INSIDE:

Tibetan Medicine in Northern China: Mixing Modern Science with Ancient Wisdom

Healthcare Providers Develop New Skills in Cooking and Nutrition Course

Fortune 500 Employees Participate in Mindfulness at Work Program
Table of CONTENTS

Tibetan Medicine in Northern China: Mixing Modern Science with Ancient Wisdom
Letter from Mary Jo Kreitzer Page 3
A Discovery Mission in China Page 4
Hatha Yoga Page 6
Teacher Training Program Celebrates 4th Year Page 8
A Healing Journey
Michael Bischoff’s Story
The Art and Science of Worldview Transformation
Research at the Minnesota State Fair
Mindful-Self Compassion Page 12
New Experiential Course: Mindfulness at Work
Wellbeing and Resiliency for Health Professionals
What We See Depends Upon Our Perspective
Mindfulness in Education
Food Matters:
Cooking and Nutrition Course for Healthcare Providers
Innovation:
A Driving Value for the Center Page 14
Page 15
Page 16
Page 18
Page 20
Page 22
Page 24
Page 26

Mandala is the Sanskrit word for “circle” and is a sacred symbol that mirrors a state of consciousness through a concrete pattern. Native Americans use mandalas as healing and transformational art in the sand; art therapists to facilitate healing; and Tibetans as visual representation of Buddhist beliefs. As a universal symbol of healing, the respective circles of the mandala capture the many diverse aspects of the Center’s work: reflection, transformation, spirituality, creation, and lastly, the ongoing journey that continues to shape what we are to become.
One of the Center for Spirituality & Healing’s newest partnerships is with the Tibetan Medical College of Qinghai University in Xining, China. Earlier this summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Xining with Dr. Miriam Cameron, the Faculty Lead of the Center’s Yoga and Tibetan Medicine program, and the Center’s Administrative Director Pamela Cherry. Tibetan Medicine, one of the world’s oldest healing arts, is a complex, traditional medical system that incorporates a mind/body approach to health care. It has been practiced for more than 4,000 years in Tibet and the Himalayan Region of Asia. As will be described in more detail in one of the feature articles of this issue of Mandala, the Tibetan Medical College is part of a unique and innovative collaborative venture that includes the Provincial Tibetan Medical Research Institute, the Provincial Tibetan Medical Hospital, the Arura Pharmaceutical Company, and the Tibetan Medicine and Culture museums.

As we had the opportunity to explore each of these organizations, I was deeply impressed by the rigorous work being done to both preserve and advance Tibetan medicine and culture. Libraries and laboratories preserve ancient texts that are hundreds of years old while digital repositories are being established to house texts that are now widely accessible. State-of-the-art manufacturing facilities produce medicines that meet both international standards for “good manufacturing practices” and the close scrutiny of traditional doctors. Clinical facilities provide traditional therapeutics in a modern hospital and clinical environment. We observed many examples of families engaged in care and being taught how to care for their family members using traditional Tibetan medicine. It was a powerful mix of modern science and ancient wisdom.

This partnership will provide unique opportunities for our faculty and students to learn from and collaborate with scientists and practitioners from the Tibetan Medical College. One of the lead visionaries, Kunchok Gyaltse, is both a Tibetan monk and a scientist with a PhD in public health from UCLA. While this may seem like an unusual background, we met many other faculty who were dually trained in traditional healing and western science.

As we reflected on our time in northern China, one observation that we shared that in some ways surprised us was the extent to which spirituality infused and informed the work being done. We felt a deep sense of alignment with the Center’s focus on spirituality and healing.

Building on momentum set in motion during our 20th anniversary celebration last fall, we are seeking entrepreneurial partners in philanthropy to take our core education and research programs to even greater levels of impact. In her column on the last page of this issue, Center development director Dianne Lev describes the launch of a Strategic Innovation Fund that will fuel our capacity to move nimbly into new initiatives that respond to community needs and lead to sustainable solutions. To learn more about the Center’s giving priorities, please get in touch with Dianne at dlev@umn.edu.

Tashi Delek!

Mary Jo Kreitzer, PhD, RN, FAAN
Founder and Director, Center for Spirituality & Healing
Center Director Dr. Mary Jo Kreitzer, Faculty Lead of the Center’s Yoga and Tibetan Medicine focus area Dr. Miriam Cameron, and Administrative Director Pamela Cherry spent a week in late July in Xining, China with colleagues from the Arura Tibetan Medical Group.

The Tibetan Plateau is often described as “the roof of the world.” It has an elevation of more than 14,000 feet, intense exposure to the sun, and significant temperature fluctuations between day and night. The natural topography of deserts, forests, grasslands, and vast stretches of snow-covered mountains provide ideal conditions for growing medicinal plants.

Tibetan medicine is one of the world’s oldest known healing traditions. Since ancient times, Tibetan medicine has been practiced throughout the Tibetan Plateau and other areas of Asia. Increasingly, Tibetan medicine is moving to the west and incorporating western scientific research. Given the limits and costs of biomedicine, interest in Tibetan medicine is exploding.

The Arura Tibetan Medical Group is the largest Tibetan medicine organization at the provincial level in the People’s Republic of China. Their goal is to utilize Tibetan medicine to provide quality care and improve population health at the local, provincial, and national levels. To achieve this goal, five institutes were created to support care, education, research, cultural preservation, and the production of high quality medicines. Led by President Dr. Otsang Tsokchen, the Arura Group is a model of synergistic collaboration.

The Tibetan Medical College is part of Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) University. Under the direction of Dean Lhusham Gyal, PhD, the college combines traditional Tibetan medical teaching methods with modern biomedical teaching facilities to educate practitioners, educators, and researchers at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. The PhD program, led by Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen, is the only one based in a traditionally Tibetan region of China. Trained Tibetan medical doctors are licensed in the P.R. of China and participate in mainstream health care systems using Tibetan medicine to provide effective health care services that improve the population’s health and wellbeing. Kreitzer had an opportunity to give a lecture on using mindfulness to improve diabetes management to faculty and graduate students of the college; this led to an interesting conversation about ways that mindfulness is inherent within the practice of Tibetan medicine. A new program on Tibetan nursing was recently launched that will graduate nurses trained in both biomedicine and Tibetan medicine, and will standardize the role of nursing in Tibetan medicine.
The Tibetan Medicine and Cultural Museums house more than 20,000 artifacts in their collection that spans Tibetan history, arts, medicine, culture, and religion. The museum is a base for teaching students from the Tibetan Medical College as well as a venue for educators to bring students from all levels to learn about Tibetan culture. The museum has collected 80 Tibetan medicine thangka, 180 kinds of Tibetan medicine external therapy tools, over 1,000 Tibetan medicine classical books, and more than 3,000 Tibetan medicine specimens. A centerpiece of the museum is the Tibetan Great Thangka, a masterpiece of a single cloth that is over 2,027 feet long. It is displayed in a maze-like exhibition hall. “At every turn,” says Cherry, “we encountered exquisite images that held deep meaning and beautifully illustrated aspects of Tibetan history and culture.”

Flanked by an outpatient clinic and a four-story Wellness Center, Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) Provincial Tibetan Medicine Hospital is a 460-bed facility that offers modern diagnostic equipment such as CT scans and ultrasound along with traditional Tibetan medicine treatments including herbal medicine, medicinal bath therapy, and external therapies. “It was fascinating to see families (in the treatment rooms with patients and doctors) learning to administer some of the Tibetan medicines so that they can care for their loved one when they return home,” says Cherry.

