

# CRIM MINDFULNESS INITIATIVE

## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D as “Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” It is cultivated by a range of simple meditation practices, which aim to bring a greater awareness of thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns, and develops the capacity to manage these with greater skills and compassion.

It’s been nearly 10 years since Deepak Chopra visited Flint, and sparked our community’s interest in learning about and practicing mindfulness. After his visit, the Crim stepped up to be of service and provide evidence-based workshops, classes, and intensive training programs about mindfulness, resilience, emotional intelligence, compassionate leadership, and the fascinating neuroscience behind them all.

**An Innovative Community Wide Strategy** Mindfulness is a proven support in the health, community, civic, education and business sectors. From its launch in 2011 as pilot project in just a few schools, the Crim Mindfulness Initiative has grown to serve 8,000 greater-Flint community members across all sectors today. In 2018, the Crim received unanimous support from the Mayor’s Office and community leaders to serve as flagship city in a national Mindful City Initiative.

**Community Leadership is Key** In 2019, 137 community leaders pledged their support and engagement by attending a 2-day training to increase their knowledge and practice of mindfulness, emotional intelligence and compassionate leadership - to be equipped to grow these capacities at the individual, organizational and community level. Ninety-eight percent of participants reported they found the training valuable and 97% were ready to apply what they learned in their personal and professional life.

**A Growing Network** Dr. Bobby Mukkamala and Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha serve as co-chairs for an Advisory Board which provides critical support and expertise to guide the initiative alongside a growing network of collaborating organizations and Mindful Ambassadors. This capacity building approach, with a small staff providing coaching, consulting, and support exponentially increases the reach and sparks authentic, organic collaborations to grow and evolve sustainably.

## What's Next:

A Flint Mindful Fellowship, supported by the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute, has selected 20 diverse leaders to complete rigorous training to be equipped to teach trauma-informed, culturally relevant training in Flint and Genesee County. The goal is to provide Search Inside Yourself to some of the 3,000 waitlisted participants.







New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Hawaii, the South Pacific. There is no end to the places Alfreda Harris has lived, worked, taught, and explored. Born in the Mississippi Delta, Harris' family came to the Beecher area in the late 1950s. One of six children, her parents encouraged her to be self-sufficient and to "get a good job." However, Harris also wanted to explore the world. After starting college at Central Michigan University in the mid-70s, she decided it was time for a change and booked a one-way ticket to southern California, starting a life-long journey of learning.

After graduating from UCLA, Harris worked a variety of jobs - everything from teaching in the Peace Corps, to working for the Postal Service, to business marketing, learning something new in every experience. Twenty-two years ago, she came back to Flint for what she thought was a short visit and hasn't ever left.

Harris is now a well-known community figure and can be seen working in the Flint Cultural Center at the Flint Public Library and as a docent at the Flint Institute of Arts. A professional storyteller, librarian, and guest teacher, Harris is also a yogi, mindfulness practitioner, and woman of faith.

Harris reconnected with the Crim by completing the 10-mile walk to honor the tenth anniversary of her father's passing. Simultaneously, she found mindfulness. Harris said, "Mindfulness is something I always did in my devotional time but I didn't know it was mindfulness." By adding structure to her practice Harris said she "has strengthened her mindfulness foundation and has been enriched by the mindfulness community." She notes that being a part of this community has helped her through some very difficult times. Personally, she has dealt with illness, family troubles, and the recent passing of her mother and sister. She also finds mindfulness helpful as we collectively face the double pandemics of the new COVID-19 and the more longstanding pandemic of racial injustice.

Harris is one of 20 Flint Mindfulness Fellows and is eager to pay forward the compassion, focus and mindful leadership she has learned. Harris noted she is excited to use her roles as teacher, yoga instructor, and storyteller to help youth "who need help being present and finding their way."

As part of the fellowship, Harris will undergo extensive Search Inside Yourself Leadership Training, created at Google and based on the most current neuroscience, to teach hundreds in Flint and Genesee County over the next 3 years.

## MINDFULNESS BY THE NUMBERS

Average Per Year 2017 - 2019

**20** Mindful Fellows

**98** trained community ambassadors

**768** educators trained

**6,283** students reached

**2,587** adults trained in mindfulness, yoga, or Adverse Childhood Experiences

**3,018** community members interested in continued training

The Foundation for a Mindful Society selected Flint as the Flagship City in a National Mindful Cities Initiative, along with Boston, MA and Jackson Hole, WY.

## What's being said. Right now.

"The skills of self-awareness, resilience, and compassion are important - now more than ever. They are critical to realizing the lives we aspire to, for ourselves and the communities within which we live.

The Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute is deeply honored to partner with the Crim Fitness Foundation, the community of Flint, and Genesee County to support the development of these skills for the benefit of all who live there." - Tyler Peterson, Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute