

"I learned how to have hope and be compassionate towards others. This is the most important thing I have learned because I can use this throughout my whole life." —Student, 7th Grade



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We are pleased to introduce Casey Bridges, who has joined our Tools for Peace ("TFP") team to serve as the Executive Director of the organization. Casey previously served 4 years as the Executive Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of South Africa. He brings his passion for youth development and organizational leadership experience to Tools for Peace at an exciting time of progress and growth.

As director, Casey will be working to develop new partnerships with a focus on program development and delivery. Already proving to be a great ally as we strive to build relationships with Boys & Girls Clubs throughout California, Casey played a leading role in bringing Tools for Peace programs to the Santa Monica club where he spent a year preparing for the South African initiative. These partnerships will help Tools for Peace grow exponentially and ensure we continue reaching those who need us most.



POSITIVE RESULTS

We've continued our work with the Emotion Regulation Lab at the University of California, Riverside ("UCR"), which has been studying the effects of the Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum. Dr. Elizabeth Davis and her team have been collecting data during our week-long Summer Teen Camp for the past three years, and this past June concluded a study of a year-long Tools for Peace pilot program during the school day at Washington Irving Middle School.

Overall, results from these collaborations with UCR show that practicing mindfulness and meditation using the Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum fosters better cognitive control (the ability to focus on the task at hand) and emotion regulation (being able to handle difficult feelings) which is relevant for many areas of students' lives, like relationships with friends and family members, and doing well in school.

"After just a week of practicing mindfulness and meditation at the Summer Teen Camp, campers' anxiety decreased, and emotional awareness, self-kindness, self-efficacy, and compassion for themselves and others all increased, indicating the many promising benefits of even a short period of mindfulness and compassion practice. Together, these findings show that Tools for Peace programs can promote healthy and adaptive social, emotional, and academic functioning in teens."

—Angela Silars, Researcher

We are proud of the team at UCR who have been presenting their findings at conferences throughout the country including the Association for Psychological Science Conference, Western Psychological Association Conference, Bridging the Hearts and Minds of Youth Conference, and UCR Undergraduate Research Symposium, and are looking forward to continued collaboration.



CAMP AND CAMPERS KEEP GROWING

We can hardly believe that Summer Teen Camp celebrated its 11th year this past August! Campers from Northern and Southern California, and as far away as Arizona and Oregon gathered in the Tehachapi mountains to learn how to practice meditation and cultivate compassion. We asked a few campers to share what they will take away from camp:

“One of my favorite parts of camp was being able to completely feel everything I feel and approach my emotions with curiosity. I’ve never been so open to cry, laugh, smile, or share as I am when I’m here.”—Camper, 10th Grade

“The most important thing I’ve learned is compassion and empathy for others. I learned that it is possible to not feel alone in the world.” —Camper, 12th Grade

“I learned to stop, breathe, and think. Due to this, I can be more calm. I’m able to make wiser choices in my life.” —Camper, 11th Grade

MAKING AN IMPACT AFTERSCHOOL

This fall marks TFP’s 6th year of partnership with L.A.C.E.R. Afterschool Programs, where we provide clubs and workshops for students at Irving, Bancroft, and King Middle Schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Inspired by the past two years of success working within the sports program at L.A.C.E.R., we decided to expand our offerings to integrate with more after school activities. In addition to a weekly club, TFP facilitators also provide 15-20 minute workshops where students learn and practice mindfulness and compassion building skills within the context of Rock Band, Art, Drill Team, Dance, and Homework Club.

“Learning and practicing the Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum in this way heightens its relevance, and allows students to directly experience how mindfulness and compassion can be developed in daily life. For example, the students in drill team use mindfulness and compassion building activities to strengthen their teamwork, calm themselves down, and now request to meditate before performances.” —Mayme Donsker, Lead Facilitator



Photos: Students at LACER Afterschool Programs

STOP, BREATHE & THINK ONLINE COURSE

We're halfway through our winter online course, which provides an opportunity to strengthen the fundamentals of mindfulness and meditation and focuses on the development of kindness and compassion in everyday life. We'll be offering two sessions in 2017, so keep an eye out for registration details this Spring, and tell your friends!

"I will be using these meditations for a long time as my practice continues and am so very glad to have them. The whole course I found to be well put together and centered in ways that affect me strongly; I am just so completely pleased with the whole thing." —Course Participant



HIGHLIGHTS

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LOS ANGELES

TFP has partnered with Children's Hospital Los Angeles to train 30 pediatricians to deliver a custom mindfulness curriculum for a school wide pilot health education initiative at Lee Medical and Health Science Magnet Elementary School in Central Los Angeles.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

This January, TFP is partnering with Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica to develop and implement a club-wide Tools for Peace program. The program will be implemented in phases and will focus on creating a mindful and compassionate club culture.

TOOLS FOR WORK

Media Arts Lab, the sole provider of advertising for Apple Inc., invited our Program Director Loren Witcher to their Los Angeles headquarters to lead a workshop on mindfulness in the workplace. Tools for Peace looks forward to continuing the partnership and to providing more mindfulness and compassion workshops to professionals.

GOOGLE

Google.org Charitable Giving Fund of Tides Foundation recently recognized Tools for Peace with a charitable donation of \$10,000 to continue our efforts to reach the young people that need us most through camps, in school and after school programs, and now Boys & Girls Clubs.

Teens participating in Tools for Peace in 2016 reported they are better able to:

92%

Calm themselves down

88%

Focus better in class

96%

Pause before they react

82%

Bounce back from a set-back

89%

Be supportive of classmates

ACTIVITY: GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Gratitude is the feeling of being thankful and appreciative. Gratitude supports our ability to handle whatever comes our way, and can enhance our happiness and enjoyment of everyday life.

Directions: Make a list of 3 things you are grateful for today.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS

For over 11 years, Tools for Peace has provided youth camps, school programs, and workshops that inspire people of all ages to develop kindness and compassion in everyday life. We are committed to providing full camp scholarships to those who need them most, with the goal of raising \$25,000 in 2017. Your donations are vital to fulfilling our mission and help to sustain our programs and activities throughout the year. Your generous donations are deeply appreciated.

DONATE

Every little bit counts as we start this exciting new chapter! You can send your tax-deductible donation to:
Tools for Peace 75 S. Grand Ave., Suite 217, Pasadena, CA 91105.

SHARE

We'd love for you to share this newsletter with friends, colleagues, and organizations that would be interested in our work.

BECOME A PARTNER

Interested in partnering with Tools for Peace for your school, organization, or workplace? Contact us for more information:
Office: (626) 564-0700 Email: info@toolsforpeace.org

WE'RE GOING PAPERLESS

If you would like to receive paperless newsletters, please email us at info@toolsforpeace.org.