Many of the Tibetan medicine doctors are also faculty at the university. Palchen Sangdak, PhD, led the group to beautiful meditation spaces where patients, families, and staff can focus on healing the mind. “Tibetan medicine integrates ethics, spirituality, and healing,” Cameron observed. “The facilities carry out this essential teaching.”

At the request of Lhusham Gyal, Ph.D., Dean of the Tibetan Medical College, Cameron shared her Center research “Tibetan Medicine and Integrative Health: Validity Testing and Refinement of the Constitutional Self-Assessment Tool and Lifestyle Guidelines Tool” with hospital and university faculty, staff, and students. Cameron also presented about her Tibetan medicine online graduate course, “Traditional Tibetan Medicine: Ethics, Spirituality, and Healing” later in the trip. Both presentations stimulated dialogue with faculty and students about how to bring Tibetan medicine into the 21st Century and keep the teachings authentic to the Gyushi, the ancient, fundamental text of Tibetan medicine.

The Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) Provincial Tibetan Medicine Research Institute houses 120 researchers and three laboratories that are recognized at the national level as China’s traditional medicine research laboratories. The hospital is used as the clinical research base and many of the researchers are faculty at the university’s Tibetan Medical College. Preserving knowledge of Tibetan medicine is an important function of the research institute. The Institute has collected more than 2,000 Tibetan Medicine Classical texts, many of which are the only remaining copies. While preserving these, the Institute published Tibetan Medicine: The Great Collection of Classical Medical Texts in 62 volumes and The Gyushi Pictorial Explanatory Texts in 6 volumes. Six Tibetan medicine digital repositories have been established as well as a Tibetan medicine website. The University of Minnesota team urged the group to consider translating some of the key works into English.

The Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) Arura Pharmaceutical Company is the fifth arm of the integrated model. Established in 1992, they produce pharmaceutical grade medicines that are distributed throughout China. In addition to producing Tibetan medicine, the pharmaceutical company also uses classical textbooks and Tibetan medicine teaching thangka to educate people on how to correctly use Tibetan medicine.

“We were deeply impressed by the depth, breadth, and the heart of the work being done in Xining and look forward to ways that we might collaborate to advance Tibetan medicine around the world” says Kreitzer. “While we anticipated a strong presence of Tibetan medicine, we were all astonished by the extensive facilities, rigorous research, and high-quality education. The extent of collaboration among the five institutes was truly remarkable and it is a model that should be emulated.”
Katie Schuver, Ph.D., E-RYT500, RPYT doesn’t have an ‘Aha!’ moment around her love of teaching yoga. She can’t pinpoint a specific experience where the light bulb turned on, or a story that truly captures how yoga changed her life. In fact, it was initially quite the opposite. “My first couple of exposures to yoga were somewhat off-putting,” she says. “I was actually doing crunches during shavasana, or corpse pose.”

Today, Schuver can’t get enough of the pose. It’s her favorite, and she’s now taught yoga for nearly 20 years. “OVER TIME, I GRADUALLY FELL IN LOVE WITH YOGA AND REALLY BEGAN TO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE IN MY MIND AND BODY,” SCHUVER SAYS. “IT’S BEEN THE ANCHORING PRESENCE IN MY LIFE SINCE.”

One step after another led Schuver to study Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota. She took several graduate courses from Dr. Miriam Cameron, Lead Faculty of the Center for Spirituality & Healing’s Yoga and Tibetan Medicine focus area. This focus area, which Cameron began in 2001, conducts research and offers graduate and undergraduate courses about yoga and Tibetan medicine, including two graduate courses in India.

Things fell into place from there. At Cameron’s invitation, Schuver developed and teaches the Hatha Yoga Teacher Training Program. The program consists of three undergraduate courses open to undergraduates, graduate students, and members of the community. Students who complete all three courses A-F or S-N are eligible to register with Yoga Alliance as a 200 hour Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT).

“Katie is so well-qualified to teach these Hatha Yoga courses,” Cameron, PhD., MS, MA, RN, says. “I can’t imagine anyone better.”

THRIVING AND GROWING

Now in its fourth year, the Hatha Yoga program is flourishing. Schuver consistently receives feedback from local yoga studios praising the courses. Many local studio owners who are already certified to teach Hatha Yoga have expressed interest in taking these courses after former Center students became teachers at their studio.

“The reputation of the quality and high standards of our Hatha Yoga program is really gaining awareness in the yoga community,” Schuver says. And that’s due to, in part, to this unique program that blends tradition and philosophy with science-based, physical practice. The courses go way beyond vocational training.

“Our mission is to bring together individuals who are interested in exploring yoga practice for non-dogmatic teaching. We integrate an eclectic knowledge base that honors the body and spirit,” Schuver says. Like the other courses in the Yoga and Tibetan Medicine focus area, Hatha Yoga courses are rooted in Tibetan medicine and ayurveda. Students study yoga philosophy, ethics, spirituality, healing, teaching styles, anatomy, and scientific research.
“Katie’s vast knowledge base is a huge strength for the program,” says Dylan Galos, a current yoga student and an epidemiology PhD candidate in the School of Public Health. “She knows a lot about anatomy and yoga philosophy and can integrate the two in a way that most teachers can’t.”

A unique characteristic of the Yoga and Tibetan Medicine Focus Area is that students can take courses for credit while seeking undergraduate or graduate degrees. That’s what first drew Galos to enroll in the Hatha Yoga courses.

In 2005, Cameron started taking students to India, the source of yoga and ayurveda. Since then, Cameron and Schuver have taken students to India twice a year. “Studying with experts in India is a rich learning opportunity that expands perspectives,” Schuver says.

“Learning about how yoga is practiced in a different country was very grounding,” Galos says, who went on the trip last winter. “It really deepened my personal meditation practice. Everything I learned and experienced over there will make me a better yoga teacher.”

Since 2001, the Center has had strong ties to India.

“Students are so lucky to have the opportunity to study yoga in India,” says former student Laura Wiesner, MA. “What an incredible way to build onto coursework and take that into a new context with teachers from a different background and training.”

LEADING THE CHANGE

The Hatha Yoga program stands at the forefront of a movement to develop standards for Hatha Yoga teachers’ training programs. Evaluating teachers through a defined set of criteria will improve Hatha Yoga practice and ensure student safety.

“When teachers don’t understand anatomy or the foundational principles of practice, risk of injury develops,” Cameron says. “But injuries and yoga should be opposites. Yoga is about being in harmony with your body.”

Cameron remembers a time one of her Hatha Yoga teachers actually injured her. She was in a Reverse Triangle Pose and the instructor pushed her arm further backward — too far.

“It’s important to challenge yourself, but yoga is all about individual choice and understanding your limits. As a teacher, you guide your students but put responsibility for self-care into their hands. It’s about helping them find self-empowerment,” Schuver says.

That’s something Wiesner liked about her experience with the Hatha Yoga courses. She completed the Hatha Yoga program last spring and now teaches at YogaFit studios around the Twin Cities.

“I like doing modified chattaranga (Plank Pose) with my knees down. Each time I do it, especially now if I’m teaching class, I am making a choice for what I want to do. I’m being intentional in my practice and listening my body,” Wiesner says.

“The Yoga and Tibetan Medicine Focus Area truly is thriving, and we’re all excited to see how it continues to grow,” Cameron says.

“These are life skills. Not just yoga, but life, and how to be an active participant in your life,” Schuver says. “Yoga builds off the mat and into your world and influences your thoughts, your words, your actions, your interactions. It’s an all-embracing practice that provides a platform to just be.”

