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RIO VISTA REVIEW

A SOCIAL MAGAZINE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF RIO VISTA

Mindfulness:

*A Krame Family Practice
and Career*



Healthy Living

Learning Through a Global Pandemic

Home of the Month

Luxury Estate on Jacobean Way

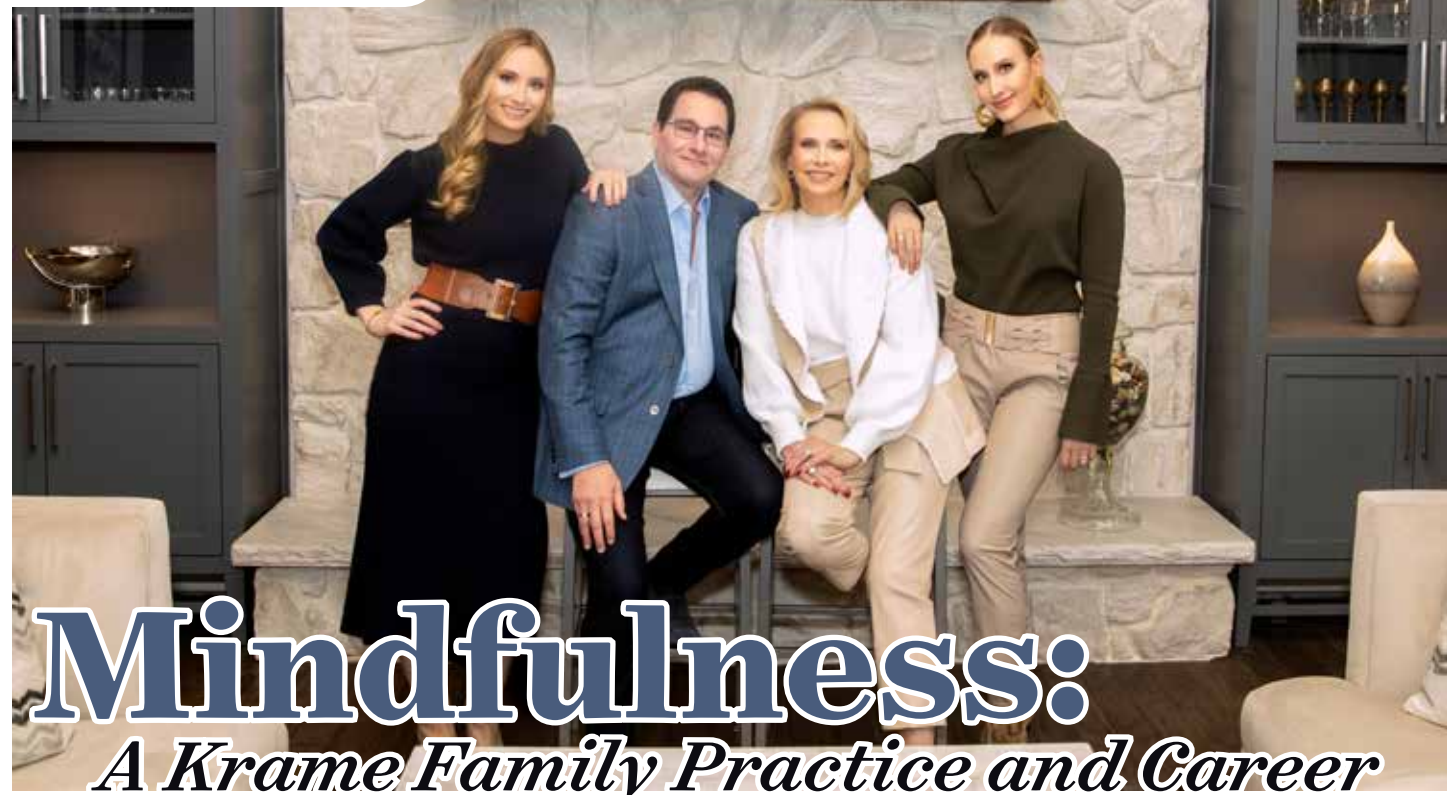
Senior Matters

Sharing Stories Across Generations

meet your neighbors

By **Melissa Griegel**

Cover Photo and Article Photos by **Bobby Lynn**



As all of us can attest, we are living in stressful and uncertain times. Mental health issues have been on the rise for years, but with the global pandemic, civil discord and political turmoil, more and more people are suffering increased levels of anxiety and depression and are seeking help in record numbers. The Krame family was way ahead of the curve, realizing over 20 years ago the tremendous benefits of Mindfulness to increase our capacity for resilience and improve our mental wellbeing.

