We’re excited to announce that Stop, Breathe & Think won the Webby’s People’s Voice Award for Best App in the Health & Fitness category. The award is voted on by Internet users worldwide, and we won thanks to the enthusiasm of our supporters. To be honest, we are still amazed that our app is recognized as the top in its field of health and fitness. To be acknowledged alongside companies like WebMD, CVS, Headspace, and Happify is an accomplishment we are very proud of.

As a small team operating on a shoestring budget, we rely on volunteers, friends, partners, and donors who see the value of our work to help us share it. This challenge has become one of our biggest assets. The SB&T app has created a tremendous amount of goodwill, inspiring people to help fill in the gaps of our resources. For example, we don’t have a marketing budget, but the app has been spreading through word of mouth and social media. So much, in fact, that almost 600,000 people from 183 countries have downloaded the app, which is rated 5 stars in the App Store! Additionally, we’re first in the App Store’s search results for “meditation,” reaching thousands of new people everyday.

We also see the impact of the Stop, Breathe & Think app through the steady stream of emails we receive from users, who express how the app has helped them overcome everything from everyday stress and anxiety to more serious challenges like ADHD and PTSD. Here are just a few quotes:

“I am an oncology counselor...When I found your app it was like finding a treasure. I recommend it to many of my clients in hopes of lowering and even eliminating their suffering.”

“I have been using your app for myself, my husband and my 14-year-old daughter who has Aspergers, ADHD and anxiety. I have also been recommending your app to friends and clients. We have all been very blessed by your app. Thank you!”

“I am a uni student and also have anxiety issues, and the short meditations are perfect for my lifestyle. Whenever I feel overwhelmed or stressed or anxious, I’ll take 10 minutes to do a meditation and calm myself. They work perfectly!”

We’re continuing to move forward with planning the next updates to our Stop, Breathe & Think app. Feel free to share your suggestions at info@stopbreathethink.org.
10 YEARS OF CAMP INSPIRES KINDNESS

We’re gearing up for our 10th Annual Tools for Peace Summer Teen Camp, August 2nd - 8th. For 15 years, we’ve helped over 20,000 teens learn how to practice mindfulness and cultivate compassion.

At camp, we integrate our SB&T curriculum with a full roster of activities, so our campers learn how to apply mindfulness in relationship to other campers and have that experience to draw on when they return to daily life. It’s incredible to see them blossom into bright, enthusiastic young adults with a real sense of responsibility and maturity. This year, we have 6 camp alumni returning as Junior Counselors, and they’ve become leaders in the Tools for Peace community, and in turn leaders at home, school, and in their neighborhoods. Tools for Peace Summer Teen Camp continues to create a lasting ripple effect of kindness and compassion.

This year, we aim to provide over 30 full camp scholarships to deserving students from our in-school programs with our Be Kind to the Power of 3 campaign. Our goal is to raise $25,000 so that each teen who requested a scholarship can attend camp. Donate today, and help #InspireKindness. Visit igg.me/at/bekind3 for more information.

HOW ARE YOU?

Our Stop, Breathe & Think app users all agree on one thing: they’re anxious! We looked at the emotions selected by users in our most active countries, and anxiety was the top pick across the board. It goes to show that no matter where you live, we all share common experiences. Take a look at the other top emotions:

- UNITED STATES: ANXIOUS, HOPEFUL, CONCERNED
- CANADA: ANXIOUS, CONTENT, HOPEFUL
- UNITED KINGDOM: ANXIOUS, UNEASY, WORRIED
- AUSTRALIA: ANXIOUS, HOPEFUL, GRATIFIC
- CHINA: ANXIOUS, HAPPY, HOPEFUL

OUR SB&T ONLINE COURSE EXPANDS

We’ve launched our spring Stop, Breathe & Think online course on a brand-new, state-of-the-art platform. We’ve also welcomed our Tools for Peace facilitator Erin Phillips to the online course teaching team. Erin became a TFP facilitator in 2011 and is helping us expand our course offerings to more people in the future. We love being able to provide Stop, Breathe & Think online because we can potentially partner with organizations and schools across the nation, and even the globe. We’re coming closer to our goal of getting the whole world to meditate, if just for a few minutes a day! Our next Stop, Breathe & Think 8-week online course begins on October 2nd. You can learn more on our website: ToolsforPeace.org.
MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON CAMPUS

We’re continuing to strengthen our 5-year in-school partnership with LACER Afterschool Programs. We’re working with LACER to expand to more campuses, and the Irving Middle School principal has reached out about creating more Tools for Peace activities at school, as he’s seen the positive impact TFP has had on the entire campus.

This June, we’re also training 70 more Aim High teachers in our Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum. The training will help teachers develop a personal mindfulness practice and focus on compassion-based strategies for self care.

“If every 8 year old in the world is taught meditation, we will eliminate violence from the world within one generation.”

-His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

MEET A TFP FACILITATOR

Mayme Donsker leads our Tools for Peace classes at LACER Afterschool Programs in Los Angeles. This year, she has taught mindfulness to school sports teams, led field trips, and worked with students on compassion-in-action projects to beautify their campuses by creating community gardens and murals. Mayme has been dedicated to teaching the Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum for over 5 years. Her calm, assured demeanor creates a trusting environment where students are challenged to fully engage in the SB&T curriculum. Mayme relayed a story about how her students transformed throughout the past semester.

“This semester, I had a student who was removed from other classes but found a home at Tools for Peace. He told me he felt stuck with the way he was treated by his friends and the way he treated them. Because I didn’t judge or label him, he was able to connect with SB&T and find more positive ways to deal with relationships. I believe that every student has the capacity to develop mindfulness and compassion. The most important thing I can do as a facilitator is not make assumptions about who students are, what they’re capable of, or what they’re feeling, but to meet a student where he is currently and help him relate to Stop, Breathe & Think in a personal way.” We’re grateful Mayme’s part of our team!

Mayme created the “Paying Attention to Joy” activity on the back of this page for her students, who have really responded to it. In fact, research shows that focusing our attention on positive experiences actually impacts the physiology of our brain and increases our capacity to have more positive experiences.* We’ve been trying it out for ourselves; why don’t you give it a try?

*Rick Hanson, psychologist in practice in California. He’s also the author of “The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love and Wisdom.”
ACTIVITY: PAYING ATTENTION TO JOY

Write the word joy with a pen on your hand. As long as that word is written on your hand, and until it washes off and you can’t see it anymore, make it a goal that whenever joy arises, you take note of it. Say to yourself, “This is joy. Right now I am experiencing joy.” Be really present in that moment of joy. Notice how it feels in your body, the tone of your voice, and the kind of words you use when you are joyful.

If you like doing this, make it a goal to recognize joy for an entire week. Every time joy arises, be very mindful of joy. And if that really works for you, you can make it a goal to recognize joy for months, or maybe even indefinitely. Start one day at a time, then one week at a time, and slowly build. By recognizing and being mindful of joy, you reinforce the experience of joy. You may be experiencing the same amount of joy as normal, but because you’re paying attention to it, ultimately, you will feel more joyful. You’ve now made it easier to recognize joy as it arises, and so you can do this with the other positive attitudes; compassion, kindness and equanimity.