The Center’s Hatha Yoga Teacher Training courses are open to current UMN students, and others in the community with an interest in this area. Visit z.umn.edu/HathaYoga for more information.
A Healing Journey
Michael Bischoff’s Story

BY ANDREA UPTMOR
Michael Bischoff started having headaches at the end of August 2015, right when summer turned into autumn. As the weather cooled, the headaches grew more intense and were joined by spells of nausea. Probably migraines, he thought, and went in for an MRI, where he noticed a concerned look in the tech's eye. On September 24th his neurologist called with the difficult news: buried in the right side of Michael's brain was a tumor the size of a golf ball.

Very quickly, Michael's life took on a new shape, and he faced the new unknown with an energy not unusual for the 44-year-old community organizer and father of two. Just four days after that first MRI, Michael rode his bicycle through the dark morning to Abbott Hospital, where he checked in for major brain surgery. His surgeons removed most of the tumor and praised him for bouncing back more quickly than most.

Michael had none of the cognitive or physical side effects that he and his family had feared. Within days, Michael was posting updates and snapshots on his CaringBridge site in his typical style—tender, honest, and a little goofy. (His first post, penned the day after the MRI, was titled “The Adventure Begins”).

Within a week, the biopsy results were in: glioblastoma, an aggressive cancer that spreads quickly. Michael would need radiation and chemo to prevent what was left of the tumor from spreading, and even then the prognosis looked grim. His oncologist drew a chart with a large curve in the middle to represent the median survival rate: 18 months.

A thin place between joy and grief

For Michael, the journey toward wellbeing is an ongoing process that’s physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational. He hopes for a cure, and for a long life, but his main focus is on finding wholeness in each moment. The things he loves most—biking through the snow, cuddling with his family, taking long walks along the Mississippi—he considers just as important as radiation and chemotherapy in his healing process.

And part of finding wholeness is facing—and embracing—the grief and fear that comes with a serious health crisis. Michael, who had spent years cultivating relationships as a facilitator for community sustainability and had several large projects lined up, deeply lamented the loss of his career after being put on Social Security Disability. His work was intertwined with his sense of purpose; without it, he feared a loss of the meaningfulness that had once made his life so rich.

His blog became a conduit for these explorations, allowing him to receive community support as well as talk openly about despair, which he allows to move as freely as joy. Michael writes frankly about the sadness that accompanies the realization he is no longer the person he used to be—an active community organizer, an international traveler with a head full of hair, a husband and father who knew for certain he would grow old with his wife, Jenny, and see his children become adults.

continued >
The power of spirituality

Michael’s ability to handle the intensity of his diagnosis can be partly attributed to his dedicated spiritual practice. His longtime involvement in a Quaker community, as well as his mindfulness meditation practice, have deepened his ability to listen and respond with kindness to whatever arises over the years—a coping skill that can gently shape the way that illness affects life.

Bennett, a chaplain with years of experience with people living with life-threatening illnesses, describes the 360-degree healing role of spirituality: providing clarity to look ahead with hope, a mirror to reflect upon the past and find reconciliation, and an anchor to help stay present and savor the moment. Spiritual practice can be empowering, too, “reminding us that we are still driving our life and choosing our route for the rest of the journey, no matter what happens.”

And Michael has had plenty of opportunities to put that philosophy to the test. After just two days of chemo and radiation, the incision from his first brain surgery began to leak spinal fluid, and he was sent back to the hospital for a week, where he lay with a lumbar drain in his spine. The insertion of the tube was an extremely painful procedure, during which he found solace by focusing on the love and prayers of support he knew his friends were sending.

Over the course of the following week, as fluid drained from him, Michael noticed the small moments of wellbeing that kept popping up—the trust that developed between him and the nurse practitioners, his wife’s hands on his feet as they removed the tube from his spine, his own ability to stay calm in the middle of physical pain.

“Being on my back for a week in the hospital wasn’t my previous picture of wellbeing,” he laughs. “I love to move around and be active, and be with my kids, and it was sad not to be able to do those things. Yet that week in a hospital included some of the highlights of my life so far—the connection with other people, the creativity, the spiritual experiences I had. Even though it was miserable, I felt a lot of wellbeing at the same time.”

Finding wellbeing in healthcare

This kind of positivity in the middle of a painful medical event isn’t typical in American healthcare, where a grim focus is placed on the removal of physical disease and the lengthening of life. “Many healthcare providers have historically been taught to treat a body part or symptom, and have not always considered the whole person,” notes Kreitzer. They simply diagnose and administer treatment—and the patient is left to figure out how the rest of his or her life fits in.

A project manager at heart, Michael is by nature a more empowered patient than most, and with the urgency of a glioblastoma diagnosis he felt especially called to create his own healthcare experience. He incorporated integrative therapies into his treatment, including qigong, Healing Touch, naturopathy, imagery, and prayer—which didn’t always land well with a few of his western doctors, some of whom reacted to non-medical interventions with hostility.

Michael did find unwavering support from his primary care doctor, Peter Lund, who was careful to balance his own preference for western-evidence-based treatment with respect for Michael’s own path to healing. In fact, Michael credits Dr. Lund, a longtime neighbor, as one of the most important relationships in his healing journey. The two have developed a powerful connection not often seen in primary care—Dr. Lund rushed to that first appointment with the neurosurgeon to help advise a bewildered Michael and Jenny, called colleagues to get second opinions on Michael’s case, and doesn’t shy away from the raw vulnerability that comes with talking about death.

Michael grows emotional when he talks about how important this relationship has been to him. The gratitude Michael has for the deep care he’s received, he says, has contributed to his healing as much as any medicine. “The first thing Peter said when he learned about my diagnosis was: ‘Don’t postpone joy. Savor every moment,’” says Michael. “That’s been really meaningful for me.”

Decisions and celebrations

In January 2016, Michael was fitted with a skull cap called Optune, an experimental treatment that treats brain tumors by emitting electro-magnetic waves. Deciding to try the
cap wasn’t an easy decision, but making difficult choices quickly with limited information is something that people with serious diagnoses learn to do. With glioblastoma, there is limited data about what treatments will be successful. It was either Optune or enrolling in a clinical trial with a new vaccine—both options which carry risk and Michael found “confusing and horrible.” Dr. Lund helped him navigate the choice, and together with his family, Michael chose the cap. His family even made a celebration out of it: Michael sat down in his kitchen as his wife shaved his head, while his son, a budding videographer, mixed footage of the event with music and turned it into an upbeat music video. The cap is like something out of a science fiction movie—transducer arrays adhere to Michael’s skull, with long trailing wires that lead to a bag he carries everywhere. The contraption is clunky and awkward, and sometimes his head heats up while he’s sleeping, causing the machine to beep and wake him up.

But Michael continues to intentionally focus his energy on the things that bring meaning to his life—sharing his story of healing with other patients and healthcare providers, developing a photography book and show with his wife, preaching, and, most importantly, curling up with his family on the couch, listening to Jenny read while their rescue dog, Bella, sleeps nearby. He is a ceaseless advocate for finding the beauty in the small stuff—like filing his family’s taxes, something he wished, shortly after the diagnosis, to be alive and healthy enough to do. In this way, the small things in Michael’s life have grown to become one enormous celebration.

