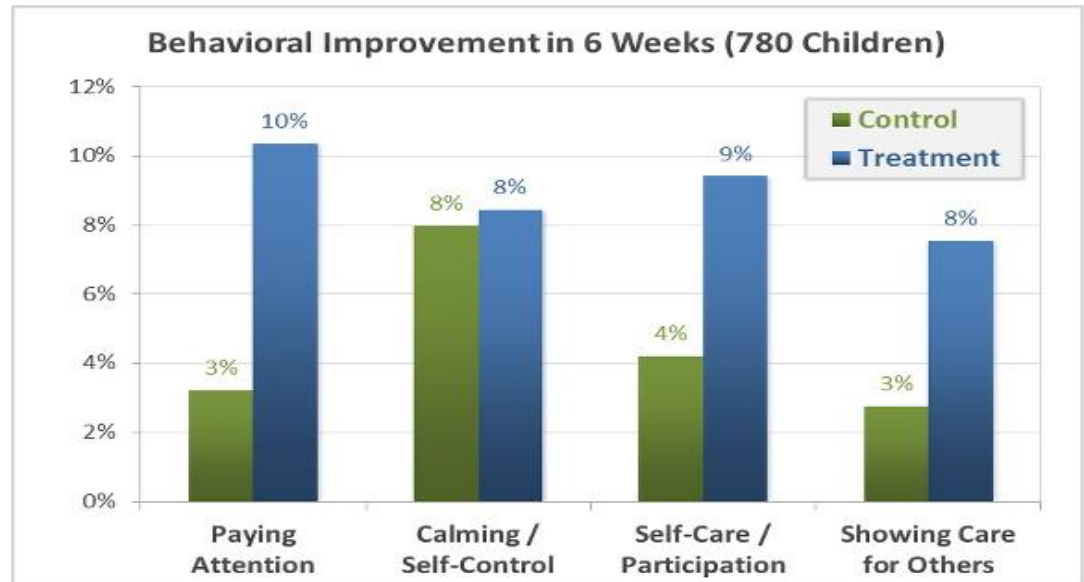


Figure 2: Improvement in Children's Behavior

# The Mindful Schools Core Team

For detailed bios, please visit <http://www.mindfulschools.org/about/staff>



**Randima (Randy) Fernando - Executive Director**

Randy was a software product and program manager at NVIDIA Corporation for over 7 years, where he also served on the inaugural NVIDIA Foundation Board. He has published three best-selling books and several papers on 3D computer graphics, successfully run large projects with over 100 people. He has been responsible for all aspects of product management from development to PR and marketing. Randy has a BS in Computer Science and an MS in Computer Graphics from Cornell University.



**Megan Cowan - Co-Founder and Program Director**

Megan has taught mindfulness to 3500+ youth, trained 2000+ educators, mental health professionals, and parents in mindfulness practices and applications for youth, and has been leading Mindful Schools Curriculum Training courses domestically and internationally since they began in 2010. Megan is featured in the documentaries “Room To Breathe” and “Healthy Habits of Mind,” both addressing the topic of integrating mindfulness training into U.S. public schools.



**Chris McKenna - Program Director**

Chris has spent over a decade working with diverse communities suffering from high incidents of trauma, including five years with an organization launched out of Amnesty International that provided legal and psychosocial services to victims of torture and war crimes from over 20 countries. From 2009-2012, Chris was the Executive Director of the Mind Body Awareness Project, a nonprofit that pioneered the development of mindfulness-based interventions for at-risk adolescents.



**Vinny Ferraro - Senior Trainer**

Vinny is a long-time mindfulness practitioner and instructor and a nationally recognized leader in designing and implementing interventions for at-risk adolescents. The child of an incarcerated father, Vinny spent the majority of his teenage life hustling and living on the streets. Vinny has taught for the Challenge Day organization as well as the Mind Body Awareness Project. He has received national media coverage for his work with adolescents, including the MTV series “If You Really Knew Me...”



**Christina Costelo - Training Coordinator**

Christina received her MA in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz and her BA in Psychology from San Francisco State University. With a passion in progressive and innovative learning environments, Christina has worked in education for 9 years in a variety of settings, including as a Program Director for an Oakland non-profit, Camp Director for Camp Galileo, and afterschool program quality assessor.

# Thank You

For more information, please visit  
[www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org)