For two decades, the GGSC has turned the “science of a meaningful life” into research-based resources that support the well-being of millions around the world. In our 2020 annual report, we are proud to share the programs, insights, and stories that animate our vision.
Core Programs

GREATER GOOD MAGAZINE
Our award-winning online magazine is home to a rich array of media, including articles, videos, quizzes, and podcasts—all available for free. With over 10 million annual visitors, the research-based stories, tools, and tips on the site make cutting-edge research practical and accessible to the general public, especially parents, educators, health professionals, business leaders, and policy makers.

RECENT HIGHLIGHT
The Science of Happiness wins an award!
Our podcast won bronze in the Health category at the New York Radio Festival Awards. It was also honored as a Finalist in the Jackson Hole Science Media Awards. Pictured: GGSC Executive Producer Jane Bahk receiving our award.

SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS PODCAST
With more than 20 million downloads to date and reaching as high as #2 on iTunes’ list of Top Podcasts, The Science of Happiness has been a smash success. Listeners love the surprising, funny, and touching stories of our guests who try research-tested practices for bringing more joy and goodness into their lives. Co-produced by PRI, new episodes come out bi-weekly, all year long.

ONLINE COURSES
More than half a million students from around the world have enrolled in our free, 10-week Science of Happiness online class—and data show that it boosts their positive emotions and helps them deal with the stresses of life. We also launched our Science of Happiness at Work three-course series, which has already enrolled tens of thousands of students and received rave reviews.

EVENTS
Our conferences, talks, and workshops feature leading scientists, authors, practitioners, and public figures who share cutting-edge insights into the science of a meaningful life. No matter the size or format, all of our events combine science, storytelling, and actionable tips. During the pandemic we successfully shifted many of our events online, including our 2020 Bridging Differences summit—and we were able to include many more participants this way.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES
Since our founding, we have supported and educated parents with resources to nurture qualities like gratitude, forgiveness, and generosity in their children. Our parent initiative Raising Caring, Courageous Kids gives parents multimedia resources to raise kids of high character who treat others with compassion and respect. Through this initiative, we also provided $1 million in grant funding to 16 community-based organizations that help parents build these skills in their kids.

GREATER GOOD EDUCATION
Through online resources and in-person training, we help hundreds of thousands of educators nurture their students’ emotional lives—as well as their own—and build healthy classrooms. In 2020, we launched our new Greater Good in Education platform with over 200 science-proven practices for educators to cultivate prosocial classrooms. (See page 6 for more details.)

TRAINING FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & WORKPLACES
Our training program helps professionals apply the science of well-being to their work and their organizations. Our team is leading experiential workshops, providing consultation to industry leaders, and developing trainings for different sectors, particularly health care, to help combat stress and build resilience. We hosted our inaugural Institute for Health Professionals in fall 2019 and launched an online training for health professionals in 2020.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS
We have supported, nurtured, and advised over 100 graduate and undergraduate scholars at UC Berkeley since 2002, in a wide range of relevant fields from psychology and sociology to medicine, biology, business, education, public health, and more. Greater Good Fellows have gone on to rich and distinguished scientific and academic careers.

About the GGSC
OUR MISSION
The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society. Since 2001, we have been at the forefront of a new scientific movement to explore the roots of happy individuals, strong social bonds, and altruistic behavior—"the science of a meaningful life." Our work:
• Equips individuals with research-based skills that improve their social and emotional well-being.
• Brings a trusted, inclusive voice to the cultural conversation about compassion, connection, and happiness.
• Empowers people to become agents of change in their own communities and organizations, improving institutions from the inside out.

This 2020 Annual Report celebrates our recent accomplishments and highlights our newest initiatives.

How happy are you? How grateful, how connected? Take the quizzes at Greater Good magazine to find out!

Artwork by Rafael Lopez

2019-2020 GGSC Fellows

GREATER GOOD IN ACTION
In 2015, we launched the best source for research-based positive practices to cultivate happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection. More than 1.5 million users of GGIA have discovered concrete steps toward developing essential social and emotional skills.

In 2020, we successfully shifted many of our events online, including our 2020 Bridging Differences summit—and we were able to include many more participants this way.
Greater Good Guide to Well-Being During Coronavirus: In a tumultuous year we produced dozens of new science-based resources to support resilience and connection, as well as additional tools to fight racism and promote social justice.

Bridging Differences: Our project to reduce polarization (see page 5) culminated in a large public event, exploring evidence-based strategies for building bridges between and within communities.

Gratitude Book: We published an anthology highlighting the key findings from our pioneering six-year project on Expanding the Science and Practice of Gratitude.

Two New Video Series: One series features playful, research-based skills for well-being that are fun to learn and easy to share; the other offers parents concrete tips for nurturing strengths like generosity and humility in their kids.

Greater Good in Action: We launched a ground-breaking website with new features to help you find your own pathway to happiness and track your progress.

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**EVENT HIGHLIGHT**

The Science of Happiness: Live! This uplifting three-day gathering gave an audience of over 300 the chance to connect with one another and hear from experts like Dacher Keltner, Barbara Fredrickson, Richie Davidson, and Jack Kornfield—all under the redwoods of the 1440 Multiversity in Scotts Valley, California.