That’s not to say he doesn’t feel anxiety and sadness about what lies ahead, nor is he immune to the side effects that come with chemotherapy and radiation. Some days the treatment exhausts him physically. Throughout the spring and summer of 2016, he spent multiple hospital stays trying to manage severe pain, high fevers, and meningitis. He cries sometimes when he is talking about fear and also when he describes the gratitude he feels for the healthcare providers who have shown such compassion—from the steadfast support of his primary care doctor to the small comforts the radiation technicians offered when they asked him, as his head was bolted down to the table, what else he had planned for the day.

The Center for Spirituality & Healing, with its collaborators in the Schools of Nursing and Engineering, is partnering with CaringBridge in research that explores how social technology can enhance compassion, empathy, connectedness, and altruism. More information about this exciting project will be featured in our Spring 2017 issue.

In a short video on the Center’s “Taking Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing” website, Michael discusses how relationships with family, friends, and community have provided healing after his diagnosis. Visit z.umn.edu/MichaelsStory to view.

What love can do

In those first confusing days after Michael’s diagnosis with glioblastoma, his friend Emily, a cancer survivor herself, hosted an event for him called “Let’s See What Love Can Do.” More than a hundred friends and community members poured into a rented church and held what they dubbed a “healing extravaganza”—singing, dancing, and other displays of love and talent. “It was transformative for all of us,” Emily says.

“There are people like Michael, who, in the midst of a profound health challenge, continue to search for meaning and a way to give back,” says Kreitzer. “I have been deeply moved as I witness how Michael invites others to journey with him. It becomes deep learning for all.”

After the event, Michael shared a powerful image from the event on his CaringBridge site: a crowd of a hundred people all reaching in toward the center, where Michael stands, his head bowed in gratitude, a small smile on his face. Everyone has a hand on someone else’s shoulder.

It’s hard to tell who is actually receiving the gift in this picture—whether healing is something that moves from the community to the sick person, or whether it’s the other way around. Or perhaps it’s a combination of the two—wellbeing as a flowing gift that emerges and moves freely where it’s given room to thrive, offering itself to anyone who stops to listen. +++

In those first confusing days after Michael’s diagnosis with glioblastoma, his friend Emily, a cancer survivor herself, hosted an event for him called “Let’s See What Love Can Do.” More than a hundred friends and community members poured into a rented church and held what they dubbed a “healing extravaganza”—singing, dancing, and other displays of love and talent. “It was transformative for all of us,” Emily says.

“There are people like Michael, who, in the midst of a profound health challenge, continue to search for meaning and a way to give back,” says Kreitzer. “I have been deeply moved as I witness how Michael invites others to journey with him. It becomes deep learning for all.”

After the event, Michael shared a powerful image from the event on his CaringBridge site: a crowd of a hundred people all reaching in toward the center, where Michael stands, his head bowed in gratitude, a small smile on his face. Everyone has a hand on someone else’s shoulder.

It’s hard to tell who is actually receiving the gift in this picture—whether healing is something that moves from the community to the sick person, or whether it’s the other way around. Or perhaps it’s a combination of the two—wellbeing as a flowing gift that emerges and moves freely where it’s given room to thrive, offering itself to anyone who stops to listen. +++
Whether you're a seasoned practitioner of a formal transformative tradition, a practitioner of an eclectic array of practices, or a newcomer to the transformative path, you may be seeking ways to affirm, deepen, and inspire your own inner experiences and insights. If so, you're not alone. As a social anthropologist, I have studied worldviews and how they shift or stay the same. I have documented ways that our worldviews impact our daily lives for both the good and the bad. My research offers insights into how our worldviews are fundamental to how we see ourselves, others and our place in the world. They are the lens of perception through which we experience, understand, and interpret the world and ourselves. They inform and are informed by our beliefs about our human experience and the cultural and physical environments around us.

Through decades of deep inquiry, I have come to see that our worldviews influence how we adapt to changes in our life circumstances, including our views on living and dying. To better understand worldviews, I compared different people's views reading from different scripts, reciting from different prayer books, living in different models of reality. Increasing numbers of us are seeking to discover our own authentic truth and expand our consciousness by reveling in the life paths of different cultures, worldviews and belief systems. It is my premise that understanding these diverse truth systems about how to live deeply, while at times challenging, can renew our sense of connection to the whole of life. Ultimately, encountering and appreciating alternative worldviews enriches each of us.

Our worldviews are a key to understanding our own identity, how we set our intentions, and where we place our attention—each and every moment. As we begin to understand and dive more deeply into what defines our own views and motivations, we can see that worldviews are a rich and complex component of life. We have the opportunity to look at our own assumptions, beliefs, and expectations in order to reflect on what is really working for us and what is trapping us in a limited mode of thinking and being. Indeed, reflecting on our worldviews is a way of seeing how we may transform any fears we have in order to live our life with greater meaning and purpose.

BY MARILYN SCHLITZ, PH.D.

What does it mean to innovate at a deeply personal level?

How do we engage in our own transformation, shifting any limiting worldviews, beliefs, and perspectives to those that inspire positive change and growth?

And how can we create our most authentic life, knowing that we are all going to face challenges and obstacles that can throw us off our course?

The Art and Science of Worldview Transformation

I quickly discovered a plethora of different and competing truth claims that coexist about what gives life meaning and purpose. Many people are...
My research on transformation has led to the creation of a transformation model that can aid us as we seek to find inspiration and excitement for our life journey. I have had the good fortune of meeting with enlightened masters from all across the world, and in that process to gain insights that can help people shift their worldview. I have, with my colleagues in our book, *Living Deeply: The Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*, identified common elements that allow us to engage in a transformative practice that includes intention, attention, repetition, guidance, and acceptance. The most fundamental shift comes when we take the elements of personal transformation and bring them fully into our lives, each and every moment. Life becomes practice—and practice becomes life.

One simple practice that I discovered to help aid us in living deeply comes from just being. To invite this tool into your life, sit quietly. Bring a smile to your face. Feel the muscles in your cheeks as you hold a positive intention. Bring to mind a positive quality or characteristic about yourself (for example, “I’m creative,” “I’m funny,” “I’m a good hugger.”) Begin to breathe into this thought about your positive quality. Continue to smile as you enjoy this positive quality about yourself. When you think about life’s challenges or limiting beliefs, let it be within the context of this positive feeling that comes from just being. 

Marilyn Schlitz was the Center’s second Wellbeing Lecture Series speaker in 2016. Learn more about Dr. Schlitz on her website at marilynschlitz.com

What are the possibilities for future generations when it comes to the relationship between food, cooking, and responsibility?

In this era of global obesity, diabetes, and limitless options, the time is right for personal and societal transformation. In this engaging lecture, Dr. David Eisenberg, director of culinary nutrition and adjunct associate professor of nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health will discuss:

- Why prevention is superior to intervention
- Nutrition information, cooking skills, exercise, mindfulness practice, and the utilization of integrative therapies are each, individually, useful in optimizing your health and wellbeing, but none of these skills are individually sufficient to the societal challenge
- Mindfulness, perhaps more than any other element, is a key navigational instrument for transformation
- Teaching Kitchens may serve as attractive and effective “entry doors” to a lifetime of self-care

Additionally, Dr. Eisenberg will discuss food literacy, food access, and preparation, and the importance of talking about food and nutrition with your healthcare professionals.

Learn more and register at z.um.edu/WellbeingLecture
Research at the Minnesota State Fair

Center collects data from Minnesotans at the Great Get-Together

By Holly Wilson

During the last week of August and through Labor Day, more than one million people gathered at the Minnesota State Fair. They ate, played, shopped, watched, learned, and even participated in research projects.

