



ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016

Calmer Choice 

Cultivating awareness, living mindfully, enhancing resilience

What's inside...



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& Executive Director**
A welcome from Fiona Jensen



Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This past school year has been full of amazing growth and reflection for both myself as the Executive Director, and for the Calmer Choice organization itself. With all we have walked through, our small, local, grassroots organization that started in 2010 as a response and outreach to a community in crisis on Cape Cod has grown to be an organization, now recognized around the country. What an incredible journey, one that I could never have predicted. With such a dedicated team who have put their hearts, knowledge, time and energy into Calmer Choice, I feel blessed and see that anything is possible.

Offering young people a toolbox to deal with life's uncertainties including stress, anxiety and self-destructive behaviors is crucial in today's ever changing complex world. Today we humans process as much information in a week as our ancestors did in their entire lifetime 100 years ago. It is no wonder we need to find ways to safely and effectively manage all of it!



Calmer Choice's success is a direct result of our ever expanding network of supportive, devoted and passionate community members and staff. I am in awe every day as I see our dedicated staff and community rally around Calmer Choice and create a place where young people feel valued, appreciated and supported.

I want to thank our Board of Directors for their ongoing leadership and dedication, our donors for their unwavering support, our staff for their amazing commitment and enthusiasm, our volunteers for their endless loyalty, and all the school staff, students and families for whom we have so much respect and admiration. We couldn't do this without YOU! Thank you so very much!

I look forward to an incredible 2016- 2017 school year with all of you!

With tremendous love and respect to all of you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fiona Jensen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Fiona Jensen,
OTR/L



Our Mission

Calmer Choice is a universal prevention program committed to teaching young people how to effectively and safely manage stress and resolve conflict so that they live happy, healthy and successful lives. Our goal is to provide skills that will diminish the risk of violence, substance abuse, and other self-destructive behaviors.



Our Vision

Calmer Choice envisions a world in which young people lead lives of kindness and compassion towards themselves and others.



Mindful Awareness

Mindful Awareness is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, to what is happening right now, both internally and externally, with kindness and curiosity towards ourselves and others.



“I have seen first-hand the positive impact of this program in creating a calmer, more centered youth culture.”

-Christina Bologna, volunteer and community member

From the Program Department



Year-end celebration party for instructors

Life in the Program Department was and is both a work-in progress and work-of progress! We are continually creating, researching, writing, teaching, learning, sharing, supporting, scheduling, attending conferences and going on speaking engagements. The to-do list is never quite done. Yet it is important to stop, put the list aside for a moment, reflect, breathe and take a look at some of the highlights from the 2015-2016 school year!

The last year we completed our 8 week sessions in 15 schools across Cape Cod! In addition to our local programming, we had the opportunity and honor

to teach an extended version of the Calmer Choice program to the Boston Collegiate Charter School in Dorchester. This collaboration included being involved with the amazing Dr. John Gabrielli with his research lab at MIT and the Harvard School of Education. It was such an honor and privilege to be part of this research. With 12 new lesson plans, we traveled to Dorchester 4 days a week for 2 months to teach Calmer Choice curriculum to the students. It was an immense undertaking for our already full plates, but the students surely touched our hearts and we definitely gained a wealth of knowledge!

In the spring of 2016 we finally fulfilled the requests for an after school program. It was a pilot program at the Centerville Library and ran for 6 weeks for elementary school-age children. The response from children and parents was tremendously positive. The requests for future after-school programs grows daily and we hope to be able to offer more down the road.

At the completion of the sessions the Calmer Choice instructors are always amazed at the responses from students, the thank you cards, the hugs, the stories, and the parents, teachers and principals who thank us. It is truly touching and inspiring. We get to see that the simple skills we teach are meaningful in their lives. Whether it's better focus and attention, the ability to fall asleep easier at night, calm themselves, taking on another's perspective, or being gentler and kinder to themselves/others (even their siblings!), it's remarkable to hear and see the impact.