The practice of Mindfulness is now widely used to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and enhance overall wellbeing through specific practices that involve breathing, meditation, gentle body movements, and other tools. The purpose is to learn how to focus our attention, cultivate an awareness of the present moment, and see things with greater clarity. Through an increased awareness we can question the accuracy of our own perceptions and invite new perspectives, which enables us to respond thoughtfully rather than reacting habitually or automatically. Equally important, is the quality of the attention we bring to our experience of life – are we highly critical and judgmental, or can we be more open and accepting? In any given moment we can pause, take a breath, and choose how we respond, which will determine if the next moment is one of ease, or one of stress.

Much of our stress also comes from ruminating over past events or worrying about a future outcome, but by continually returning to the present moment we are able to free our minds of the mental chatter that can generate unnecessary stress. While we may not be able to control what's going on around us, we can meet life's challenges more effectively and contribute to our own wellbeing by building up an internal "Mindfulness tool-kit" to become more resilient.



Bill and Catherine Krame

Rio Vista residents Bill and Catherine Krame started practicing meditation and Mindfulness over two decades ago and felt the profound benefits it provided to each of them individually, as a couple, and as a family. This positive impact inspired them to share these transformational practices with others.

In an effort to effectuate change on a broader scale, Bill and Catherine founded The Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living at Ramapo College. For over five years they successfully brought Mindfulness to students, faculty and staff, and served the community at large. An overwhelming interest in their work from academics and professionals across the country prompted them to develop new programs and expand their reach by leaving Ramapo College and establishing The Krame Center for Mindful Living in Ramsey, NJ. In addition to their non-profit organization, Bill and Catherine are actively involved with two affiliated companies: U-Thrive Educational Services, LLC and Mindful Awareness Practices, LLC. The former of these two companies is dedicated to increasing resilience among college students, while the latter of the two is focused on promoting mental and emotional wellbeing in a variety of populations and professions, beginning with K-12 Educators.

Bill graduated magna cum laude with a dual degree in International Business and Marketing from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Bill's main career has been in commercial real estate development. While still active at Krame Development Company, Inc., he now devotes most of his time working with his wife and two daughters on their ever-expanding educational programs in the field of mental and emotional wellbeing.

*"My goal is to effectuate positive change one person at a time."
~William Krame*

Catherine grew up in Toronto and was a successful entrepreneur prior to raising a family and becoming an active philanthropist. Catherine completed a professional training program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School to become a qualified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher (MBSR-QT) through the Oasis Institute for Mindfulness-Based Professional Education and Training within the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society. She is certified in Positive Psychology (CIPP), lectures on the subject of Mindfulness, and is the published author of *"Living in Flow: The Key to Unlocking Your Greatest Potential."*

"The power of Mindfulness is that in each moment we can choose our response, and in that choice is an opportunity to begin again." ~Catherine Krame



Bill and Catherine



Simone and Kailen

Simone (Krame) Figueroa

Simone is Co-Founder and President of U-Thrive Educational Services, LLC, an organization that brings mental and emotional wellness programs to college students to help them manage stress, become more resilient, and thrive throughout their undergraduate experiences and beyond. Simone serves on the Board of Directors and is the Chair of the Gala Committee for Integrative Touch for Kids (Tucson, AZ) and holds a Trustee & Advisory Board position for the Krame Center for Mindful Living (Ramsey, NJ). Simone lives in Tucson, Arizona, with her husband Isaac and their dog, Diesel.

Growing up, Simone witnessed her parents meditating and dinner conversations often centered around the deeper tenets

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Simone and Kailen

of Mindfulness without labeling it as such. Despite this, meditation and Mindfulness were not forced upon her and it wasn't until college that she found her own path. At the beginning of Simone's college journey, she struggled with her mental health and emotional wellbeing. During her junior year, she fatefully stumbled upon a credit-bearing course in Mindfulness, and went from surviving in college to thriving. In this course she learned how to deal with the trials and tribulations she was facing, how to be present, and how to better connect with herself, others, and the world around her. Simone graduated Cum Laude from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's degree in Finance and concentration in Spirituality and Health. The effects of the Mindfulness course she took were so profound that it ultimately changed the trajectory of her career. She turned down a lucrative dream job as a private banking analyst for J.P. Morgan for a more personally rewarding path with Canyon Ranch, a premier Health & Wellness Resort in Tucson, Arizona, where she held various positions ranging from Operations Manager of Health, Healing & Spiritual Wellness to Director of Guest Experience. She then went on to start Conscious Living & Lifestyle, a coaching practice to support individuals in achieving physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

An avid learner, Simone returned to Columbia University and received her Masters degree in Clinical Psychology in Education



with an emphasis on Mind-Body Medicine, graduating at the top of her class. During her studies at Columbia University, she took a year-long practicum in Positive Psychology and became fascinated with and quickly saw a need for Positive Education, the incorporation of 'heart-based life skills' into the academic environment. She realized that most efforts in this field were being geared toward K-12 education and not much was being done for college students. This research coupled with her own struggles as an undergraduate student led to the realization of U-Thrive Educational Services. Simone's deepest passion and mission is to effectuate positive change within the mental health landscape on college campuses.

