



ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



Calmer Choice



Our Vision & Mission

The mission of Calmer Choice is to teach young people 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. Ultimately, Calmer Choice envisions a world in which people lead lives of kindness and compassion towards themselves and others.

Message from Our Founder & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I often wonder how to summarize my awe and gratitude when I am asked to write something like this. How does one put onto one page all there is to say and acknowledge? Thank you to our staff, our board, our volunteers, our donors and business partners. It has been quite a year with many great things happening along with our fair share of growing pains and challenges.

Now nine years into our mission, we find ourselves at an interesting juncture as an organization and as a community. One that has caused all of us to pause and reflect with more and more frequency on both the why and how of what we are doing and where we are going.

In the fall of last year, we received preliminary findings from a research study with MIT and the Harvard School of Education including brain scans that concluded that the Calmer Choice program was in fact making a difference in decreasing anxiety, improving emotional regulation, enhancing attention and reducing stress. Researchers for both MIT and Yale now have papers pending publication with more in the pipeline, providing increased evidence in the efficacy of our programs and what we teach.

We hosted new events and had record-breaking fundraising in others. And then to top off the year, this last June, in an effort led by Senator Julian Cyr, we received notice that Governor Charlie Baker approved \$50,000 in state funding for Calmer Choice, recognizing us as an innovative leader in the substance abuse prevention movement.



And yet....among our small staff, we have attended 5 more funerals of young people dying of opioid overdoses in the last six months alone, and have known of many more here on Cape Cod who have lost their lives to this battle. There is still more work to be done, and every day we must begin again, inspired and determined to bring our mission of kindness and compassion to all those who need us.

Thank you for being a part of the community of people who make this work possible.

With love and gratitude,

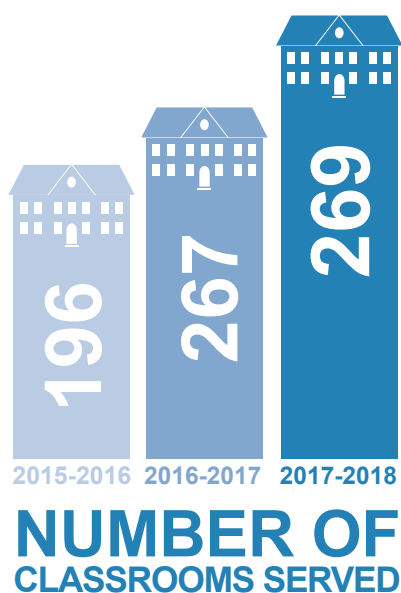
Fiona Jensen,
OTR/L

Programming

Programming at Calmer Choice is a collaborative effort from schools, instructors, students, parents, volunteers, donors, supporters, curriculum developers, the Board of Directors and community members. Without you we couldn't provide the level of programming that we do.

Learning as we Teach and Teaching as we Learn was our 2017-18 theme. As mindfulness instructors we each have our own way of reflecting on the nature of the mind and that reflection helps us develop a way of teaching. This reflection is what we teach from and this contributes to preparing students for life from the inside out.

This year Calmer Choice provided programming in 19 schools, 269 classrooms, reaching over 5,000 students across Cape Cod. Calmer Choice Instructors taught 168 of those classrooms, and in-school trained staff taught 101 of those classrooms. Since Calmer Choice began we have served nearly 21,000 people across Cape Cod. By the end of the 2018-2019 school year we are projected to serve more than 26,000 people.

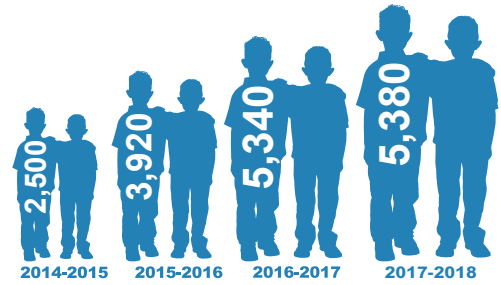


“We have a lot to do and a lot to accomplish in a day, week, and year. Calmer Choice reminds me to be mindful and to concentrate on one thing at a time. We are always juggling a variety of things at once. It is helpful to remember that we accomplish more by focusing completely on one thing at a time. Calmer Choice has been a great addition to the classroom. Each lesson focuses on very valuable life lessons that targets the needs of our students. The topics and lessons are very age appropriate and the children are always engaged.”