We have an extraordinary Calmer Choice team, an amazing bunch of flexible, dedicated, caring individuals. Thank you to our dedicated group of volunteers who come out of the woodwork to help, along with the stellar Board of Directors who roll up their sleeves and work so hard to support and advise Calmer Choice. We definitely couldn't do any of this without you! We are looking forward to kicking off another wonderful school year in 2016-2017!

Back to the to-do list!

Instructors

Sally Burke
Stephanie Goley
Bob Jensen
Poppy Kennedy
Caroline McCutcheon
Jennifer Perrin
Patty Weinstein
Zoe Wolf

Apprentices

Marge Gramm
Forest Malatesta
Sasa Relic Christakis
Ronda Sigel
Krishna Sprinkle
Linda Whittlesley

School-Based Calmer Choice Instructors

Alison Graham
Monica Jalbert
Greta McCue
Meg Morrison
Laurie Richardson



1. Boston Collegiate Charter School
2. Morse Pond School
3. Quashnet Elementary School
4. Teachers at the Waldorf School of Cape Cod
5. Hyannis West Elementary School
6. St. Peters Nursey School
7. Barnstable West Barnstable Elementary School
8. Barnstable Community Horace Mann Charter School
9. Sturgis Charter Public School
10. Barnstable High School
11. Marguerite E. Small Elementary School
12. Station Avenue Elementary School
13. Mattacheese Middle School
14. Ezra H. Baker Elementary School
15. Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation School
16. Cape Cod Regional Technical High School
17. Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School
18. Stony Brook Elementary School
19. Chatham Elementary School
20. Chatham Middle School
21. Orleans Elementary School
22. Nauset Regional Middle School
23. Provincetown Schools



How many of us know of a 3rd grader who has the ability to regulate his challenging emotions so well that when he encounters a bully at school, he can process the experience and then feel compassion and empathy for the intimidator? Not many. This was Isaiah's first reaction when faced with this situation at school. The reason he gives for his response, "I learned this during Calmer Choice."

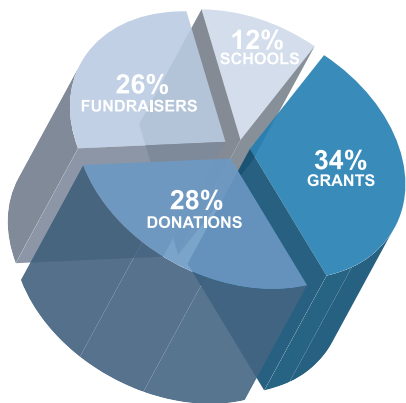
Empathy, which seems to be lacking more and more in our society, is an integral part of the Calmer Choice curriculum. As Isaiah describes, "Our teacher showed us a picture of a horse but if you turned it around it was a frog too. It was really good to learn that people have different perspectives in life. Maybe the boy who was bullying me has a hard time at home or was having a bad day."

The perspective lesson gives students the opportunity to explore what happens in disagreements and arguments. Through engaged activities and stories, students learn that there are many ways to view a situation and that arguments usually occur when we think our way is the only way.

In addition to his understanding of perspective, Calmer Choice helped Isaiah understand emotions and steps to working with challenging emotions. "Although I was upset at what the boy had said to me, I understand that when you get angry the amygdala in your brain starts firing and this shuts down your pre-frontal cortex. I learned that when I feel angry, I can stop, notice that my amygdala is firing and take deep breaths, this helps my amygdala settle down, so that I can think and make choices from my pre-frontal cortex and figure out a way to deal with the situation."

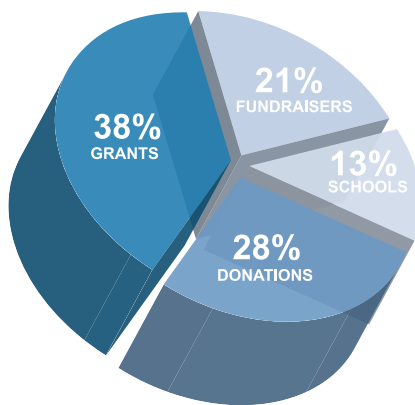
Through the Calmer Choice program, Isaiah has learned the invaluable gift of compassion and empathy as well as a way to deal with his emotions in a stressful situation. Isaiah's emotional and social toolbox has grown to include skills that are crucial in a world of increased cyber bullying, anxiety and stress.

