

Florida Community of Mindfulness (FCM)
2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan and 2017 Priorities
Revised December 15, 2016

Vision

The vision is FCM's long term aspiration. While it is unlikely to be achieved in our lifetimes, it is the "north star" toward which FCM's mission and work is directed.

Our vision is to create a community, and eventually a world, where principles of loving-kindness, generosity, and selflessness result in global peace, environmental sustainability, and the cessation of suffering for all sentient beings.

Mission/Ultimate Aim of FCM

The mission is FCM's most fundamental reason for existence; the aim it is always seeking to realize. While many organizations may share FCM's broad vision for the world, the mission defines more fully who FCM is.

The Florida Community of Mindfulness offers Buddhist teachings that are relevant to the realities of day-to-day life and lead to personal transformation. FCM provides a variety of educational and practice opportunities to support those who sincerely aspire to cultivate mindfulness, equanimity, compassion, and joyful selfless service to others.

How We Approach our Mission

FCM realizes its mission through the creation and nourishment of a healthy and active sangha community, where teachings and other practice opportunities are shared in an environment of mindfulness and loving-kindness under the guidance of our teacher Fred Eppsteiner.

Core Values

Core values are the essential principles that underlie, motivate, shape, and guide FCM.

- Awakening: Through the practices of mindfulness, deep understanding/wisdom, and compassion, we grow personally, heal psychologically, and transform our suffering into the flowering of an awakened being. We use Buddhist meditative practices to rediscover eternal truths about reality through direct investigation and experience, rather than through blind faith in dogma.
- Non-Denominational Buddhism: While practicing within the Mahayana Zen tradition, we take inspiration and guidance from the full breadth of Buddhist teachings. We are creative and experimental in our forms since we desire to be relevant and accessible to American culture, issues, and vernacular. We apply the

Buddhist teachings based on their appropriateness to the individual(s) being taught and practice skillfulness in their application.

- Community: Having the support and personal connection with a sangha/ community of spiritual friends is a key element of our Buddhist practice. We seek to live our path with the support of a harmonious practice community. Sangha-building is, in itself, a meaningful and deep practice which embodies interconnection instead of separateness.
- Inclusiveness: Our community is open to anyone who is dedicated to following this path. We respect and encourage diversity.
- Mindful Living: We practice an engaged form of Buddhism, i.e., a Buddhism that is relevant to the lives of our members and the society we live in. We primarily utilize the broad traditional teachings and practices of Buddhism, applied in the context of modern life. As a community of lay practitioners, we learn how to live an awakened life in the midst of our relationships and everyday activities. We are dedicated to living a meaningful, open, and joyful life, guided by the Five Mindfulness Trainings of the Plum Village tradition.
- Service: We help bring joy and reduce suffering by being of service to our families, our communities, and our society. We practice selflessness and “love in action” and give generously of our time and resources to those in need. When engaged in activities to benefit and heal our world, our actions are based on selflessness, mental and emotional calmness, non-violence, compassion, and deep acceptance of what is.
- Deep Sharing/Deep Listening: We create trust within our community of practitioners to encourage speaking from our hearts and listening to each other without judgment.
- Direct Transmission: Our teachers have received their authorization from within the continuous lineage of the Buddha. The direct personal relationship between teacher and student is central to the true Dharma transmission within the Buddhist tradition.

3-Year Strategic Goals

January 2015 to December 2017

- ❖ Complete renovations of the Practice Center, including residential retreat capacity and meditation gardens.
- ❖ Develop residential retreats, including on-site programs involving both members and non-members.
- ❖ Offer a clear, comprehensive path of teachings and practice opportunities for members, non-members, and the broader community.

- ❖ Further develop the culture of selfless service, including coordinating volunteer efforts within FCM and serving the broader community.
- ❖ Deepen connection and caring within the FCM community by continuing to develop and implement sangha welfare activities and programs.
- ❖ Support and nurture local sanghas through a unified community with a common home in Tampa Bay.
- ❖ Promote and increase diversity in FCM through Wake-Up, family programs, and other activities.
- ❖ Develop a broad core of trained and experienced teachers who participate in a program of teacher training and support.

2017 Priorities

To move in the next year most effectively toward implementing the 3-Year Strategic Goals, FCM has set the following priorities for 2017. (Please note that at the end of each description of the priority are the name(s) of Board and ex-officio Board members who are point people to provide leadership for the work on that priority.)

1. Lift up selfless service as a theme throughout FCM with an emphasis on improving service to the sangha by broadening member participation and creating a depth of leadership. (Charner, Tammy, Liz)
2. Deepen connection and friendship by creating opportunities for community and social activities. Develop and implement programs to support each other during significant life transitions. (John)
3. Encourage member participation in FCM Dharma programs and foster meaningful integration into the FCM community. (Carol)
4. Evaluate the wisdom of continuing the Mindfulness Institute (MI) as an effective way to provide service to both the sangha and the broader community. (Nancy, Angie, Tammy)
5. Encourage, support and empower FCM members to engage in acting for the good of the broader community. Develop a protocol to define these efforts. (Bryan)
6. Offer mindfulness and other Buddhist teachings in collaboration with other nonprofit organizations where doing so is consistent with our mission. (Jacquelyn)
7. Create activities to meet and develop positive relationships with our neighbors. (Angie)

8. Offer programs for families, children, teens and young adults to support age diversity within the FCM community. (Bryan)
9. Develop residential retreat capacity and raise the necessary funds for this project. Develop plans for supporting and conducting residential retreats. (Angie, Jacquelyn, Carol, Tammy, Robbie)

Main Roles and Responsibilities of the FCM Board

The Board of Directors assumes all of the traditional fiduciary roles of the boards of non-profit organizations, including providing overall leadership, oversight, and supervision of all programs, finances, fund raising, staff, and building and outreach projects. Its main roles and responsibilities include:

- Setting broad policy and priorities, e.g., strategic planning;
- Ensuring that the organization remains true to its vision, mission, and core values, and focused on its stated goals and priorities;
- Overseeing finances and the prudent collection and expenditure of funds, e.g., regular financial reports, budgeting, etc.;
- Ensuring that the organization has the money it needs to fulfill its work, e.g., dana collection, annual fund, capital campaign, etc.;
- Creating effective organizational structures, staffing, and engagement of members and volunteers;
- Serving as an ambassador and leader inside FCM and in the broader community, always speaking and acting for the well-being of the community; and
- Avoiding any actual, or the appearance of, personal conflict of interests with Board service.

FCM's teacher, (currently volunteer) Executive Director, and Assistant to the Teacher serve as ex-officio members of the Board of Directors.