- Brooke Leidner,
1st Grade Teacher at Ezra Baker

“My most favorite things about Calmer Choice would be that it takes time away from school to just breathe. It’s also relaxing, as soon as I stepped into the room I felt a vibe of calm and cool vibes. It taught me how to pay attention to my breath and that I can use this anytime to help me.

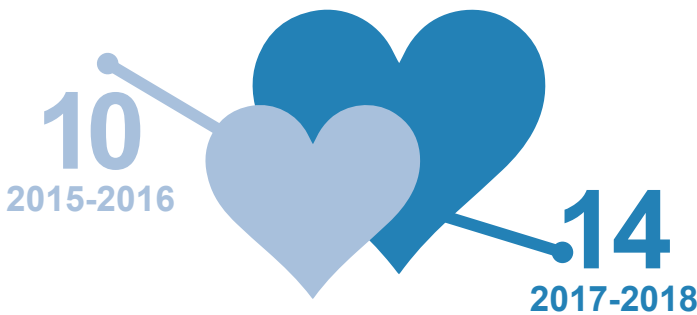
- DY High School student



NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED BY CALMER CHOICE INSTRUCTORS



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS



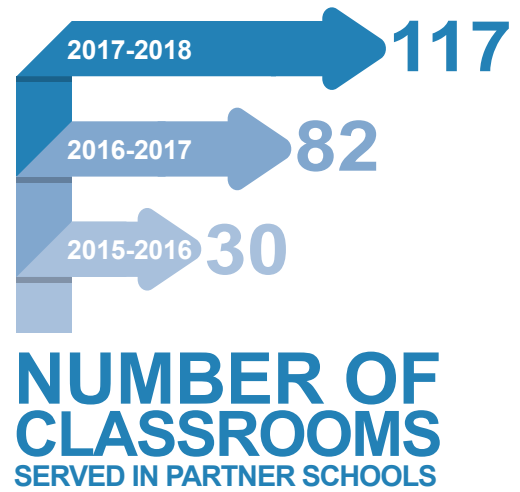
NUMBER OF CALMER CHOICE INSTRUCTORS



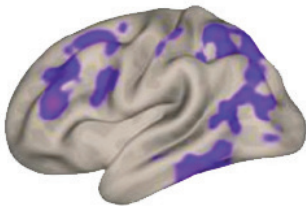
Calmer Choice Partner Schools

Calmer Choice Partner Schools is a successful initiative that was designed in 2015 and continues to grow. This initiative supports schools and districts in becoming self-sufficient in teaching the Calmer Choice mindful awareness curriculum. Starting with the traditional Calmer Choice programming, which includes an instructor in the classroom, this model offers schools a process in which school staff are then trained to deliver the program. Calmer Choice continues to support the trained staff through ongoing education and peer partnership.

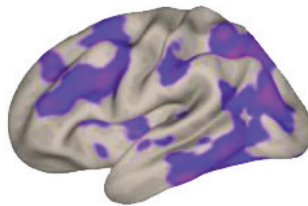
In the 2017-2018 school year, 14 school-based employees from Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich, Dennis-Yarmouth and Nauset school districts completed a year-long instructor training. This brings us to a total of 22 school-based instructors that are now able to bring the Calmer Choice mindful awareness curriculum to 11 different schools.



Impact



Before Calmer Choice



After Calmer Choice

¹ Bauer, C., Caballero, C., Scherer, E., West, M., WhitfieldGabrieli, S., Gabrieli, J.D.E. (2017). Meditation, resting state connectivity, and sustained attention: An RCT in middle school children. Poster presented at: Organization of Human Brain Mapping. Vancouver, Canada.

The impact of the Calmer Choice program on the students we serve has been profound. Over the last seven years Calmer Choice has partnered with researchers from Tufts, Yale, MIT and Harvard to study the impact of its program with over 2,000 students, and in December 2017 we received communications from our researchers outlining findings that are currently being reviewed for publication, an important step in enabling Calmer Choice to become an evidence-based program. Evaluations support the effectiveness of the program, as well as demonstrate the feasibility, efficacy and applicability of teaching these skills in public schools.

