

The Difference Mindfulness Can Make: Help Bring the Practice to Children

■ **By Katayun Jaffari and Courtney Schulnick**

As we have been saying for the last eight months, 2020 has presented us with unprecedented times. These times have proven that compassion for each other and ourselves is paramount to staying resilient, both professionally and personally. Despite all of the obstacles created by the pandemic, as attorneys, we have stayed committed to meeting our clients' needs.

How do we do it? By practicing mindfulness. As former Chair of the Business Law Section, Kathy Jaffari had the privilege of sharing the gift of mindfulness with members of the Philadelphia Bar Association through the Mindfulness Series she created. While advocating for another can be one of most rewarding aspects of life, it can be extremely challenging, as well. Jaffari learned and shared that mindfulness is the tool that can enable us to zealously and effectively represent our clients while keeping us grounded. Mindfulness, which is present moment awareness, can help optimize overall well-being and effectiveness in our work because we become more aware of how we are moment to moment and therefore, how to best support ourselves and our clients. This holds espe-

cially true for lawyers given the long hours and high level of stress that is inherent to the legal field.

Courtney Schulnick, a litigator, mindfulness teacher, wife, and mother to three young boys, has also witnessed how her personal mindfulness practice benefits her and the ripple effect it can have on others far and wide. As a mindfulness teacher to young children, Schulnick has recognized that when children regularly practice mindfulness, they are able to cultivate a greater level of kindness and compassion towards not only themselves, but others, as well. Wouldn't it be incredible for children to be able to learn these gifts and many more from mindfulness practices being offered in a school setting?

A study from The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University showed that mindfulness education in the classroom can reduce the negative effects of stress and increase students' ability to stay engaged, helping them stay on track academically and avoid behavior problems. At The School Mindfulness Project, we have developed an educational model that aspires to improve the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of entire school communities by providing sustainable mindfulness education and mindful movement educa-

tion to staff and students on a school-wide basis (<https://www.schoolmindfulness.org/>). By offering mindfulness programs in schools, children can become more aware of their habitual patterns and learn new ways to relate to the stressors in their lives. The ability to learn mindfulness with fellow classmates allows them to recognize that they are not alone in their thoughts and feelings. And to be able to process their experiences with peers in a supportive environment promotes a deep sense of commonality and helps strengthen children's inner resources to face even life's greatest challenges.

Would you like to help make a difference in a child's life? The School Mindfulness Project is looking for volunteers, especially those who would be interested in becoming members of its Board of Directors and support the organization's mission.

If you are interested or would like to learn more, please contact Kathy Jaffari at kjaffari@cozen.com. Also, if you are interested in short guided mindfulness practices, please join Courtney Schulnick for the Wellness Committee's Wellness Wednesdays at 8 a.m.

Miles

continued from page 3

not have happened without the help, guidance, wisdom, and concern of so many. You've boosted me up and occasionally pulled me along on this very unique journey. For this, I will forever be grateful. So many of you have reached out to me, expanding my circle of dear friends and colleagues. To do this in a year in which we cannot meet in person is truly remarkable.

As I have said, I will be passing my title to Lauren McKenna. She, Wes Payne, and Marc Zucker will lead this Association over the next three years. I feel that we will be in very good hands as we face the future together.

Now, I'm not going away. I intend to be involved in the Association, in whichever way I can be of assistance, as long as I'm wanted. I am reminded of the words of Robert Frost in his poem *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*. Frost ends this beautiful poem with the line that I suspect all of us know, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And Miles to go before I sleep, and Miles to go before I sleep." For myself, I have many more goals; I'm not done by a long shot. I hope that some of you will take my future journeys with me, because I do have miles to go before I sleep.

Hon. A. Michael Snyder (Ret.) (msnyder@adrdri.com) is the 93rd Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Workers' Comp.

continued from page 7

In August, I focused on the civility that is prevalent amongst the Workers' Compensation Bench and Bar. This was not lip service. This civility, which I will classify as extra-professionalism, enabled us, as practitioners, to take the adapted system and "make it work." Taking telephonic depositions would not be effective if discovery is not promptly exchanged and exhibits pre-identified. Conducting telephonic and video hearings would not be possible if attorneys didn't moonlight as IT professionals for their clients, and judges didn't understand that sometimes, despite our best efforts, the technology, or users, would fail. As 2020 winds down, and 2021 approaches, I say cheers to my colleagues in the Bench and Bar.

Finally, in November, a time when Philadelphians traditionally gather with family to enjoy turkey and all the trimmings or to watch the Dallas Cowboys lose their annual Thanksgiving matinee, we are reminded of the less fortunate. The spirit of giving is another cornerstone of the Philadelphia Bar Association Workers' Compensation Section, and the COVID-19 pandemic could not keep us down. Throughout the year, each monthly CLE presented by the Section was accompanied by a charitable collection. In November, the Section delivered 325 bagged lunches, as well as socks, to St. John's Hospice. The Section has a longstanding relationship with St. John's Hospice, and even though we could not serve our holiday meal this year, with the generous donations of our law firm partners and the hard work of Section members and their families, we delivered to the best of our ability.



In closing, I want to thank the outgoing 2020 Section Co-Chairs: The Honorable Tina Maria Rago, Andrea Graf, and Anna Rio. You did a phenomenal job leading our Section through these turbulent times. I also want to recognize The Honorable Audrey Timm and Caroline Gentilcore, with whom I will serve as co-chairs in 2021. I am looking forward to carrying on the great work of the Section with you!

Christopher M. Fox (cfox@gk-wcl.com), an attorney at Gross & Kenny LLP, is certified as a specialist in the practice of Workers' Compensation Law by the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Section on Workers' Compensation Law as authorized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and is a co-chair elect for the Philadelphia Bar Association's Workers' Compensation Section.