This year, the Center for Spirituality & Healing had the unique opportunity to conduct two research projects at the Fair. The focus of the research projects surrounded two Center initiatives: Food Matters and Wellbeing. Pamela Jo Johnson, PhD, associate professor at the Center, felt that the Great Minnesota Get-Together offered a unique opportunity to engage Minnesotans. “We are interested in perspectives from a diverse cross-section of Minnesotans, and what better way to engage young and old, rural and urban, socioeconomically and racially/ethnically diverse adults?” she says.

The FOOD MATTERS research will provide critical information to supplement the new Food Matters academic program at the Center.

“We are in the process of building a new program at the Center,” says Jenny Breen, MPH, professional chef, and co-instructor of the Center’s Food Matters course. “We are offering classes currently to health professions students because we know that many people rely on these practitioners for all their health advice”

At the fair, the Food Matters study examined the extent of the public’s knowledge of current dietary guidelines. “We are also interested in learning about barriers to healthy eating and how comfortable they are with preparing meals. Lastly, we want to find out what sources of information the public perceives as most reliable and whether they turn to health professionals for advice about healthy eating,” says Center Director, Mary Jo Kreitzer.

The Center wants to utilize this research to guide educational offerings as well. “We intend to more accurately target our education and course offerings from the CSH, as well as with our community partners,” says Kate (Venable) Shafto, MD, co-instructor of the Center’s new Food Matters course.

Minnesotans will benefit from this research because it could have a major impact on everyday health. “Currently, health professionals receive little education on diet, nutrition, food preparation, and healthy eating. It makes it difficult to counsel patients. This is a significant issue given that 70-80% of diseases are life-style related and there is strong evidence that what we eat has short and long-term consequences,” says Kreitzer.

WELLBEING was a research focus at the Fair as well with a study titled, “What is Wellbeing and How do You Get It?”

Johnson says that with the Wellbeing research the Center wanted to answer, “What does wellbeing mean to people, and what do they think is most important in promoting or supporting their own wellbeing?” She continues, “We know what researchers think, but it is not clear that these academic definitions and measures hold meaning for the general public.”

Johnson hopes the Wellbeing research done at the Fair will “lead to refinements in our tools to measure wellbeing.”

Ultimately, whatever the results, research at the Fair “is a way to bring our research mission closer to the citizens of our state,” says Kreitzer.

More than 2000 individuals participated in the studies.
Kristin Neff, PhD, one of the world’s leading experts in the field of self-compassion, visited the Center for Spirituality & Healing as a Wellbeing Lecture Series speaker in 2014. Her innovative work—encompassing more than a decade’s worth of research and measurement—aligned closely with the Center’s focus on wellbeing, and also with its flourishing mindfulness program.

When Neff began offering Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher Training, Jean Haley and Jean Fagerstrom, two of the Center’s veteran mindfulness teachers, quickly enrolled.

This fall, as the Center begins offering its second iteration of “Mindful Self-Compassion,” students are already seeing the value of this important skill set.

“If people spent more time practicing self-compassion, they would be more capable of showing compassion to others,” says Susan Diekman, a student in the first course and the Communications Director in the University’s Office of Human Resources.

While many people feel compassion when a close friend is struggling, providing that same level of kindness and care to oneself is often not a priority. “Self-criticism is not a great motivator,” says Haley. “It’s just not at all helpful.”

Students focus on three main components throughout the 8-week class, which include self-kindness vs. self-judgment, common humanity vs. isolation, and mindfulness vs. over identification.

These techniques have helped Diekman face stressful situations in ways that are more effective, “By meditating, and accepting, and being in the present moment you actually can move more gracefully through stress,” she says. “My life circumstances didn’t change, but the way I handled stress did.”

Mindful Self-Compassion is a complement to the Center’s expanding Mindfulness program.

Mindful Self-Compassion as a precursor or extension of other Center Mindfulness programs. “It’s a stand-alone course, but can also be taken before or after MBSR.”

Diekman also spoke to the wellbeing and resiliency benefits that come from the class. “By its very nature, self-compassion fosters deep and meaningful reflection and conversation. And then you start to carry some of that into your life,” she says.

Haley describes her favorite part of the class as being able to visibly see students practicing self-compassion during classes.

“I love seeing how vulnerable people are willing to be,” she says. “We deal with some pretty deep stuff, and people step up in the way that is kindest to themselves. People take care of themselves—they let go of striving to be a certain way.”

Fagerstrom agrees. “When people share what they’re learning, its gratifying because you learn that this work really makes a difference,” she says.

The Center for Mindful Self-Compassion, founded by Neff and Christopher K. Germer, PhD, in 2012, conducted a randomized controlled trial, which demonstrated that mindful self-compassion significantly increased self-compassion, compassion for others, mindfulness, and life satisfaction, as well as decreased depression, anxiety and stress.

“Being human is not about being any one particular way; it is about being as life creates you—with your own particular strengths and weaknesses, gifts and challenges, quirks and oddities,” says Neff. +++

Learn more about the Center’s Mindful Self-Compassion class at z.umn.edu/MindfulSelfCompassion
The American workforce is stressed.
A report compiled by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health suggests that 40% of workers view their job as very or extremely stressful, 3/4 of those surveyed believe that workers have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago, and many cite their job as their number one stressor in life.

Workplace stress has serious health implications for employees, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, psychological disorders, and greater risk for workplace injury. Mood, sleep disturbances, difficulty in concentration, short temper, upset stomach, low morale, and decreased job satisfaction are other effects of workplace stress.

Stress impacts the economy, too. The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine cites that health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report higher levels of stress.

In the summer of 2016, the Center launched three pilot sections of “Mindfulness at Work,” an experiential course that helped employees of a local Fortune 500 company develop mindfulness skills, and apply them to their work and personal lives.

This innovative experiential course was built from the ground up to teach core mindfulness skills while also exploring their specific application to the workplace. Participants learned how to practically apply evidence-based techniques that could help them succeed in the job. Each week of the course included topical video presentations, readings, and links to guided meditations. The course lasted for eight weeks and included 15-30 minutes per day of formal mindfulness exercises. Mariann Johnson, a Mindfulness teacher at the Center, facilitated the three sections.

“Mindfulness at Work” highlighted key mindfulness traits related to essential workplace skills, such as resilience, task execution, critical analysis, communications, and leadership. The course instructor helped foster the learning culture by offering weekly reflections, responding to participant questions and encouraging participants to share about challenges and successes in their practice.

“In 30 years in the workplace, this Mindfulness course is by far the most helpful, applicable and practical training I’ve ever received,” says a Fortune 500 Mindfulness at Work employee participant. “The results are tangible and immediate. It’s something that will stay with me the rest of my life, not only in work but also in my personal life. I really hope my company brings this course back for a wider audience. I think everyone could benefit from it.”

In an effort to make the “Mindfulness at Work” course accessible to professionals around the globe, the Center also offered two sections taught entirely online — more than 60 employees from four countries participated.

“My company offering the course tells me that it is okay to take time for myself — to make sure I am prepared to face the challenges of my work day,” says another employee participant.

The Center’s Integrative Health & Wellbeing Research Program created a voluntary, anonymous survey to learn about participants’ experiences from the initial pilot course. All of the findings will be used to improve future offerings of the course.

