



mindful littles®

2019-2020 PARADISE RIDGE HEALING INITIATIVE

IMPACT REPORT

**A Mindful Littles Program in Partnership with Paradise Unified School District
Funded by the North Valley Community Foundation**



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Paradise Ridge Healing Initiative is an innovative response to Paradise Ridge student, educator, and family needs for coping skills and social-emotional wellbeing after the 2018 Camp Fire.
- The Mindful Littles MYSELF curriculum launched September 9, 2019 and offers weekly 20 minute mindfulness and social-emotional learning lessons in 38 Paradise Ridge elementary school classrooms.
- Both qualitative and quantitative feedback shows that students and educators grew in their capacity to self-regulate, foster positive emotion, and live with resiliency and compassion.

PROGRAM CONTEXT



About Mindful Littles

THERE IS A MINDFUL LITTLE IN EACH OF US.

Faced with navigating complex social and global issues and the rising mental health epidemic, our youth need vital social and emotional skills now more than ever.

By proactively building the compassion muscle, Mindful Littles equips kids to make conscious choices for a more positive future for themselves and the world— no matter what life brings them.

Mindful Littles' vision is that every child is empowered to create a peaceful compassionate future starting with themselves and their communities through service learning and mindful well-being programs.





About the Paradise Ridge Healing Initiative

RESPONDING TO LOSS WITH RESILIENCE

On November 8, 2018, the most destructive wildfire in California history passed through the Paradise Ridge area, displacing over 50,000 people and destroying over 11,000 homes. In the aftermath of the fire, Paradise Unified educators showed up for their students, seeking to establish some sense of normalcy even as they endured their own loss and instability.

IMindful Littles was funded by the North Valley Community Foundation to provide mindfulness and trauma healing practices for the 2019-2020 school year.

On September 9, 2019, the program launched in 38 classrooms across the district's three elementary sites.

ADDRESSING STUDENTS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS





About the MYSELF Curriculum

INTEGRATING MINDFULNESS AND PLAY

Meeting students' social-emotional needs is the foundation of our K-6 curriculum as learning tools for emotional self-regulation and positive peer relations is essential to ensuring all students can thrive. Through dynamic 20 minute in-classroom lessons that blend evidence-based mindfulness practices and play, students develop their capacity to act compassionately towards themselves and others.

Practices we teach include:

- Body awareness to recognize and name emotions
- Fun and accessible breathing techniques
- Positive mindset tools like gratitude and self-affirmations
- Practice acts of kindness to spread positive emotion

Responding to Community Needs

FOSTERING HEALING AND HOPE

Since the Camp Fire, many students and families have experienced grief, increased stress, instability at home, longer commute times to school and work, alongside the ongoing realities of trauma and loss in the community.

Butte County has the highest rate of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in the state, with 76.5% of people reporting experiencing one or more Adverse Childhood Experience before age 18.

Our engagement with students, educators, and families employs a strength-based approach that emphasizes every person's innate capacity to care for themselves, develop a foundation in mindfulness, and create positive change in the world around them.



THE MINDFUL LITTLES IMPACT





Students

TEACHING TOOLS TO COPE AND THRIVE

Before Mindful Littles:

- 55% of elementary students had reported never or sometimes use coping tools to manage difficult emotions.

After Mindful Littles:

Receive weekly feedback from students that they are using the skills they have learned with Mindful Littles to:

- cope with fire triggers
- manage conflict at school and at home
- regulate difficult emotions
- help themselves feel more peaceful
- leaders in their families and their communities.



Educators

EMPOWERING THEM TO GUIDE WITH COMPASSION

Taking a approach to shaping peaceful and compassionate school communities. Our facilitators have become trusted partners for educators as they cope with stress and navigate their own sense of loss. In addition to providing teachers with extension habits and resources that they can implement in their classrooms, Mindful Littles offers a sequence of educator nourishment sessions that allow teachers to practice the same skills students are learning. Teachers at one elementary school site took the initiative to request a lunch time mindfulness session with Mindful Littles.

Families

PRACTICES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

“Take a deep breath, mom”-Kindergarten student

Supporting families to develop positive coping skills and mindful habits is another key focus area for the Paradise Ridge Healing Initiative.

We have connected with Paradise Ridge families by offering mindfulness activities and information about our program at community events such as a back to school barbeque and monthly parent resource fairs. Many students share about how they are bringing the skills they learn in the classroom home to their parents. One parent shared that her kindergarten student reminded her to “take a deep breath, mom” when she was having a stressful moment.





Service Learning

COMPASSION IN ACTION

Through service learning experiences, students have the opportunity to actively share the positive emotion they have cultivated with others. According to the Learning Pyramid, children retain about 5% of what they learn from lectures, 10% from reading, 75% from experiences and 90% from teaching others or immediate use. Service learning actively engages students in experiential learning and often gives them an opportunity to teach others what they have learned.

For the one year commemoration of the Camp Fire, students created “rainbow breathing wands” from colorful beads and pipe cleaners to gift to first responders and family members along with a note encouraging them to practice peaceful breathing. Before the holidays, classrooms created “kindness boxes” filled with encouraging notes and pictures to thank staff at their and show their support for local businesses.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A HUB FOR COLLABORATION

When Mindful Littles began working in Paradise, we immediately leveraged our relationship with Starbucks. We were able to connect their employee volunteers with efforts to help remodel the former middle school and get it ready for elementary school students before the first day of school back in Paradise. Starbucks volunteers continue to be a powerful force for good at the schools by offering their creativity to complete two successful teacher lounge makeovers. These projects have boosted staff morale and created a space for educators to rest and recharge during the school day.





CONTINUING THE PARTNERSHIP

Given the success of our first year in Paradise, Mindful Littles has been funded to return to Paradise Unified during the 2020-2021 school year.

Working with the Butte County Office of Education, we are part of a federal mental health grant through SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration).

Our Mindful Littles team is deeply grateful for our partnership with Paradise Unified administrators, educators, students, and families. We are excited to continue investing in a peaceful and compassionate future by promoting the holistic well-being of Paradise Ridge students and the community that surrounds them.

“Mindful Littles has made a huge impact on my fourth grade students as well as myself. I'm beyond grateful to have this important program in our schools.”

-Jessica McMahon, 4th grade teacher



“Through Mindful Littles, our students are developing a set of tools to proactively mitigate feelings they are experiencing due to the recent significant traumatic event as well as other daily stressors. Additionally, the strategies are equipping the students with the skills and mindset to make a positive impact on our school community.”

-Edward Gregorio, School Principal