BY THE NUMBERS



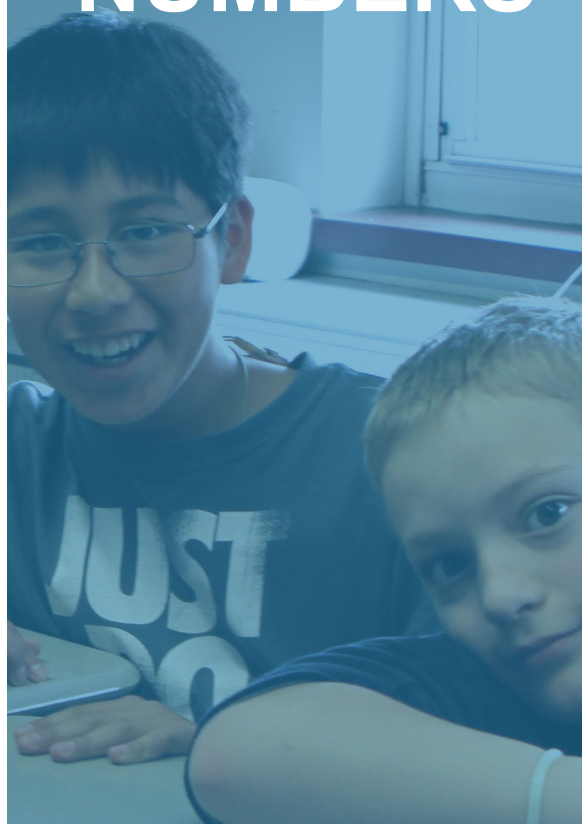
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

Schools	47,332	12%
Grants	134,109	34%
Donations	110,442	28%
Fundraisers	102,554	26%
Total Income	394,437	100%



FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

Schools	79,670	13%
Grants	236,829	38%
Donations	173,469	28%
Fundraisers	127,252	21%
Total Income	617,220	100%



Ice Cream Social at Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School May 2016

BY THE VOLUNTEERS NUMBERS

80
number of
volunteers
in 2015-2016

919
number of
hours
donated

\$20,218
value
of time in
thousands
of dollars

Organizational

Created and funded 4 full time and one part time staff positions in order to manage increased growth.

A Board retreat was held in January to look at the organization's strengths and challenges, and to update the Strategic Business Plan that was created in 2014.

Calmer Choice was awarded a three-day "Service Retreat Grant" from the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York. Board and staff were joined by other "thought leaders" in the world of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and mindfulness, as well as legal and religious scholars to participate in a national discussion on the benefits of teaching mindfulness in schools as well as the contextual frameworks from which it is taught.

Calmer Choice has increased its organizational recognition with continued partnership with researchers from Yale University, with the addition of MIT and the Harvard School of Education.

Financial Support

Calmer Choice, recognized as a primary prevention program, was awarded \$20,000 by Cape and Islands District Attorney Michael O'Keefe, \$30,000 from Cape Cod Health Care Office of Community Benefits and \$20,000 support from the Cape & Islands United Way.

Calmer Choice experienced tremendous financial growth with a budget that grew from \$394,437 in FY 2014-2015 to \$617,220 in FY 2015-2016 with a corresponding increase in community support.

Calmer Choice met its first large match from a private donor, raising \$20,000 from the community in 15 days.

Calmer Choice was awarded a \$100,000, three-year matching technology grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation to acquire the office and program technologies needed to implement and grow the ability to provide programming to more schools.

The Falmouth School District was awarded a three year \$100,000 grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation to implement the Calmer Choice program in their



*Business Alliance Partnership
Training at Camp Wingate* Kirkland June 2016*

four elementary schools, while working with the school district to integrate Calmer Choice into the curriculum. The District will ultimately provide the program in-house with Calmer Choice-trained faculty and staff. This is truly a model for other districts as this landmark grant was written and sought by the Falmouth School District and not by Calmer Choice.