Positive Outcomes
• 96% of participants agreed that the program increased their ability to identify when they are stressed at work and methods for responding
• 93% agreed that the program enhanced their understanding of how their habits and attitudes impact their perception of work events
• 93% agreed that the program helped them be more attentive to what others are saying
• 89% agreed that the program provided specific strategies for dealing with challenges at work

“Mindfulness at Work” has broken new ground in the areas of workplace content, online delivery, and rigorous evaluation. As the course moves forward, the Center hopes to expand its reach across the globe to promote its mission of mindfulness and human flourishing. +++
Tips for Practicing Mindfulness at Work

Even on the most hectic of workdays, these five simple exercises can have a tremendous positive impact on the state of your mind and body:

**Six Minutes: Wellness Wandering**

Put aside your work and find some green space, either by windows or by going outdoors. Shift your attention to noticing the sensations of your body moving through space. The more you drop into the felt-sense of your body moving, the more the mind can relax.

**Three minutes: Shift from Doing to Being**

We are conditioned to “do,” so intentionally take three minutes to be human. Allow yourself to not have an agenda. Notice how your body feels or hold a relaxed gaze out a window to take in a view of nature.

**One Minute: A Mindful Movement**

Pick one movement that you intuitively know will be helpful to your body. Bring full awareness to the intention to move, then move and notice any feeling that arises after this moment of self-care.

**Thirty seconds: Deep Belly Breathing**

When in doubt, place a hand on your belly, let your belly relax into the support of your hand and place your attention with soft belly breathing for thirty seconds.

**Three Seconds or Less: Yawn**

Yawning can be like a reset button for our system.

Learn more about Mindfulness at Work, and how to bring it to your company by visiting z.umn.edu/MindfulnessAtWork
Wellbeing & Resiliency
for Health Professionals

Course Impacts Providers and Patients
By Building Self-Care Skills

BY TOM OLSON, MEGAN VOSS, AND HOLLY WILSON

As the demands placed on the healthcare system increase, the population ages, and technology pushes the workforce into an era of 24/7 connectivity, health care professionals are searching for strategies to help them cope. Being able to withstand long and exhausting hours is crucial to their job, and to their responsibility of giving patients the best care possible. To be an effective care provider, self-care and resiliency are critical skills that health professionals need in order to thrive.

The Center for Spirituality & Healing is offering a Wellbeing and Resiliency for Health Professionals course to address the stress and burnout epidemic facing healthcare providers.

This course is offered in a variety of formats, including for interprofessional cohorts, for physicians, for nurses, and for residents; this fall all first-year University of Minnesota Medical School Internal Medicine residents are enrolled in this course.

Kate Hathaway, PhD, an instructor of the course believes that mindful and intentional self-care is the foundation for wellbeing. “Wellbeing involves physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual, value-based living,” she says. “This is particularly challenging for health care providers, who spend their days care-taking and find themselves fatigued and stressed by the physical and emotional attention expended to others.

Megan Voss, DNP, another instructor of the course, has learned a great deal about the resiliency it takes to be a successful health care provider from the stories heard inside the classroom. “One of the most interesting professionals we’ve had in the class was a tissue donor coordinator and recovery specialist,” she says. “This student talked about the secondary stress experienced in every situation due to working with families and healthcare professionals immediately following a patient’s death. I learned so much from hearing that perspective.”

Students in the course have also learned valuable lessons. “The greatest gift this course has taught me is how to be patient with myself, my coworkers, and my patients,” says a past student. “As nurses, we rarely have enough time or resources to complete all of our tasks in a timely manner, which causes me to become irritated and frantic. Despite my attempts to conceal these traits, they are noticed and impact those around me. This course helped me learn how to be patient so that I could take time to respond to various situations and encounters, rather than just react.”

In addition to providing greater wellbeing and resiliency for practitioners, this course will benefit patients, too. "Hopefully, patients will be interacting with healthcare providers who are calmer, more focused and find more joy in their work,” says Hathaway. “Additionally, we hope, and suspect, that health care providers will pass on the content from this course to their patients, encouraging and supporting their self-care and resiliency efforts as well.”
Voss also spoke to this mutual benefit. “Patients benefit from receiving care from a health care professional that is mindful, resilient, and practicing good self-care.” She explains, “Studies have shown that not only are health care professionals [who are] in a state of wellbeing more effective at providing care, they are less likely to make mistakes and more likely to show empathy and to recommend therapeutic lifestyle changes to their patients.”

Maureen Ryan, a nurse at the University, applied the class to her own life, and says she has found that accomplishing tasks is now easier thanks to the lessons she took from this course. “Prior to this course I would let stress control me. I would be focused on the insurmountable amount of work I had to complete, which would only debilitate me and prevent me from actually accomplishing the work,” she says. “This course has helped me tackle small challenges, a little at a time, resulting in complex issues and tasks getting resolved. This course has given me more hope and encourages me to be kinder to myself.”

Ryan was so impacted by the content and practices introduced in the course that she has designed her Doctor of Nursing Practice project around Resiliency and Wellbeing as an intervention for pediatric blood and marrow transplant nurses on the frontlines.

"Many nurses, especially pediatric blood and marrow transplant nurses, experience high levels of burnout,” she says. “Nursing burnout is detrimental to the individual, the patients, the departments, and the organization involved. My DNP project will be focusing on specific areas of burnout that nurses experience.”

Supported by a generous grant from the Fairview Greatest Needs Fund, this course will be available to pediatric blood and marrow transplant nurses at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital this winter at no cost to the individual. Many institutions, healthcare and others, are beginning to see the value in investing in employee wellbeing.

The newest participants in the Wellbeing and Resiliency Course are incoming internal medicine residents. An initiative led by Meghan Rothenberger, MD, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Associate Program Director of Internal Medicine in the University’s Medical School, has focused on teaching internal medicine residents skills to enhance their wellbeing and resiliency very early on in training. Internal medicine residents participate in the interactive online course co-facilitated by Rothenberger and Voss.

+++
AMAZING INNOVATIONS in photography are coming along faster than most of us, even the pros, can keep up with. This is a relatively new development. I’ve been making photographs since I was a kid in the 1950s. For the first few decades of my career, my tools were not drastically different than those used by photographers of past generations. Every artist’s creative vision is limited by the physical parameters the tools allow. Thus, I, and my colleagues, learned to visualize within these restrictions placed upon our creativity.

Photography has always allowed us to see in ways that are different from our human vision. Photography can warp time, show light beyond what our eyes can detect, magnify what is too small or too far away to see. What it could not do very well was match our visual memory.

Then came digital image management (what most of us now think of as Adobe Photoshop™), and then digital photography. Digital photography was a dramatic shift in the physical way in which we captured light, making photography faster, easier, and higher quality. But, it did not, by itself, change our vision much.

Digital photography and digital image management made several innovations possible, and have dramatically expanded what we can physically photograph. Techniques like stacked focus to extend what is sharp, high dynamic range utilized to photograph scenes with extreme light and dark areas, and stitched panoramas that widen our view, finally made it possible for our creative vision and photographs to closely mimic our visual memory where everything is sharp, well-lit and seen in a wide format.

The newest, and perhaps most-dramatic photography innovation of late, has little to do with the camera, nor digital imaging, but is a way to transport the camera to places we’ve never been able to go before: the drone.
In the film “Dead Poets Society,” Robin Williams’ character has his students stand on his desk in order to see the world in a fresh way. Drones allow us to photograph what can be seen from that in-between height — what is above our heads, but lower, and closer to objects than planes or helicopters can safely fly. These images can show the face of a cliff and the scene below, rather than one or the other. They show us a new perspective, revealing a reality that we live with every day, but could not access.

In our fast-paced lives and in our polarized political climate, it is vital that we search out new perspectives. Rather than repeatedly examining things from our traditional viewpoints, which only reinforces old biases, we must adjust our position until we find a vantage point, which clearly reveals our problems and solutions. We must then let this new comprehension erase ideas formed when we could only see the world with a partial view.

