



August 2017



A Message From

Ryan C. Eisenberg, Executive Director

Opportunity for Renewal

There is a wonderful thing about a school year. Beyond learning, beyond our ability to take risks, there is the opportunity for renewal. Each year offers us an opportunity to take lessons learned, reflect, and make a plan for future growth. It also offers us a time to set goals and tackle new challenges. School offers us a place where we can step outside our comfort zone to try new things. This could be taking on a new challenge, learning how to connect with others, or deepening our understanding of ourselves as individuals.

I have long said school breaks are timed well. Make no mistake, learning is hard. By design, the process of learning is our ability to challenge our minds to grow, and this can be an exhausting process. Students and staff alike often crawl towards the summer break, and that can be a sign of the strong effort put forth in learning. Summer offers everyone a chance to refresh, preparing ourselves for continued growth. Beyond our taking time to recharge, it also offers an opportunity to reflect on the lessons from the past year so we can return ready to take on new goals and opportunities for the challenges ahead.

I am excited to kick off the 2017-18 school year and want to welcome back all of our students and staff. It is my hope that everyone had the opportunity to refresh and renew so that together we can engage in the process of learning. My goal is that AchieveKids continues to be a place where our community feels comfortable in their risk taking, so that all of our students find success in learning and leave having a better understanding of themselves as individuals.

Together We Can Achieve!

Ryan C. Eisenberg, Ed.D.

Executive Director





Save the Date!



Festival of Trees

Monday, December 4, 2017
University Club, Palo Alto
Holiday Boutique, Silent Auction
Luncheon and Special Entertainment
10:30 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

Mindfulness in the Classroom

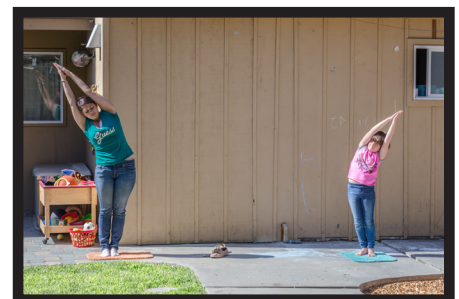


Our brains are always thinking about something. These thoughts could include plans that you made, arguments you recently had, people you need to talk to, and things you need to do. As we move through our day these thoughts can often be reactionary impulses based on previous experiences and behaviors and are often times not the most beneficial way to react to any given situation. There is a solution to this hardwired state of mind: Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. When practiced and applied consistently, research shows that mindfulness fundamentally alters the operating system of the mind; brain activity is redirected from reactionary parts of the brain to the more rational part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex.

In the K+ classroom our students may be worrying about things like the lunch menu, how long until break, who gets to play on the iPad first, or who they will play with at recess. In order to help my students regulate these thoughts and emotions, we set aside a time each morning for mindfulness. During this quiet time in our classroom students can color, play with play-dough, join me in yoga, or practice breathing exercises with staff. Whatever it is they choose to do, they are encouraged to do it mindfully; focusing on what their hands are doing, how they are feeling in this moment, and bringing themselves back to their breathing. We want our students to use this mindfulness throughout the day. When students become frustrated, hyper, or sleepy we encourage them to use "space cards" to take a walk, breathe some fresh air, or do stretches. Our hope is that by doing this our students will increase their emotional self-awareness and regulation.

Since starting this practice I see students taking a couple of extra seconds to think before acting, and becoming aware of and stating the feelings going through their bodies. We hear phrases such as "This is getting me very frustrated" or "What you just did made me feel angry." We also help students to identify how their bodies feel physically. They can then connect tight muscles, scrunched faces, and fast heart beats to perhaps feeling angry. It is this type of self-awareness and expression that helps our students make better choices and become less reactive to situations on a daily basis.



For more information on how you can sign up for a school tour or to learn more about our program please contact: Karin Klarreich, Director of Development at 650.213.5286 or kklarreich@achievekids.org

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