Community

Hundreds of parents, teachers and students gathered to express their overwhelming support for Calmer Choice at a Dennis-Yarmouth school committee meeting in February. School committee members voted to keep Calmer Choice in the Dennis-Yarmouth School systems.

Calmer Choice was awarded the 2016 “Excellence Award” by the Yarmouth Rotary.

The Calmer Choice Speaker Series continues to flourish, bringing local, regional and national speakers to Cape Cod to share their research, knowledge and personal experiences on the benefits of mindful awareness practices.

Calmer Choice successfully launched the Business Alliance Partnership program, growing from 4 businesses to over 23 businesses in 12 months.



Business Alliance Partnership party May 2016

Program

Quashnet Elementary School was able to move to the final phase of “self-sufficiency” with the Calmer Choice program being taught in all 27, 3rd through 6th grade classes conducted by Calmer Choice trained in-school staff. The Provincetown Schools also became self-sufficient, having hired a Calmer Choice trained instructor to provide the program in their classrooms.

Calmer Choice was able to hire its first research assistant to the Yale University researchers with the ongoing qualitative and quantitative studies of Calmer Choice programming.

Continued revisions and curriculum development to include the most up-to-date information on providing mindful awareness education to school children. This includes looking at the language used in teaching the lessons, the education of Calmer Choice instructors and the creation of a new Instructor Training Program.

Provided our first after school program for 12 children with great success. The online application for the program filled up in 30 minutes with requests for similar programs on the rise.

“Your organization inspires me. The ripples of positive energy that emanate from Calmer Choice are serving a higher purpose and creating an impact on our next generation.”

-Sara Whiteley of W. Vernon Whiteley, Inc. and Calmer Choice Business Partner



CALMER CHOICE SPEAKER SERIES

To benefit the greater community while also raising funds, Calmer Choice has created a Speaker Series which brings local, regional and national speakers to Cape Cod to share their research, knowledge and personal experiences.

Speakers To Date

Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, Professor of Medicine Emeritus at U Mass Medical Center
Congressman Tim Ryan

Dan Harris of ABC News, Good Morning America, and NY Times bestselling author of *10% Happier*
George Mumford, author of *The Mindful Athlete*

Janell Burley Hofmann, author of *iRules: What Every Tech-Healthy Family Needs to Know About Selfies, Sexting, Gaming and Growing Up*.

Forum on Substance Abuse Prevention

Adria Kennedy (Calmer Choice Program Director)
Michael O'Keefe (District Attorney for the Cape and Islands)
Joanne Sykes (School Adjustment Counselor)
Randy Hunt (State Rep., Fifth Barnstable District)
Trudy Avery (Caron Institute)

Thank You To Our Speaker Series Sponsors

Beacon Financial Planning of Cape Cod, Inc.
Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office
Cape Cod Academy
Emerald Physicians
Falmouth Toyota
Gosnold on Cape Cod



Janell Burley Hofmann, March 2016



George Mumford, August 2015

My daughter had three years of Calmer Choice during her middle school years. Her experience was incredibly positive and she continues to use what she learned as part of a healthy, balanced, kindhearted life.

-Parent Ronda Sigel

My son was upset one day after dinner and, without any prompting from me, was able to calm himself down. He did his five-finger breathing which helped stop the amygdala from firing. I was amazed at his language and insight. He was able to breath through his frustration and make a good, rational decision about how to proceed with our evening.

-Parent Jess Newell

Supporting Calmer Choice is important to Cape Associates because teaching children how to cope with stress in their lives early on will build a stronger, more resilient and valuable member of our community.

-Lindsay J. Cole Cape Associates, Inc.



DIRECTORS & STAFF

Officers

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Owner, Scargo Café

Fiona Jensen, OTR/L, President
Executive Director, Calmer Choice

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Vice President Commercial Loan Officer
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Emily Mezzetti, Secretary (2016)
Retired School Administrator/Principal

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Robert Thrasher Retired Telecommunications Executive

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Douglas Worthen, Director of Mindfulness Programs, Middlesex School, Concord, MA

Staff

Executive Director: Fiona Jensen

Program Director: Adria Kennedy, RN/NP, MSN

Director of School and Community-Based Programming: Katie Medlar

Resource Development Coordinator: Annalise Mecham

Administrative Assistant: Kimberly Perry

As you consider opportunities for giving, please remember that every gift goes to help the students of Cape Cod lead healthy, happy and fulfilled lives. Your donation also helps to teach and educate others beyond Cape Cod. There are a variety of ways to support Calmer Choice as we grow including:

Annual Fund

At the close of every year, we ask our loyal friends and supporters to give generously to help support Calmer Choice and our mission. Our Annual Fund goes to support our operating budget and enables us to continue our programming throughout the year. You can also become a **Calmer Choice Champion** by signing up to donate monthly in any amount.

