

SHANTHI
PROJECT
Mindfulness Education + Resources for All

2024

IMPACT REPORT



WWW.SHANTHIPROJECT.ORG

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, all of us at Shanthi Project are deeply inspired by the powerful impact mindfulness has had on the lives of those we serve. While we are aware that the need for mindfulness has never been greater, we know our mission has the unique ability to drive meaningful change. Every mindful breath, every moment of presence, and every ripple of kindness begins with the commitment of those who understand this, too.



Through our programs and workshops, we've seen firsthand how mindfulness empowers people of all ages to manage stress, improve focus, foster compassion, and so much more. Students are learning tools to support their mental health, allowing them to remain calm amidst academic and social pressures. Educators are creating more harmonious and supportive learning environments. And in workplaces, employees are learning skills to navigate challenges with greater self-awareness, leading to healthier and more productive teams.

The challenges of our time remind us of the power of mindfulness to transform lives and communities, grounding us in resilience and hope. While teaching our kindness lesson to an elementary school classroom this year, one student shared that our mindfulness practices made them feel like "the world can be a better place."

This report celebrates the successes and progress we have made together in the past year. It highlights the measurable impact of our initiatives and the vision that drives us forward, and it's an ode to our dedicated partners, donors, volunteers and staff members, without whom none of this would be possible. Together, we are not just nurturing individual well-being; we are building a more compassionate, connected Lehigh Valley.

Kimberly Hopkins
Executive Director
Shanthi Project

P.S. For the first time ever, we served over 5,500 children and adults this past year!

OUR MISSION

To teach social-emotional resiliency through the practice of mindfulness.

OUR VISION

Resilient communities nurtured by individuals with self-awareness and compassion, regardless of their past experiences.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tiffany Noll Yurasits, UKG - Board President
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Debi Rice, Fun-Nominal Events & Marketing
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Denise Veres, Founder & Board Member Emerita

SHANTHI PROJECT STAFF

Kimberly Hopkins, Executive Director
Sarah Dennehy, Senior Director of Programs
Maison Allen, Development Coordinator
Lauren Drabenstott, Marketing Consultant
Dan Massaro, Finance & Data Manager
Susan Morelock, Manager of Community Programs & Engagement

Mindfulness Instructors & Workplace Trainers:

Jocelyn Hontz
Susan Morelock
Kelly Prentice
AnnMarie Serfass

School-Based Instructors:

Sally Kraft
JoEllen Millsbaugh

Mindfulness & Yoga Instructors:

Dona Jones
Sara Timofeev

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions and service of departing staff and board

members: Angie Andresen, Michelle Beil, Jo-Ann Devereaux, Kelsey Gasper, Subhajit Ghoshal, John Hawkins, Cheryl Kienzle, Marguerite Nicosia, and Shauna Williams.



Pictured: Dave Erickson and Tiffany Noll Yurasits

SCHOOL-BASED OUTCOMES

2023-2024

Over the the 2023-2024 academic year, Shanthi Project delivered our 16-session Calm+Kind+Focused in-class mindfulness program to approximately **3,322 students** in **109 classrooms** at **13 different schools** across **4 Lehigh Valley school districts**.

Across this wide range, **we surveyed classroom teachers** from 21 different classrooms in 4 separate schools, among 3 different Lehigh Valley school districts. Post-program, we learned that:



100%

felt students improved “moderately” or “very much” in self-management (emotional and behavioral control)

90%

felt students improved from “moderately” to “extremely” in self-awareness

90%

felt students improved from “moderately” to “extremely” in relationship skills

86%

felt students improved from “moderately” to “extremely” in social awareness

76%

felt students improved “moderately” or “very much” in responsible decision-making

SCHOOL-BASED OUTCOMES

2023-2024

Year after year, we receive positive feedback from students and educators regarding our mindfulness programming. Here is a small sample:

EDUCATOR TESTIMONIALS

“As a teacher, the weekly mindfulness sessions help me to stop and take a breath when handling situations with students. I also find that **taking a mindful moment as a class helps to calm and center everyone in the room** to refocus and allow learning to occur.”