Additionally, thanks to a partnership with MIT and the Harvard School of Education, Calmer Choice students were involved in the first study ever conducted using brain scans with youth that provides scientific evidence that a school delivered mindfulness-based program can enhance attention and reduce stress. MIT researchers found Calmer Choice effectively enhances sustained attention in middle-school students and positively changes brain connectivity, as well as reduces amygdala reactivity to fear and stress. (1C. Bauer, personal communication, December 2, 2017)

The Impact of Calmer Choice

Multi-school, multi-community survey feedback on the impact of Calmer Choice to our students, their parents and teachers

Students

86% report they use skills taught by Calmer Choice in practical ways:

- Thinking before acting
- Reducing test anxiety
- Being kinder
- Being more aware of feelings and emotions

84% still use skills from Calmer Choice one year later

Teachers

Report Calmer Choice improves school/classroom climate:

- 90% report creating an environment more conducive to teaching
- 82% report personally benefitting from lessons and material taught in their classes
- 95% report continuing teaching the skills after the program has ended

Parents

Report children use Calmer Choice at home in positive ways:

- 81% report their children seemed happier
- 79% report their children were kinder to others
- 72% report their children were less anxious

Community Programming

Through our community-based programs Calmer Choice aims to promote health and well-being for all Cape Cod residents. Our community-based primary prevention programs can enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors to those living on Cape Cod.

Some of the Calmer Choice community partners served during our 2017-18 program year are:

- YMCA of Cape Cod
- Kennedy-Donovan Center
- First Church of Christ
- Girl Power Group
- Dream Day Camp
- Camp Amazing Grace
- Camp Wingate-Kirkland
- Creative Outlets
- Yarmouth Library
- Housing Assistance Corporation



Calmer Choice Events

Across the Cape through all four seasons, Calmer Choice is proud to both host our own fundraisers and fundraisers, as well as join larger community events to benefit the thousands of young people we serve each year. All these events are ways for us to both give back to the community and help to support our programs. We thank you for all who showed up, ran, rode bikes and enjoyed themselves.



Falmouth Road Race
August 2017



Calmer Choice Celebration
August 2017



Speaker Series -
Daniel Golman
August 2017



Cape Cod 100
September 2017



Spectacle of Trees
December 2017



Overcoming Obstacles
June 2018



Tour de Barnstable • June 2018

Volunteers

Calmer Choice was founded in 2010 in the wake of the tragic deaths of several Barnstable High School students and graduates, punctuating an alarming rise in substance abuse, violence and self-harm that was devastating the Cape Cod community. Personally impacted by this series of events, Fiona Jensen mobilized her grief to seek out an army of volunteers to help create a solution to help young people in manage stress, resolve conflict and increase their inner resilience, and sought to arm educators with practical resources to better support their students' social-emotional health. Through this devastation, and solely through the volunteer efforts of many, Calmer Choice was born.

Volunteers remain a critical and important part of the Calmer Choice community. Whether you are a retired school teacher, enjoy planning events or are a stay-at-home parent, each of our volunteers bring a unique skillset and passion to our team and are extraordinarily grateful.



Directing traffic for the Tour de Barnstable bike race

BY THE VOLUNTEERS NUMBERS



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 to volunteer@calmerchoice.org or call 508-398-0808

Testimonials



My favorite thing about Calmer Choice is the warm sensation in my heart - a feeling of connection and pride - when a class is able to practice what we teach and benefit from the curriculum, even in sometimes challenging situations. I was recently teaching a 2nd grade class that had to be evacuated into the hallway because of an incident that took place in their classroom just prior to my arrival. I honestly questioned whether the class should be cancelled given what they had just witnessed, the repeated distractions of other classes walking by, and various faculty mulling about; but when we began an exercise to practice mindful breathing to close the lesson, you could hear a pin drop the kids were so focused. Upon reflecting on this experience, it was obvious to me how much these kids needed Calmer Choice that day and it was beautiful to witness and a privilege to facilitate the fulfillment of that need

-Liam Girouard, Calmer Choice Instructor

I think people would be surprised by how young the children are who can get real benefits from the Calmer Choice program. Through my work as a family physician, I have a deep understanding of the impact of mental and psychological health on the physical and there is no doubt in my mind, as a physician, that the impact of Calmer Choice on our youngest generation can change the way the world works.

I've been inspired lately to take action in my own way against the social injustices I see in the world, the way so many people are treated as "less than." In that vein, I see tremendous value in the fact that Calmer Choice doesn't call out or stigmatize kids who are traditionally labeled as "troubled," and offers their programming to the whole class, allowing everyone to experience the benefit. Through Calmer Choice, I feel like I am doing my part to create a resilient and tolerant society, and I couldn't be more grateful to be a part of this important mission.

-Dr. Patricia Fater, Calmer Choice Board Member



Calmer Choice gives me hope that I can make a difference in my grandson Adam's life. My son Jason, Adam's dad, became lost to addiction, and after over 25 years of struggle, he died of a drug and alcohol overdose on May 18, 2016 at the age of 42. My husband Jim and I are raising Jason's son Adam, and we want to equip Adam with tools to help him grow strong and to enable him to avoid the demons that cost his Dad his life. Calmer Choice is one of those tools.

Anxiety and depression are growing among our youngsters at an alarming rate. Calmer Choice encourages us to slow down, to breathe and center ourselves before we leap or flee, which in turn reconnects us with what is most valuable in our lives: how we relate to ourselves, to each other and to our world. Calmer Choice gives us hope.

- Christine Davenport, Calmer Choice supporter and grandparent

OUR HISTORY OF HELPING THE CAPE

JANUARY 2010 TO JUNE 2017



1. Oak Ridge Elementary
2. Teaticket Elementary School
3. Mullen Hall Elementary School
4. North Falmouth Elementary School
5. East Falmouth Elementary School
6. Morse Pond School
7. Quashnet Elementary School
8. KC Coombs School
9. Hyannis West Elementary School
10. St. Peters Nursey School
11. Barnstable West Barnstable Elementary School
12. Barnstable Community Horace Mann Charter School
13. Sturgis Charter Public School
14. Barnstable High School
15. Marguerite E. Small Elementary School
16. Station Avenue Elementary School
17. Mattacheese Middle School
18. Ezra H. Baker Elementary School
19. Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation School
20. Cape Cod Regional Technical High School
21. Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School
22. Stony Brook Elementary School
23. Chatham Elementary School
24. Chatham Middle School
25. Orleans Elementary School
26. Nauset Regional Middle School
27. Eastham Elementary
28. Provincetown Schools

Financials

As a prevention program, Calmer Choice reaches children early, providing skills before they reach the age where negative impulses can lead to long-term and potentially disastrous outcomes. We are the only prevention program teaching mindful awareness on Cape Cod, and we are committed to providing Calmer Choice to anyone seeking services regardless of their ability to pay.

In order to provide services everyone, we rely almost entirely on grants, private donations, and fundraising events to support this work. Financial support multiplies the efforts of our dedicated and passionate team, allowing us to deliver crucial life skills to thousands of students and community members each year.

There are a variety of ways to support Calmer Choice. Read more below, visit our website at www.calmerchoice.org/support-us or contact Emily Smalley, Development Manager, at 508-694-5730.

Annual Fund

At several points in the year, we ask our loyal friends and supporters to give generously to help support Calmer Choice and our mission. These appeals are often centered around the holiday season, such as #GivingTuesday, or leveraged with a generous match, ensuring double the impact on every dollar you give.

Calmer Choice Champions

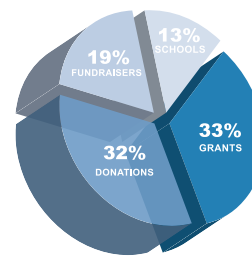
As a Calmer Choice Champion, you are able to provide unrestricted support to Calmer Choice through a recurring monthly donation. We have several levels available starting as low as \$5 per month!

Business Alliance Partners

Good business is not only for the generation of profit, it is lending itself to creating passion in all your company's goals and objectives. Companies that adopt this outlook take responsibility for enhancing the quality of the life of their employees. As a Business Alliance Partner, your donation will have a great impact, from the support of individual students and their teachers, to sponsorship of a classroom, to underwriting an entire school.