One of the innovative ways we can change our vantage point is to shift our observation timeline from daily to yearly, decades-long, or even centuries-long.

By doing this, we open ourselves up to finding a different place, or different way to view our problems, and what we see can be very enlightening. We may discover that our vision was blurred or blocked, and that what now comes into view completely changes opinions based on our previous perspectives. Maybe, by looking at the complex world around us from a drone’s perspective, we can note our individual struggles and triumphs while keeping the wider world in view at the same time.

Innovations can help us to do cool and fun things, but they can also help us view our world in transformative ways, revealing new pathways that allow us to make comparisons and connections, bringing us together in our understanding, and uniting efforts towards a sustainable, healthier, and more humane planet. +++

Craig Blacklock’s photos and books, featuring images from Lake Superior, the Apostle Islands, and more, can be seen on his website at www.blacklockgallery.com
A growing body of research has found that job stress for teachers is dramatically increasing, while teacher job satisfaction has plummeted to the lowest level in 25 years. As teachers leave the profession in large numbers, principals are reporting difficulty in maintaining a pool of effective teachers — especially in low-income schools. Furthermore, this stress inhibits teachers’ abilities to innovate and build supportive relationships, which has profound impact on their students, and their own wellbeing. To address stress and its effects on both teacher wellbeing and student learning, the Center has developed Mindfulness in Education (MIE), an inspiring initiative supported by its new Strategic Innovation Fund.

More than two years ago, the Center for Spirituality & Healing hosted a discussion with Dr. Patricia Broderick, creator of the Learning to BREATHE curriculum for the classroom. Conversations following Broderick’s visit led the Center to explore ways in which our work in the mindfulness arena could be expanded to school settings.

In 2015, a Center team – led by Mindfulness Programs Director Alex Haley, JD, MBA, and supported by Robb Reed and Samantha Witter - embarked upon a discovery process into the state of mindfulness practices, programs, and educators needs in local schools. In the span of only four months, the team completed an online survey of 28 teachers, conducted 24 in-depth interviews, collected data on 10 similar efforts in the United States and Great Britain, hosted two round-table discussions, and visited a local school that expressed interest in serving as a potential pilot site.

What this team learned from educators would become the foundation for the Center’s MIE initiative. When all was said and done, the message was clear: teachers and administrators want relevant, on-site professional coaching about mindfulness and related wellbeing practices.

MIE’s first funding partner was the Trust for Meditation Process, a charitable foundation encouraging mindfulness, meditation, and contemplative practice. Trust board members actively engaged in the discovery activities, and were encouraged by the outcomes.

“The vision of the initiative is to identify, encourage and support educators already interested in bringing Mindfulness in Education (MIE), to their students,” says Carole Baker, Trust Board Chair. “We hope it will grow organically over time as the results become visible in the schools. It is emphatically not a program intended to ‘fix’ anything, but to support work educators are doing every day.”

The core of the initiative is focused on the unique partnership between a local school and the Center. For this reason, the team includes members from its public school partner who are involved at all stages of design and implementation. Teachers from the partner school play a crucial role in grounding the initiative’s support within the needs of the school community.

“Kids’ lives can be just as stressful in their own way as adult lives,” says Baker. “They need help that’s readily available, proven, and in their control. Mindfulness is a resource/tool they can use over their entire lives to reduce stress, be more resilient, and get some perspective that’s outside the hustle we all live in.”
Meet Doug Kennedy, the Center’s Mindfulness in Education Coordinator

Doug Kennedy, PhD, is a father, former high school teacher and now the Mindfulness in Education Initiative Coordinator at the Center. In August 2016, he completed his doctoral studies researching the intercultural capabilities and behaviors of classroom teachers. Doug has a personal connection to the MIE program through his own mindfulness journey that began in the classroom 12 years ago with Center MBSR teacher Dr. Erik Storlie. An accomplished teacher, in 2010 Doug received a Distinguished Fulbright in Teaching Award to conduct research on international mindedness in International Baccalaureate programs in India. He is currently involved in the University of Minnesota’s Internationalizing Teaching and Learning program. Off the University of Minnesota campus, Doug and his family can be found during the warm months kayaking and standup paddle boarding on the city lakes and snowboarding at Hyland Ski and Snowboard Area when the snow begins to fly.

Design Innovation

At the heart of the initiative is an innovative delivery structure that includes two in-school mindfulness partners who facilitate an active learning community of teachers, and provide individualized coaching on mindfulness practices and teaching. This peer-based approach is creating a curriculum that is most relevant to this particular school. Prototype learning materials and processes can be continually evaluated and refined, so that each stage of the initiative captures new insights learned from the prior stage.

Visionary Impact

Still in a formative stage, MIE is drawing attention from teachers, principals, and other institutions of higher education; next spring, the team will share insights from the pilot along with a vision for creating a statewide Mindfulness in Education resource center. The Center is currently exploring the integration of its Mindfulness in Education work into teacher licensure programming, and a potential summer institute. Joining the Trust for Meditation Process as funding partners are the George Family Foundation and the B&H Way Foundation. +++

For more information about this initiative, or to learn how you can help shape its future, contact Center Development Director, Dianne Lev at dlev@umn.edu.
During her years as a hospitalist, Kate (Venable) Shafto, M.D., noticed her health waning. It was never anything drastic, but the signs were there. So, she adjusted her lifestyle and implemented changes like clean eating and practicing Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction at the Center for Spirituality & Healing. Soon, she noticed that those choices melded into her care and teaching, too.

“When health professionals embody healthy behaviors into their own lives, they’re more likely to talk about it with their patients,” Shafto says.

That sentiment shines in the Center’s new initiative, Food Matters, which centers on cooking, eating, and food from a health context.

“Food literacy is a major issue for the population as a whole, as well as health professionals,” says Center director Mary Jo Kreitzer, PhD, RN, FAAN. “What is known to be healthy versus unhealthy continues to change over time and even health professionals often are lacking in information.”

This fall, Shafto is co-teaching a cooking course for health students and professionals with Jenny Breen, M.P.H., a professional chef at the University’s Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute.

The Center will also continue to offer its public-facing cooking course, Inspired Cooking for Healthy Lives, as well as academic courses in nutrition and workshops focused on mindful eating.

The Center also joined a national movement called the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative. Founded by David Eisenberg from the Harvard School of Public Health, the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative pulls together leaders in culinary science, nutrition, medicine, public health, and wellbeing. Other major partners include the Culinary Institute of America, the Cleveland Clinic, organic farms, and even Google.

“What we do in the kitchen affects health and wellbeing,” said Pamela Cherry, administrative director at the Center. “As leaders in the field of integrative health, it’s vital that we focus research and education on those connections.”
Dr. Chef

Before Shafto and Breen teamed up to create the Food Matters course, they ran into the same, recurring problem: nutrition and cooking were separate.

“I didn’t see a large emphasis on cooking and local food in the health world,” Breen says.

She started teaching cooking courses for college students that centered on healthy eating. Eventually, that led her to Shafto, who wanted to offer cooking courses for health providers.

“Patients want to know what to eat. Too often, doctors aren’t prepared to have those conversations. They’re trained to recognize problems like vitamin deficiencies or high blood glucose in terms of chemistry and biology, but they may not know how to translate that into what and how to cook to address those health needs,” Venable says.

Last year, the Center offered a pilot course with nearly 20 students to test the waters; more than 60 people applied.