– Stacy Confer, Jefferson Elementary

“I feel that the mindfulness program helped me to find **alternate ways to give the class a break**, a calm moment, and coping skills.”

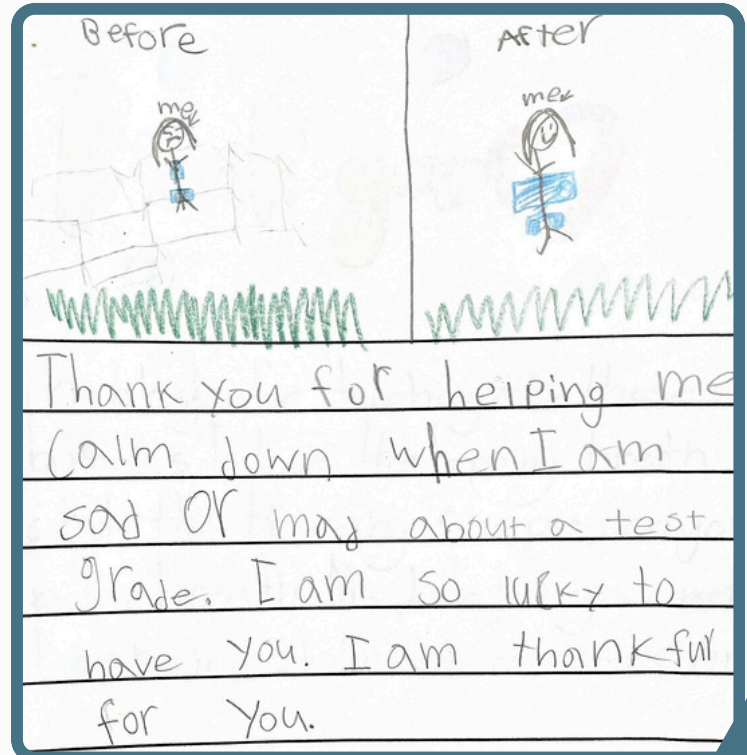
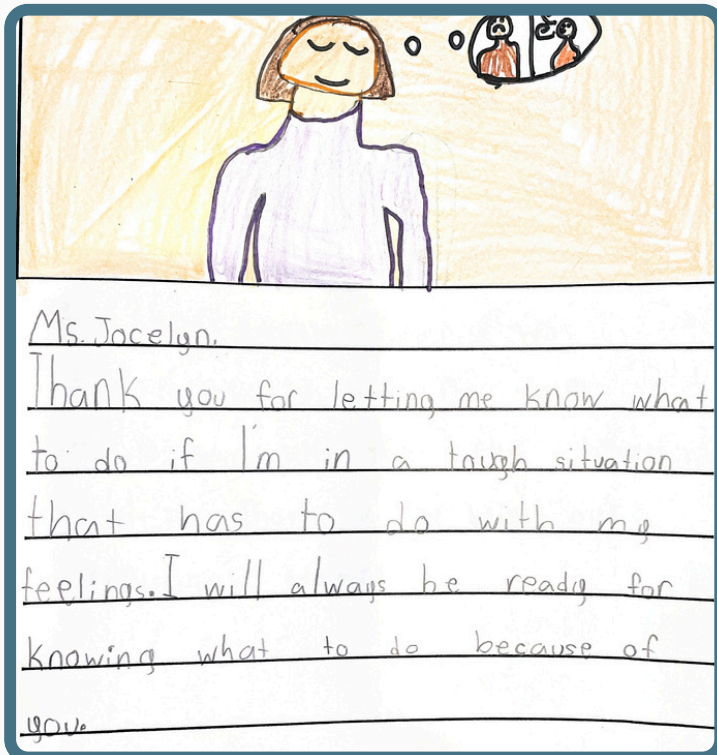
– LeAnn Court, Lincoln Elementary