**Interview with GGSC’s Bridging Differences Writing Fellow Zaid Jilani**

Is there anything in your personal or professional experience that draws you to this topic especially? I grew up in the Deep South, but I was a minority among minorities—my parents emigrated to the United States from Pakistan in the 1970s, and unlike most people in Georgia, I wasn’t Christian (I’m Muslim). I would say my whole life involved some form of bridging differences, as I was almost always a religious, racial, and political minority among the people I lived and studied around.

My life experiences taught me to be able to get along with people from very different social backgrounds and ideological predisposition than my own. Through these experiences, I learned the value of discussing ideas, not people, and being slow to judge someone who has a difference in opinion, or a different way of practicing their religion or personal philosophy.

Our Bridging Differences initiative recognizes that we have differences, but that doesn’t mean we have to let them segregate us into different communities, dictate who we befriend or marry, or lead us to resent those who are different from us.

What’s the first skill you’d encourage people to try? By focusing on shared identities, you can expand your “in-group” to include people you previously thought you had nothing in common with. In a way, it’s the skill that forms the basis of the success of the United States of America—we’re a diverse country defined not by a bloodline or skin color but by our shared commitment to a pluralistic democracy.

So let’s say you know someone with different politics, a different religious background, or who comes from an immigrant community that is different than yours. You can acknowledge that you both have these differences and value who you are, but also emphasize the ways you are similar. This is a powerful way to recognize commonalities that may have heretofore been invisible to you.

Does research actually suggest our country could become less divided? How? Some of the most interesting research on polarization comes from Dr. Liliana Mason of the University of Maryland. Mason found that most of our physical polarization—whether someone wants to live next door to someone with different politics, for example—comes from a sort of team sport mentality; the stronger you identify with a “liberal” or “conservative” camp, the more polarized you are from people on the other side. But it actually has nothing to do with what you actually believe. People on the far left of the political spectrum who are less attached to their political team are less likely to want to segregate themselves from conservatives than people slightly left of center who are strongly attached to their label.

What does this mean is we can disagree—even sharply—and not necessarily be polarized by the issues themselves. There is no need for us all to share the same opinions about health care or immigration in order to get along. But we do need to be able to move beyond attachment to labels that narrowly define ourselves and our political opponents. The skills we are identifying in the Bridging Differences initiative can help us do that.

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**By The Numbers**

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*Figures for the calendar year ending December 2020.*
Greater Good in Education

RESEARCH STRONGLY SUGGESTS that developing students’ social and emotional intelligence improves their academic achievement and overall well-being. The GGSC’s education program goes one step further: We believe that cultivating positive qualities such as compassion, gratitude, and mindfulness will lead to a wider transformation, as children mature into young adults who place care, empathy, and social connection at the center of their lives and society.

As the latest milestone in the growth of our education program, in 2020 we launched Greater Good in Education (GGIE), a free online resource that features the top evidence-based strategies for supporting the social, emotional, and character development of students and the adults who work with them. GGIE synthesizes the top insights and best practices from science, programs, and practitioners.

Our education team has been working closely with a network of researchers, education professionals, and leading programs to develop and build GGIE. With over 200 practices, keyed to different developmental stages of students and the various dimensions of a school, GGIE will provide clear, rigorous ways to create kinder, happier schools.

**I used your [gratitude] curriculum for my students, and for a final assignment, had them deliver thank you letters to someone of value in their lives, asking them to notice the recipient’s reaction and how they felt. Then they wrote a paragraph on their experience on the last day. I graded some of their essays and it filled me with joy! It was science, citizenship, and school all in one. Thank you so much for making this resource available.**

Michele Ward
5th/6th Grade Social Studies Teacher
Houston, TX

**I am part of the Hostage Negotiation Team and I develop trainings for the New York Police Department. The Greater Good site has helped me greatly with my police work, and I enjoy visiting the site frequently. Among the many topics discussed there, I believe empathy is one of the most important things to practice genuinely—especially in policing.”

Detective Jeff Thompson
New York Police Department
New York, NY

Grants to Nurture Caring, Courageous Kids

Through our parenting initiative, we awarded grants to 16 community-based organizations that are developing programs to support parents and families, in partnership with scientific advisors. We initially brought the programs together with their advisors in person, and then hosted a final convening online to share project learnings.

**Online Courses for Workplaces**

Our three-course series on The Science of Happiness at Work features GGSC Director Dacher Keltner, Ph.D., and Science Director Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Ph.D. They teach skills for building emotional intelligence and resilience to stress—and creating more collaborative, purposeful, and enjoyable workplaces.

**COURSE HIGHLIGHT**

We are very grateful for our partnerships with the Einhorn Collaborative, the John Templeton Foundation, Acton Family Giving, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, the Kern Family Foundation, and the Room to Breathe Project.

We also deeply thank our founding donors, Ruth Ann and Thomas Homaday, along with the following individuals and families who have given at the $1,000 level or above since 2019, as well as all those who support the mission of our Center at every level.

**Greater Good Supporters**

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**RECENT HIGHLIGHT**

Welcome to Greater Good in Education—a collection of science-based practices for integrating social-emotional learning, mindfulness, and character education into the life of classrooms and schools.

**LOG IN**

Practice Kindness
When we choose to do something that benefits others, we often benefit ourselves.

“Share With Everyone”
How You Can Help

As an independently funded center based at UC Berkeley, we rely entirely on supporters like you to fund our mission to study and share the science of a meaningful life.

To learn more about how you can further our work, visit greatergood.berkeley.edu/donate

Thank you!