

## ANNUAL REPORT



*"Trust me, if every school in the world had peace class,  
then the world would be a better place."  
Peace of Mind 6th grader*

December 13, 2019

What a year it's been for Peace of Mind! **Thanks to your generous contribution**, we have been able to support educators in bringing mindfulness-based social emotional learning and conflict resolution to over 3,000 students in public, public charter and independent schools in the DC area and many more across the country and the world.

We just heard from an educator near the Arctic Circle who said: "I loved teaching the Peace of Mind Program...and the students benefited tremendously." Educators' word of mouth is taking Peace of Mind farther than we ever dreamed!

It feels as if seeds we've been planting for years are blooming all at once lately; we'd like to share a few highlights with you. Thanks to your support, this year we have:

### **Developed and shared excellent resources for educators, students, and families**

- Supported and engaged over 400 educators through our well-received first annual PoM Conference, two rich Community of Practice gatherings, our three on-line courses, and in-person trainings for area schools.
- Published the *Peace of Mind Curriculum for Grades 4 and 5* (our fourth!) that helps students delve deeper into applying mindfulness to face challenges such as bullying and bias.
- Created a pilot *Peace of Mind Core Curriculum for Grade 6* at the request of Principal Megan Vroman of Wells Middle School. Listening sessions with students and teachers tell us we are on the right track and help us prepare for publication in August 2020.
- Formed a group of over 20 Peace of Mind Middle School Ambassadors, alumni of the PoM program who speak about how Peace of Mind skills have helped them.
- Engaged parents in two school-based mindfulness evenings to support their own well-being.
- Worked with Tilbury House Publishers to bring out two more children's books by Linda that help take Peace of Mind lessons home: *Tyaja Uses the Think Test* and *Sergio Sees the Good*. Kirkus Reviews called *Tyaja* "A great resource for social-emotional learning" and the Children's Book Council chose it as one of their "Hot Picks!". Teaching Tolerance singled out *Henry is Kind*, one of our earlier books, as a great way to teach SEL.

### **Spread the word about the power of mindfulness-based social emotional learning**

- Presented workshops on the Peace of Mind approach at the Collaborative for Spirituality in Education Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University and at the Conference of the Coalition of Schools Educating Mindfully.
- Linda received a commendation for her work from the DC Board of Education and Linda and Peace of Mind have been featured in 7 national and international articles, newscasts and podcasts this year thanks to the terrific pro bono PR help of AS PR.

### **Developed new sources of support**

- Engaged 80 new individual donors in our work, and benefited from our rich partnership with Fund for the Future of Our Children, provider of 12 grants to Title I schools adopting Peace of Mind. We also welcomed two new wonderful foundation partners: the NEA Foundation and The Bender Foundation. So grateful!

Throughout it all, Linda continues to teach Peace of Mind to over 700 children a week in Washington DC's largest public elementary school, keeping our work rooted firmly in the classroom.

We put our heart and soul into this work because we know what a difference it makes for our children. We have done it all on a shoe-string budget with one full-time and one part-time staff member, two great part-time contractors, a wonderful Board and group of Advisors – and you.

As you know, our work isn't nearly done. Our students, educators and schools truly need what Peace of Mind has to offer. One Peace of Mind 4th grader recently wrote: *Whenever I am stressed, I use mindfulness to focus. I use conflict resolution to stop fights from starting.* Our vision is that all of our children are able to develop these capacities. In the year ahead, we plan to continue to develop our middle school curriculum, lay the groundwork for a scientific efficacy study, create an online community of support for educators outside of the DC area, continue to improve our resources for educators and parents, and reach more schools.

**We hope you will consider joining us again with a contribution.** To give, please visit our website, [TeachPeaceofMind.org](http://TeachPeaceofMind.org), send a check to our address below, or give Cheryl a ring. If you'd like to talk about Peace of Mind, or have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to let us know.

With love and gratitude,

Cheryl Dodwell  
Executive Director  
Peace of Mind Inc.  
240 273 8084

Linda Ryden  
Peace Teacher, Founder

### **Board of Directors**

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## Recent Support for Peace of Mind



***I am astounded by this beautiful curriculum... a brilliantly practical guide for teachers, one that understands kids - both how they think, and their imaginative capacities. This is a model for the classroom of the future.***

**Jeff Warren**, Mindfulness teacher  
Co-author with Dan Harris of *Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics*.

***These delightful, captivating books are full of powerful practical methods for kids- and their parents.***

**Rick Hanson PhD**  
Author of *Resilience, Hardwiring Happiness, and Buddha's Brain*

*Learning about controlling my actions and speech helped me when transitioning from elementary school to middle school because sometimes I am stressed out from assignments, or just mad because I missed the bus and I want to lash out and express my feelings. My amygdala is starting to control my brain. But when I have those moments, I think about the THINK test and if what I say or do will hurt someone. So, I take some deep breaths and calm myself down.*

**6th Grade Peace of Mind Ambassador**

*As we prepared to open DC's newest middle school, we knew it was critically important to plan for intentional social emotional learning opportunities. Many developmental psychologists recommend meditation and mindfulness practices to be taught to adolescent students as their bodies and brains continue to grow and change. We were thrilled to partner with the Peace of Mind team to bring the curriculum to our middle school students in our inaugural year! As our students learn and practice self-regulation and conflict resolution strategies from the curriculum, we know it will support their well-balanced development and achievement in all areas of life.*

**DCPS Principal Megan Vroman**

*Finding quality, accessible, purposeful resources that have an immediate and positive impact on learners is a school leader's persistent goal. This Peace of Mind Curriculum achieves that aim as it provides educators with a set of teacher-developed-and-tested lessons that build a foundation of respect for self and other.*

**DCPS Principal Liz Whisnant**



*This is an extraordinary curriculum, at once practical and visionary. The lessons are thoughtfully and meticulously scaffolded as the children are guided step-by-step into an understanding of how their brains work, how to interact with the world with kindness, and how to master themselves. In this age of anxiety, what could be more important or valuable than to teach children at an early age how to interpret and navigate their big emotions, calm themselves, and by extension, each other? A must read for early education teachers everywhere.*

**Val Carroll, Early Childhood Educator**

*I loved teaching the Peace of Mind Program! It was easy to follow and the students benefited tremendously from the program. I would receive amazing feedback from parents, who would ask, "What are you teaching those kids!" Our Junior Kindergarten teacher received an email from a parent once explaining that her 4 year old explained all three parts of the brain at bedtime and that his mommy needed to calm herself down so that she could use her prefrontal cortex instead of her Amygdala!*

**Shaun Doherty, School Counselor**

*I started to see that if I reminded him to use what he learned in Peace Class, he could stop and breathe for a minute and help himself focus a bit. He's used it at baseball games, with us when he's ready to argue. I've seen him breathe and stop and think. He also seems to use the tactics when he's stressed about schoolwork. It's followed him to a big, busy middle school and perhaps is even more useful now than it was in elementary school. It's sort of just ingrained in his thinking now.*

**Peace of Mind Parent**

*[My son] loved Peace Class and also loved being a mindfulness mentor - I think being a leader for younger kids was an amazing experience for him,*

**Peace of Mind Parent**