“Shanthi Project is a valuable organization that continues to **impress and amaze me as a principal.**”

– Heather Bennett-Knerr, Clearview Elementary



STUDENT EXPRESSIONS



SCHOOL-BASED HIGHLIGHTS

A NEW STRATEGIC PROGRAMMING PLAN

In an effort to create a more sustainable programming model, Shanthi Project has developed a Strategic Programming Plan for our in-class mindfulness program, Calm+Kind+Focused (CKF). Under this plan, we will expand access to mindfulness education and economically serve every grade level, from kindergarten through high school, utilizing a combination of Shanthi Project programming, student/teacher-led daily practices, and enhanced classroom resources and mentorship.






Our overarching goal is to provide all students with a solid foundation in mindfulness. By serving all district classrooms universally, students will transition to middle school and high school with **a shared language of kindness and compassion**, along with a **toolbox of mindfulness strategies to support their own mental health and academic journey**.

THE FRAMEWORK

Mindfulness is present-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations. Through mindfulness, students are empowered to pause and thoughtfully respond, instead of automatically react, to what's happening inside and around them. They are cultivating their ability to self-regulate and attend and attune to their environment.

The self-awareness and intentional focus that is nurtured through our CKF program creates the foundation for learning, personal growth, and connections with family, friends, and community.

Our in-class CKF mindfulness curriculum is a trauma-informed, culturally responsive, data-driven program. It is built on a framework of mental health and wellness that includes the following domains:

-  **EMOTIONAL** - Self-awareness; self-regulation; empathy; ability to seek support
-  **INTELLECTUAL** - Critical thinking; problem-solving; desire to learn; creativity
-  **PHYSICAL** - Understanding of the benefits of physical activity; awareness of physical needs
-  **SOCIAL** - Cultivation of healthy, authentic relationships; positive social interactions
-  **ENVIRONMENTAL** - Co-creation of supportive, pleasant environments where needs are met

SCHOOL-BASED HIGHLIGHTS

HEALING TRAUMA THROUGH MINDFULNESS

During the 2023-2024 school year, we leaned on our supportive partnership with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to expand our trauma-informed programming and serve students who have been referred for severe past and current trauma at the high school level. In collaboration with the school guidance department, Shanthi Project conducted a fall and spring eight-week series of our trauma-informed small group mindfulness program for victims of abuse within the Easton Area School District.

We ran **16 sessions, serving a total of 29 high school students** during our pilot year. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants asking us to return in the spring. They shared:



Talking with the other students who have gone through similar hard times helps me feel like I'm not alone in life.

I love this group! It helps me develop coping strategies and ground me, which is super helpful when it comes to my anxiety.

I wish we can bring this to more students because there are so many kids that need this.

"The Shanthi Project Trauma Healing Group has made a profound impact for students in our building for the past two years. They are learning amazing ways to be present and treat the daily symptoms of their trauma...all in an effort in healing the deep cause of it. A lot of them have found healthier tools in coping with their intense sadness and anxiety and report great positive impact the group has on their overall well being. It is by far one of the favorite groups we have at EAHS. I can't thank the team enough for all the peace they bring to the turmoulous lives these kids endure!

Elise Symia, MS — CIS Site Coordinator, Easton Area High School

89%

of participants said
THEY WOULD PARTICIPATE AGAIN
if the program were offered in the future.

78%

of students either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they
NOW USE MINDFULNESS PRACTICES
in their daily lives.

67%

of students either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they're now
BETTER ABLE TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

OTHER PROGRAMMING

215

CHILDREN

SERVED AT FOUR
SUMMER CAMPS

71

CHILDREN

SERVED AT FOUR
AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS



14

INDIVIDUALS, AGED 12-17

SERVED AT THE
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER

During the 2023-2024 academic year, our trauma-informed mindfulness instructors continued Shanthi Project's work at the NCJJC, where our organization was originally founded in 2010. We lead sessions each Wednesday and on two Saturdays every month. With the addition of a new pod to our programming, our instructors lead mindfulness sessions for two groups each time we go.

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTCOMES

FISCAL YEAR 2024

SHANTHI@WORK



During our 2024 fiscal year, Shanthi Project workplace trainers conducted 21 mindfulness sessions for education, corporate, and nonprofit professionals. Proven benefits of practicing mindfulness in the workplace include **increased productivity and job satisfaction, reduced stress and staff turnover, and healthier office relationships.**

We continue to receive highly positive feedback about S@W, such as:

I was really impressed & enjoyed the engaging content that goes beyond the everyday mindful jargon. It was presented in an easy-to-absorb way.

10/10! Very relevant and important information for today's workplace.

964

PROFESSIONALS SERVED

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, our work in the community encompassed a wide range of events, including school fairs and open houses, yoga sessions at the Allentown Public Library, and Resilient Lehigh Valley's annual conference, to name just a few.

We also conducted 15 unique mindfulness education presentations and training sessions for community members throughout the greater Lehigh Valley.

1,100

COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED



COMMUNITY-BASED HIGHLIGHTS

SHANTHI @WORK 2.0

During the spring of 2024, we reimagined [our offerings, presentations, and individualized approach](#) to our Shanthi @Work program to meet each workplace exactly where they are—whether that is online, in-person, or hybrid. After solidifying the new, research-backed Shanthi @Work curriculum, four of our mindfulness instructors completed a six-week workplace-specific training program in order to deliver our content to a wider audience.

Now, our workplace mindfulness sessions can be 60, 75, 90 minutes, or more. During our trainings, we lay the groundwork for a foundational mindfulness practice, address the neuroscience behind our stress response, dispel myths surrounding mindfulness, and introduce straightforward activities that each workplace team can put into practice right away.

Additionally, we developed offerings for organizations looking for team-building or retreat-style opportunities. These new, expansive, fully customizable Mindfulness For All workshops combine mindfulness instruction with yoga, meditation, or creative art-making. Our workshops are a distinctive way to build camaraderie, trust, and teamwork within a workplace, no matter the industry or field.

We will launch with a marketing campaign for our revamped Shanthi @Work program in January 2025.



OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

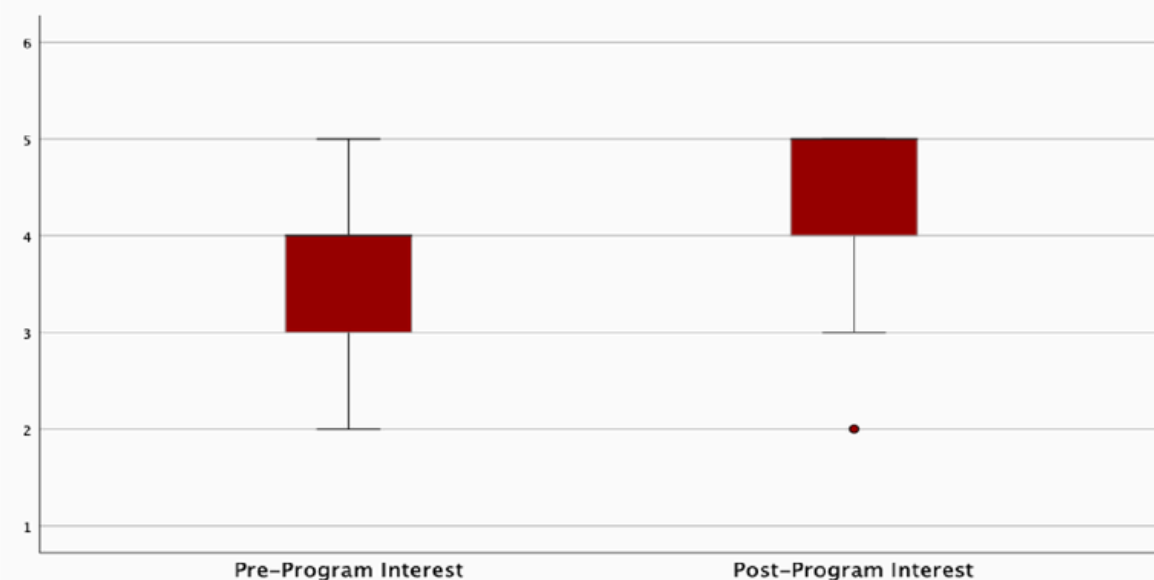
During the 2023–2024 academic year, Shanthi Project conducted independent research in partnership with Dr. Mark Sciotto, a Professor of Psychology at Muhlenberg College, and his research team. Inspired by existing peer-reviewed research, which found that the effects of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), like our 16-session Calm+Kind+Focused program, can vary based on teacher and school characteristics, this research set out to investigate:

