



# Peace of Mind

At Lafayette Elementary School in Washington, D.C.

5701 Broad Branch Road, NW

[www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com)

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## Recently In Peace...



In the spring of 2015 Lafayette staff and students were filmed and interviewed for a documentary about mindfulness by director Paul McGowan, titled **A Joyful Mind**. We were supposed to be a very small piece of the film, but the filmmakers were so impressed with our program and our wonderfully articulate students that [the section on Lafayette](#) takes up almost ten minutes of the whole 60 minute documentary! It's wonderful to hear our students speak so eloquently about how mindfulness practice helps them academically, deal with strong emotions, to be better friends, and helps them live happier, healthier lives!

You can always read more about Peace of Mind, join our mailing list, and find out about current events at our website: [www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com). You can also follow us on Facebook. Contact Linda at [Linda.Ryden@dc.gov](mailto:Linda.Ryden@dc.gov) or Jillian at [Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov](mailto:Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov)

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## Important Events

**November 1-3: Halloween Candy Drive**

(see pg. 3 for details)

We hope you were able to attend our Open House on 10/25, but if you missed it we will be hosting another day in the coming months!

## Recommended Watch



Watch the Trailer for  
*A Joyful Mind*

OR

Watch the entire  
[full-length documentary](#)  
on Vimeo  
(use promo code 1001)

Thanks to our school's  
participation in the  
documentary, we have  
permission from the director  
to watch the full-length  
feature for free!



### Mindfulness Practice

In Pre-K and Kindergarten we are expanding our mindfulness practice to about 30 seconds of quiet time. During this time, students sit in their mindful bodies and notice what is happening around them. This week we've begun trying to notice what's going on inside us, paying attention to our bodies and how they are feeling.

In 1st and 2nd grade we've been learning how to use our breath to help us deal with strong feelings. We learned a technique called Take Five Breathing. It's easy - just trace your hand while you breathe in and out. Breathe in when you trace up and breathe out when you trace down. By the time you've traced your whole hand you should feel much better. Your first grader should have brought home a little poster they made to help them remember how to Take Five. Ask your child to show you how to Take Five.

In 2nd grade we've been learning a mindfulness practice called Heartfulness. This just means thinking kind thoughts about others and about yourself. Your child should have brought home a little picture that includes the words we said and a drawing of someone to whom they sent their kind thoughts. Thinking kind thoughts about ourselves and others can help to increase empathy and self-compassion. It can create a sense of calm and well-being and even help to reduce feelings of anger when you think kind thoughts about someone you are in conflict with. Ask your child to teach you how to do Heartfulness.

In the older grades we've been talking about time travelling. No, we're not reading science fiction. We're talking about how when you pay attention to your thoughts you notice that although your body might be sitting in math class your mind might be at soccer practice later in the day, or at your baseball game last Saturday, or eating that leftover pizza for lunch. Although there is nothing wrong with this sort of time traveling, it is important to understand when your mind is on auto-pilot. When we are not mindful of where are thoughts and attention are we can miss important things in the present moment such as the homework assignment or the directions for a game. Many of us suffer from worries and anxiety that stem from letting our minds spend too much time in



*Brothers having fun at Peace Club*

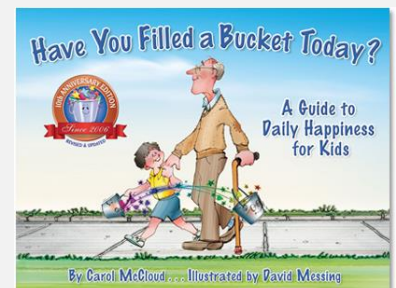
### Ask Your Child:

#### For Pre-K and Kindergarten:

Who is your kindness pal?

What does it mean to be kind to someone?

How do you "fill someone's bucket?"



#### For 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Grades:

Ask your child to show you how to Take Five.

Ask your child to teach you how to do Heartfulness.

#### For 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades:

Ask your child to teach you how to play Popcorn.

the future. Since most of the things that we worry about rarely happen or at least are rarely as bad as we thought they would be, it is important to be able to bring your mind back to the present moment. This ability that we learn from mindfulness practice can be very helpful to keep us from "pre-experiencing" things that we might never even have to deal with. For example, if you are afraid of getting your upcoming flu shot you might spend the few days before the appointment "pre-experiencing" the shot. "Oh it's going to hurt! Oh I don't want to go!" Rather than just spending half a second getting the shot we might spend hours or days anticipating and worrying about the shot. Mindfulness practice gives us the awareness to notice that our mind is in the future and it gives us the ability to choose where we want to place our attention. In Peace Class we are learning to become the master of our own mind. Ask your child to teach you how to play Popcorn so that you can become the master of your mind too.



### **Social and Emotional Learning**

In Pre-K and Kindergarten we are learning names for our feelings. Most kids can name "happy" and "sad" but that's about the extent of their social-emotional vocabulary. We are seeking to expand that so that kids know at least ten different words to describe their feelings. With a partner, we will practice telling how we feel in each Peace Class. Because we are also trying to notice how our bodies feel during mindfulness practice, this language will help students name what they notice as well.



### **Creating a Kinder and More Inclusive School**

PK/K finally got Kindness Pals! From here on out, until they finish 5th grade, students will have an assigned Kindness Pal. With our pals we practiced giving friendly greetings, finding out things we have in common, and giving friendly goodbyes. We also read a great book called "Have You Filled A Bucket Today?" to teach students about feelings and doing kind things for each other.

Students in grades 1-5 get new Kindness Pals every week, while students in Pre-K and Kindergarten will keep the same pals for several weeks before switching to a new one. The goal is that by the end of the year students have been a partner with almost every student in the class.



**Halloween Candy Drive:** Continuing a long Lafayette tradition we will again be collecting Halloween candy to share with homeless people. Please bring your extra candy to the Peace Room (202) starting on Tuesday November 1 - Thursday November 3. The candy will be shared with Bethesda Cares which provides meals and services for the homeless. Help us bring a little sunshine to folks going through tough times. Thanks!