Sponsorship

Calmer Choice has a number of events every year including our popular Speaker Series, Falmouth Road Race, The Last Gasp and CC100K. Being a sponsor for one of our informative guests or a fundraising event is an important way to give back to the Cape Cod community and defray the costs of the events themselves.

Stock

Giving long-term (owned more than a year), appreciated securities may provide greater benefits to you and Calmer Choice.

Business Alliance Partners

Being a Business Alliance Partner creates a community partnership that has direct and lasting impact on the lives of our children and the future of our community.

Volunteer

If time is what you can donate, please come volunteer for Calmer Choice! We have a robust volunteer program and are always looking for dedicated, big-hearted people who share our vision and mission. Please email for more info: volunteer@calmerchoice.org or call 508-398-0808



WAYS TO GIVE

Help Bridge The Gap

	Schools asked to contribute	Actual cost* to Calmer Choice
One Student	\$50	\$100
One Class	\$1000	\$3000
One Grade	\$3000	\$7500

*Cost will decrease over 3-year sustainability roll-out.

Other Ways To Support Programs Not Covered By School Budgets

Instructor Training
\$3,000

Curriculum Development
\$15,000

On-Line Trainings/Resources
\$20,000

Administrative-Staff Support
\$50,000+

Please call or email Executive Director, Fiona Jensen for more information:
fjensen@calmerchoice.org
or 508-398-0808 x101



OUR DONORS

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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Silicon Valley Community Foundation
1440 Foundation

\$20,000 - \$49,999

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The Peter & Elizabeth C. Tower
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\$10,000 - \$19,999

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Lombard Trust Fund

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Barry and Taylor Joyce
Tom and Judy McCullough
The Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank
Charitable Foundation Trust
The Cooperative Bank
of Cape Cod Foundation
The Cape Cod Foundation
O'Keefe Family Charitable Fund

\$2,500 - \$4,999

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Andrea Holden Thanksgiving Race
Gosnold on Cape Cod
The Joseph and Harvey Meyerhoff
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\$1,000 - \$2,499

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 Debra Robinson
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 Jason Scott
 Lynn Shields
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 Kathleen and Brian Smith
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 Sheila Tobin
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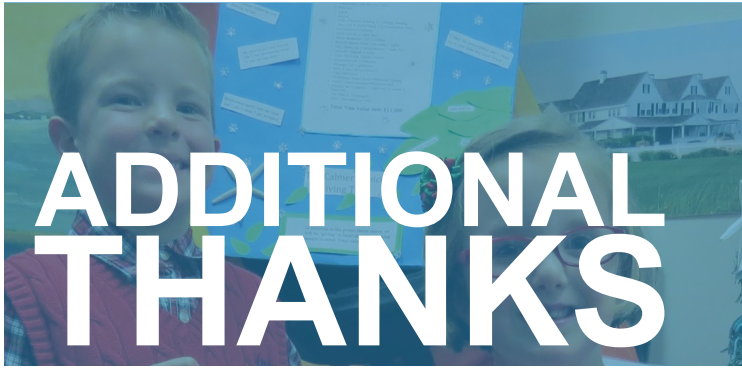
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Centerville Yoga And Wellness Center
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Sea Street Spa
Tap City Grill, Hyannis
Training Wheels
Wayside Inn Chatham
Wianno Club
Willowbend Country Club

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Special Thanks

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We apologize for any omissions or errors and trust that you will bring them to our attention.

To learn more, or to find out how to donate or volunteer,
visit CalmerChoice.org

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Calmer Choice

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