What factors (e.g., school climate, teacher background) may predict outcomes of MBIs and teacher engagement in mindfulness?

Data was collected from a generalizable sample of Shanthi Project schools, including 28 different classrooms across 5 schools in 3 school districts. In each of these classrooms, students participated in Shanthi Project’s Calm+Kind+Focused programming.

Comparing pre-program and post-program teacher surveys, we observed two major findings:

1. Classroom teachers reported **significantly greater interest in participating in mindfulness programs after completing Shanthi Project’s Calm+Kind+Focused in-class programming** than before undergoing the program.

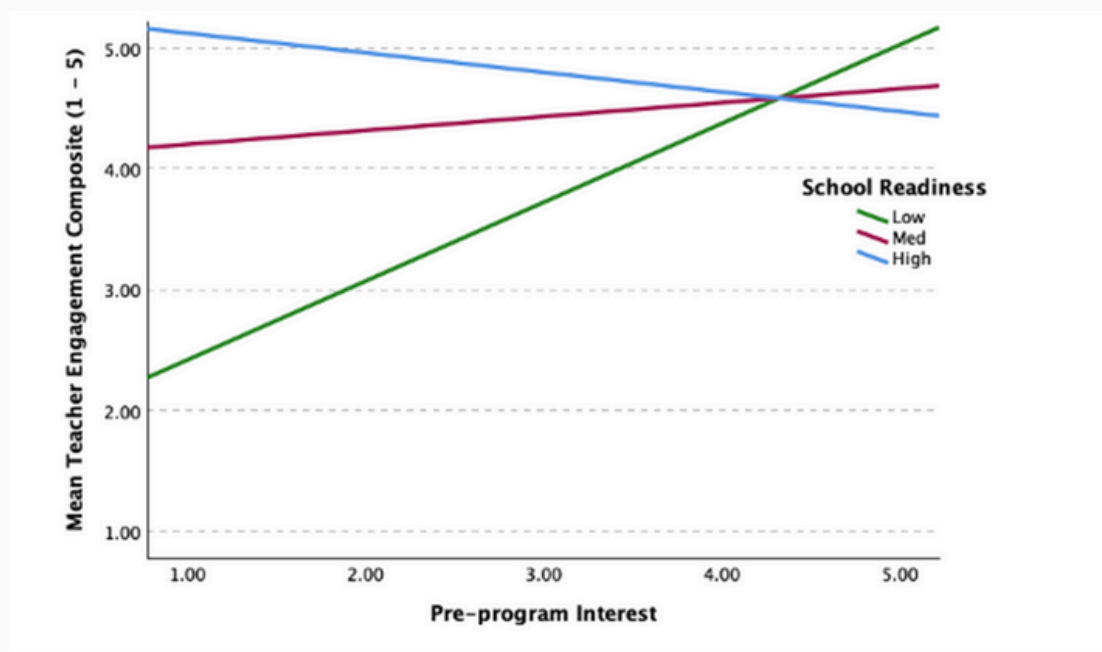


Classroom Teachers reported significantly greater interest in participating in mindfulness programs after having completed Shanthi Projects MBI ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.84$) than before they underwent the program ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.96$), $t(18) = 4.09$, $p < .001$, $d = .937$.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