“All health students should be exposed to this kind of curriculum,” Cherry says.

In the course this fall, students are learning to cook and eat their own meals as part of instruction thanks to a collaboration with The Good Acre, a local non-profit which acts as a distribution hub for local farmers, and owns a large teaching kitchen where the Center’s class is being held.

The hope is that training health students how to cook will better prepare them to offer help and care for their patients.

“There’s an applied skill-based component to healthy eating that even medical students don’t have compared to the rest of the population,” Breen says.

“Cooking has become optional in our society,” Shafto says. “We’ve become so far removed from food, and that reality has numerous consequences.”

Venable gave the example of how certain foods can affect the gut microbiome, which has been linked to playing a role in many aspects of health, particularly autoimmune diseases.

The course can help health workers improve their own lives and maintain their own health, too. Many health professionals work long days and face high pressure situations on a daily basis. Self-care is just as important in creating a healthy society.

Brenda Langton and Carolyn Denton, R.D.

“We’re not able to be happy or function to our full capacity unless we take time to enjoy a little cooking and eating our own food. Eating a healthy diet is the best insurance policy out there,” says Brenda Langton, Center Senior Fellow and co-instructor of the Center’s Inspired Cooking for Healthy Lives community course.

Langton, a professional chef and owner of local restaurant Spoonriver, has been teaching the course with Carolyn Denton, R.D. for about six years. Denton has also been teaching functional nutrition at the Center for the last decade. Inspired Cooking for Healthy Lives brings an added component to the initiative. It’s not just health professionals who lack cooking and nutrition education, but the public too.
“Food contains nutrients. Nutrients contain information, and that information directs the body in how it behaves. It’s not just what you eat, but when and how and why you eat,” Denton says. “At the Center, it’s more than just memorizing facts. We provide you with the skills and tools to practice that in your everyday life.”

“There is growing evidence that what we eat has a very significant impact on our health, both short term and long term. The American diet is very unhealthy and contributes to obesity and many chronic diseases. Through culinary and nutrition education, our community can continue to grow and improve so all Minnesotans can flourish,” says Kreitzer. +++

Want to support the initiative or learn more about the courses? Visit z.umn.edu/FoodMatters

There’s a major misconception surrounding healthy, clean eating: that it warrants sacrificing the good stuff. “Frankly, eating healthy is so much better. It’s so much more delicious,” says Langton. With access to healthy, sustainable food sources, it can be affordable, easy and satisfying. Try this recipe:

**Black-eyed peas with Vegetables**

**Serves 4 large portions**

- 1 cup dried black eyed peas, washed and picked through for any debris
- 2 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 3 cups packed chopped greens. kale, chard or spinach.

Heat 2 Tablespoon oil in soup pot. When hot add onions and garlic, and sauté over medium heat for 4-5 minutes. Add celery, carrots and cook for 2 more minutes stirring.

Now add the black-eyed peas, spices, water and bring to a boil.

Cover and simmer 45 minutes.

If you are adding kale or collards add it 3-4 minutes before serving. If you are using spinach or chard, it only needs 1 minute to cook before serving.

*Recipe provided by Brenda Langton*
Innovation is a driving value for the Center for Spirituality & Healing - we constantly strive to read the environment, foster visions about what might be possible, and then move courageously toward those new realities. In each dimension of the Center — from designing educational programs and conducting research, to engaging diverse audiences and testing new methods in clinical settings, we continuously explore and evolve in our commitment to advance wellbeing.

The Center’s work reflects the dynamic, changing needs of individuals, organizations and communities throughout the world. Our most successful offerings, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, the Master of Arts in Integrative Health and Wellbeing Coaching, and our Taking Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing website, were created organically in response to our observations of trends or opportunities presented by our donors and partners.

HOW INNOVATION WORKS AT THE CENTER

Center director Dr. Mary Jo Kreitzer’s broad experience as a health care provider, educator, and researcher — as well as her exposure to thought-leaders around the world — consistently generates insights that lead to innovations in health and wellbeing. She can often see or articulate what is still unknown to others, including new content that people wish to learn, a promising strategy that a healthcare organization could implement, an undiscovered student whose passion is ready to be engaged. This is what a true visionary does.

Typically, Dr. Kretizer shares her early thinking with Center team members and tries out her idea when speaking to University or community audiences. What if... could we... why not... she tries to gauge the audience’s reactions. The idea enters into incubation when our internal team starts to examine the notion from different angles, validating it with content experts and nurturing the seed into a sturdier plant. Several examples of initiatives currently in innovation cycles include Mindfulness in Education where teachers and students are utilizing mindfulness practices to enhance learning, Food Matters, where medical students are learning to incorporate nutrition into interactions with patients; Living Well, Dying Well where clinicians are deepening their skills in facilitating courageous conversations; and Wellbeing and Resiliency for Health Professionals, where providers are learning to take better care of themselves and prevent burnout later in their medical and nursing careers.

OUR NEW STRATEGIC INNOVATION FUND

Early in the incubation phase, it is usually clear that resources will be needed to support a pilot project, the right faculty leader, interactive learning modules for a course, and other elements with very real costs. Development enters into the innovation cycle, and we reach out to individual or family donors, foundations and corporations about their interest in the vision. Seeking to take full advantage of the excitement, our search for funding becomes time-sensitive. It is incredibly gratifying when gifts or grants match the pace of a launched initiative; it is equally challenging when an opportunity slips away.

We are proud to announce that Center has established a Strategic Innovations Fund with a target of $1 million as a high priority for philanthropic giving. After years of living the innovation lifecycle, we want to be better prepared to fuel innovation and diminish the risk of missed opportunity. We invite forward-looking venture partners who have appreciated the Center’s entrepreneurial spirit and witnessed our impact over the past two decades to join us in growing/utilizing this Fund. With confidence in our track record to steward philanthropy, we seek substantial, generous gifts to the Fund so that resources to fuel innovation can be tapped at the most strategic instance. Such donors will serve as true agents of change by forging new paths for thought leadership and influencing the arc of a trend itself. These initiatives have the potential to positively shift outcomes for students in education and patients in healthcare, and for sustaining the work of teachers and healthcare professionals. +++

We are eager to discuss the Strategic Innovation Fund’s purpose and projections. Please contact me for more information; I can be reached at dlev@umn.edu or 612-624-1121.
Take a Course at the Center THIS SPRING
Center courses will open for registration in mid-November. To learn more about our winter and spring academic courses, visit z.umn.edu/CenterCourses

WEAR YOUR WELLBEING
The Center has created men’s and women’s t-shirts featuring our Wellbeing Model! To purchase a shirt or learn more, contact us at csh@umn.edu

HELP SHAPE Center Communications
Please complete a short survey about communications coming from the Center – which will take 15 minutes or less – and you will be entered into a drawing to win special gift cards from us. The survey is available at z.umn.edu/CSHsurvey

Join the Center at NORTHRUP AUDITORIUM for “Betroffenheit” March 21 & 22, 2017 at 7:30 pm
The Center and Northrop Auditorium are pleased to announce a new partnership that brings discussions around wellbeing to live performances.

A gripping and visually arresting journey through the maze of trauma, addiction, and healing, Betroffenheit exemplifies what can happen when theater and dance combine to achieve what neither could accomplish alone. Based on true events, this dance/theater hybrid integrates original music, text, and movement with puppetry and rich visual design to prove the depths of despair and the uphill battle to reclaim a life violently derailed.

Visit z.umn.edu/CSHNorthrop for information about discounted tickets and how this exciting partnership continues to expand.