"Stress is an inevitable part of life. While we can't prevent it, we can learn tools and skills to effectively cope with whatever challenges we are faced with." ~Simone Figueroa

Kailen Krame

Kailen is President of Mindful Awareness Practices, LLC and is passionate about spreading the transformative practice of Mindfulness within professional industries and beyond. She holds a Trustee & Advisory Board position for the Krame Center for Mindful Living (Ramsey, NJ) and currently resides in New York City with her partner, Luis. Kailen also lectures on the topics of Mindfulness, Communication & Conflict Resolution and her next upcoming event is in February: *Communicating Mindfully for Effective Conflict Resolution* (Rockland Women's Business Network).

Kailen's journey into Mindfulness started young as she was surrounded by the topics of meditation and contemplative practices growing up in her household. During her sophomore year of high school, she was experiencing stress and anxiety and her father recommended reading *Practicing the Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle. This book dramatically impacted her life and helped her to change her perspective and begin the practice of "living in the NOW," or Mindfulness.

So moved by her personal experience, she wanted to share it with her peers and began researching the fields of Mindfulness and Positive Psychology. This ultimately led to her writing a book at the age of 16 called *"Put it in Perspective: A Teen's Guide*



to *Sanity*," published in 2014. This book "by a teen, for teens" offers Mindfulness and practical stress-management tools for teenagers and young-adults, although it has been enjoyed by readers of all ages.

Her passion for Mindfulness continued to shape her academic path and Kailen went on to study Psychology at the University of Florida, where she graduated

Cum Laude in less than three years. Upon graduating, Kailen lived in Tel Aviv, Israel, where she assisted with research in the laboratory of world-renowned Positive Psychologist, Dr. Tal Ben Shahar, and worked for a startup specializing in Organizational Wellbeing. From there she pursued a Masters in Clinical Psychology with a concentration in Spirituality and Mind-Body practices at Columbia University, as well as an Advanced Certificate in Conflict Resolution from the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Columbia. Kailen wrote her Master's thesis on how Mindfulness can Help Occupational Stress and Burnout among K-12 educators, which laid the groundwork for her company Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPs).

"By learning practices to be more mindful, compassionate, and inclusive individuals, the possibility of creating a positive impact is exponential." ~Kailen Krame



The Krame Center for Mindful Living

The Krame Center for Mindful Living is a

local non-profit organization that strives to enhance the mental wellbeing and resilience of individuals, organizations and society through various mindfulness programs and other contemplative learning practices. A place for meditation, mindfulness, learning, retreat, community, and practice, the Krame Center for Mindful Living offers a variety of programming rooted in Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Positive Psychology. The Krame Center believes in the power of Mindfulness and its ability to transform our lives, and the world.



U-Thrive Educational Services

U-Thrive Educational Services offers cost-effective online and in-person mental and emotional wellness programs that are designed to help college students manage stress, become more resilient, and thrive throughout

their undergraduate experience and beyond. Their programs are led by 35+ leading educators, psychologists, and scholars in the

fields of Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and Self-Compassion from numerous institutions across the country.

Current offerings include:

- 1. Life Skills for Thriving.** A semester-long (16 module) online and/or in-person program designed to be used as a stand-alone credit-bearing course, or integrated into existing curricular and co-curricular programs.
- 2. First-Year Thrive.** A 5-hour online program designed to be utilized as part of pre-orientation, orientation, or summer-bridge, or other curricular/co-curricular programs.
- 3. DEI: Uncovering Biases, Embracing Differences, and Appreciating Commonalities.** A 45-minute online program designed to introduce students to important Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) vocabulary and the role that Mindfulness and Empathy plays in supporting greater DEI among individuals and society.

U-Thrive Educational Services is also currently developing a program specifically for First-Generation Limited-Income college students to help them transition to college and thrive.



Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPs)

Mindful Awareness Practices, LLC (MAPs) is a digital educational platform that brings wellness programming to specific populations, from individuals in various stages

of life to professionals and organizations across diverse vocations. MAPs collaborates with key subject matter and industry experts within the fields of Mindfulness, Positive Psychology, and Self-Compassion.

The MAPs courses are designed to reduce stress and burnout unique to specific populations and professions. Their programs teach transformative practices and skills to help individuals improve resilience, achieve meaning and fulfillment, and thrive.

MAPs currently offers online programs for K-12 Educators and is in the process of launching programming for additional professional subsets (including healthcare, mental health, and business) and various stages of life (such as teenagers, maternity, and active adults).