CONTINUED

2. When faculty and staff consider their **school climates to be favorable and ready for change**, this results in **higher teacher engagement** with MBIs. Inversely, schools with less favorable climates tend to have significantly greater classroom teacher burnout.



Perceptions of school readiness were associated with higher program engagement, especially for teachers with low initial interest in mindfulness.

Together, these findings point to the importance of school climate (i.e. that it is favorable and ready for change) when it comes to classroom teacher interest and engagement with mindfulness. This is vital for our programming moving forward, as previous research has shown that **higher teacher engagement leads to better behavioral outcomes for the students** (e.g. increases in prosocial behaviors and decreases in negative disruptive externalizing behaviors).

We look forward to continuing to explore the role of teachers in supporting and encouraging positive behavioral and academic outcomes among their students!

EASELY YOURS

In September, we hosted Shanthi Project's biggest fundraiser of the year: Easely Yours, our first-ever **art exhibition and silent auction**. This event served not only as an opportunity to generate support for our essential, science-backed programming, but also as a chance to recognize and celebrate the profound connection between art and mindfulness.

In preparation for the fundraiser, we recruited 21 local artists, who donated a total of 26 pieces to the silent auction. Twenty generous sponsors helped the event come to life, and on September 26th, Easely Yours welcomed guests, donors, and artists to Llantrisant Retreat & Wellness Center.

After a night of music, art, food and drink, **the fundraiser raised just shy of \$20,000** – an amount that will be instrumental in helping us maintain and expand our programming in 2025 and beyond!

EASELY YOURS

Art Exhibition + Silent Auction
Benefiting Shanthi Project



THE VERES SOCIETY

This year, in honor of Shanthi Project's visionary founder Denise Veres, we launched the Veres Society, our new membership program. We designed this giving program to harness the collective power of Shanthi Project's passionate and dedicated donors, helping us to sustain and grow our life-changing mindfulness programs.

With the option of five different membership levels, ranging from \$65 to \$5,850 per year, members of the Veres Society can receive a number of personalized benefits, including access to exclusive content, listings on our website, and social media shout-outs, to name a few.

The Veres Society expands our suite of giving options and enhances engagement with members who are committed to supporting mental health and well-being throughout the Greater Lehigh Valley – just like our incredible founder.



THANK YOU!

We are **so grateful** for our 2024 corporate and community partners:



Additionally, our work wouldn't be possible without the support of our individual donors, **whose generosity is invaluable** in helping us further our mission.

Lastly, we thank our dedicated and talented staff, board members, and committee volunteers. We extend our sincerest gratitude to you!

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2025?

For the 2024-2025 academic year, we're taking all that we've learned to improve our programming, address community needs, and expand access to our services. With transformational, strategic changes already in progress, we can't wait to see where 2025 leads us. Here is a small glimpse of our plan:

Launch of a **Transition to Kindergarten Initiative** in the Easton and Bethlehem Area School Districts

Expansion of our **Healing Trauma through Mindfulness** program for high school-aged victims of abuse

Increased mindfulness resources for educators and families

A renewed focus on **enhanced community engagement**

Official kick-off of our **15th Anniversary** year-long celebration!

FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Total Revenue and Support - \$335,412

- Private, Corporate, & Government Grants - \$266,253
- Program Service Fees - \$45,775
- Contributions - \$23,384

Total Expenses - \$335,384

- Program Service - \$263,134
- Salary Administration - \$72,250

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