2018 has been a transformative year for Lineage. With your continued support, we’re taking our work to a whole new level.

Lineage Project offers trauma-conscious mindfulness practices to incarcerated, homeless, and academically vulnerable young people. Our programs foster resiliency, offer tools for managing the adverse impacts of stress and trauma, and increase our students’ physical, social, and emotional well-being.

In 2018, Lineage delivered our innovative programs to 1,000 young people and adult staff across New York City. We worked in more than 25 locations, including youth incarceration facilities, public schools, long-term suspension schools, a family homeless shelter, and a program for young people in residential mental health treatment.

Our students are predominantly Black and Latina/o, and they primarily come from neighborhoods that are systematically impacted by the multigenerational, intertwined effects of structural racism, socioeconomic inequality, and disinvestment. These profound and relentless stressors adversely impact young people’s physical and mental well-being, leading to toxic stress and, in many cases, traumatic experiences.

Numerous studies show that mindfulness practices improve attention and focus, decrease stress and depression, reduce impulsivity, and help youth regulate intense emotions. Published, peer-reviewed research on Lineage Project shows that our classes may reduce the likelihood of justice re-involvement. Our students credit Lineage classes with helping them build community, respond more skillfully to challenges, and gain insights that improve their lives.

Over the past year, we did the deep work of introspection and dreaming big—envisioning the many ways Lineage can achieve even greater influence by fostering mindfulness and compassion in youth-serving organizations, institutional settings, and communities. As a result, we are launching a brand new community program focused on youth impacted by the foster care and justice systems, and we are expanding our professional development services to offer specialized training for the adult staff of youth-serving organizations. We hope you will read more about these and other 2018 highlights below.

“I felt like I was deep in the ocean looking up at the sky. I didn’t hear the keys jangling or the guards. It was so peaceful and calm.”

—Lineage student
Engaging our students as mindfulness leaders in their own communities, offering students employment opportunities, and planting seeds of change in New York City’s wellness sector.

Our students generally lack access to mindfulness and wellness services designed for them. We secured seed funding for the 2019 pilot of a brand new Community Program to bring mindfulness tools to young people impacted by the justice and foster care systems in their own neighborhood and without charge. We will bring our work full-circle by training and paying Lineage students to serve as interns and peer leaders in our mindfulness classes. We’ll also partner with a yoga teacher-training program to support our current and past students in becoming certified yoga teachers, with the long-term goal of hiring them as Lineage teachers and growing a cadre of wellness professionals committed to expanding access to yoga and mindfulness in communities of color.

Responding to the needs of young people navigating multiple traumas.

We incorporated a trauma-conscious approach into our mindfulness programming, so our services can be more beneficial for our students. We also recalibrated the curriculum for the 20-hour, certificate-granting professional development trainings we offer to the general public to more fully incorporate trauma-conscious mindful practices. The school teachers, social workers, justice professionals, and others who take our public training will now be better equipped in their work with young people experiencing trauma.

Increasing cultural awareness in our mindfulness programming to better serve young people of color.

We hired more teachers, diversified our teaching team, and incorporated anti-oppression and racial justice values into our teacher hiring, training, and supervision practices. We also adopted an apprenticeship model that pairs newly hired apprentice teachers with senior Lineage teachers for a period of intensive training and mentoring, ensuring that our newest teachers are deeply supported as they begin teaching.

Building wider support for our unique mission and engaging leading thought-partners in growing our organization.

We formed a new Advisory Council consisting of dynamic leaders in the fields of mindfulness, justice, the arts, and wellness: Leslie Booker, Elena Brower, Dr. Gregg Courand, Joseph Goldstein, Daniel Goleman, Soren Gordhamer, Tavia Hunt, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Sharon Salzberg, Emily Stone, Jasmine Syedullah, and Quentin Vennie.

Taking Lineage Project’s teaching model to the public.

We held 4 training programs for the general public focused on sharing tools and techniques for bringing trauma-conscious mindfulness programs to court-involved and academically vulnerable young people. We have been offering these certificate-granting trainings for over ten years, drawing social workers, school teachers, yoga teachers, and justice professionals from all over the country.

Fostering more compassionate interactions between staff and young people, and changing how the system works from the inside out.

Our students spend the vast majority of their time outside of mindfulness class, often in profoundly challenging environments that can exacerbate and cause trauma. And we have witnessed the ways in which the frontline staff who work with young people can experience burnout and secondary trauma, with ripple effects on our students. In response, we began offering professional development workshops to staff at many of the schools, suspension sites, and institutions we serve. These trainings focus on mindfulness tools that can be used to support their self-care and sustainability as professionals and enhance the work they do with young people.
We’re not only putting powerful, portable mindfulness tools in the hands of hundreds of young people each year. We’re helping youth-serving organizations across New York City build their own cultures of mindfulness and compassion. We’re pioneering new approaches for shifting systems from within. And we’re cultivating the leadership of young people of color in New York’s mindfulness and wellness communities. We’re creating precisely the kind of transformation the world needs more of.

We invite you to join us in this life-changing work.

“We lineage has definitely been a part of our school’s success, including a suspension rate that’s gone down to less than 1%, and zero fights in the school over the past three years. This is significant, given our students’ extremely high rates of severe, clinical anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Through Lineage, our students learn how to apply mindfulness tools in situations where they feel triggered, challenged, or overwhelmed.”

—Principal Jeannie Ferrari, Humanities Preparatory Academy.