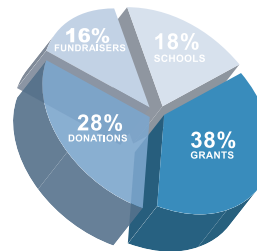
Volunteer and Have a Meaningful Impact on Our Community

Calmer Choice was built by big-hearted people, like you, who shared our vision and mission and gave their time, skills and knowledge in order to sustain and grow our organization to better serve students, schools and the Cape Cod community. You can help our youth thrive and provide a brighter future by caring and getting involved. How? Consider joining our family of mindful and heartfelt volunteers.



FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018

Schools	\$107,363	13%
Grants	\$214,945	33%
Donations	\$209,862	32%
Fundraisers	\$127,106	19%
Total Income	\$659,276	100%



FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017

Schools	\$119,639	18%
Grants	\$247,623	38%
Donations	\$180,870	28%
Fundraisers	\$100,266	16%
Total Income	\$648,398	100%

“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.”

Calmer Choice Business Alliance Partner Lindsay J. Cole, Human Resources Manager, Cape Associates, Inc.



Our Donors

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Taylor and Barry Joyce
The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower
Foundation

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Cape Cod Healthcare, Inc.
Leslie and Jenny Jonas
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Omidyar Global Fund

\$10,000 - \$24,999

The Bilezikian Family Foundation
Cape and Islands United Way
Cape Cod Charitable FunRaisers
The Cape Cod Foundation
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts/
Cape & Islands District Attorney
Michael O'Keefe
Curran Foundation
Federated Church of Orleans
Mark and Royce Gussack
Lombard Trust Fund
Frank and Nancy Selldorff

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Andrea Holden Foundation
Bassick Family Foundation
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Peter and Ginny Farwell
Laura Groark
Hyannis Rotary
Edward Bangs Kelley and Elza Kelley
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Sara Whiteley

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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\$500 - \$999

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\$100 - \$499

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Am HaYam Cape Cod Havurah

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Quiet Moments
Red Jacket Inn - North Conway
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Sass
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Sea Dog Brew Pub
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Seafood Sam's
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Solistice Day Spa
Tap City Grille
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The Pilates Room
The Ridge Club
Touch of Peace
Trevi
Twenty-Eight Atlantic (Wequassette)
Twisted Tree
Unique Boutique
Uptown Dog
Wayside Inn Chatham
Whydah Pirate Museum
Wicked Restaurant
Willowbend Country Club
Ying's
Yoga on the Beach of Cape Cod

Business

Alliance Partners

Affordable Mattress of Cape Cod
Cape Air/Hyannis Air Service, Inc.
Cape Associates, Inc.
Cleangreen, Inc.
Dative
Glivinski and Associates, Inc.
Hyline Cruises
Margo's
McShea Insurance
Nata's Noodles
Nauset Disposal
Puritan Cape Cod
RPM Carpets & Floorcoverings
Sam's Family Restaurant: Seafood
Sam's
Scargo Cafe
Shepley Wood Products
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Wilkinson Ecological Design

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Cape Cod Coffee Roasters
Cape Cod Health and Fitness
Cape Cod Plastic Surgery
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Padgett Builders, Inc.
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Pineapple Caper
Platinum Auto Service

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Ryley Construction
Scargo Café
Seminole Exchange Draw & Taxes
Stop & Shop Dennis
The Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank/
Charitable Foundation Trust
Unfinished Business of Cape Cod, Inc.
Unique Boutique
Vermont Pure
Whiteley Plumbing and Heating

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

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Recognition

Calmer Choice

Senator Cyr secures \$50,000 for **Calmer Choice** to fund substance abuse prevention programs in schools on Cape Cod.

Amendment #258: Anti-Addiction Programs in Schools



#SenBudget

Massachusetts Senate FY19 Budget Debate

#Mapoli

“This state funding, the first in our history, recognizes the value of Calmer Choice as a critical program for teaching young people to effectively and safely manage stress, resolve conflict and gain skills that will diminish the risk of violence, substance abuse, and other self-destructive behaviors,” said Fiona Jensen, Founder and Executive Director of Calmer Choice. “We are grateful to Senator Cyr for securing this funding and to the entire Cape Cod Delegation for their ongoing support of Calmer Choice as our agency embarks on its ninth year of service to the Cape Cod community.”



Thank You!



Calmer Choice

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