



# RAINBOW INSTITUTE

## Presents

### More Than Mindfulness Conference 2017: Education as a Sacred Art

Workshops, Seminars and Panel Discussions

#### **Keynote Address: *Establishing a Heart Centered School- RCS Founder Nura Laird***

Who are children really? Where do they come from? What kind of educational environment provides them the best chance of loving themselves? Of developing fully? Of expressing all that they are? And of living harmoniously in a way that contributes to others and to our world? These are the questions that we asked ourselves as we were designing Rainbow Mountain School 41 years ago. The heart is the key: first, because children are centered in their hearts, secondly, because the heart is the doorway to the brain as we now know from research, and thirdly, because the heart is the faculty that knows the essence of life on the seen and unseen levels. The language of the heart is connection and love. Education that opens up the experience of love and unity leads students to excel and thrive in all areas of their lives. Children's hearts are alive, vibrant and curious. The heart is their main channel of learning. As educators and parents, when we tap into their hearts along with their minds, we bring out the best in them and help them to be all that they are created to be. This is education in service of healing and transformation. It is crucial work for our time. It is holy work. Through lecture and experiential exercises, we will explore how we can reach and nurture children's hearts so that they are fulfilled, productive, and in service to others.

Nura Laird, formerly known as Ashrita, was one of the original founders of Rainbow School in 1977, known then as Rainbow Mountain Children's School. She has been an educator in public and alternative schools since the early 1970's. She co-founded both an alternative secondary school in Vermont before Rainbow, and more recently the University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism in Northern California. Nura has been a lifelong advocate for children and a parent educator and coach. She spearheaded a formal research study in spiritually-based parenting and family healing which became the PhD dissertation of one of her students. Nura is also a mediator with extensive experience in family mediation and a number of counseling modalities. She works mostly with couples and family members to resolve conflict and restore love and harmony to families. For the past 40 years Nura has been a student of Sufism, the age-old Islamic mystical path of wisdom and love. Currently Nura is a professor of Sufism, spiritual healing, and peacemaking at the University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism in northern California. She teaches internationally and has a private healing practice in St. Helena, California, working both in person and remotely by phone or online.

#### **Religion & Spirituality: *A conversation for the postmodern classroom and counselor***

Led by RCS's Executive Director, Renee Owen and RCS's Director of Counseling, Will Ray

**Learning Through a Holistic Lens: Exploring how teaching the whole child enhances the learning path of all children**

Led by Eddy Webb: Rainbow Seven Domains master teacher

**Communing with the Natural World: Exploring Core Routines of Deep Nature Connection**

Led by West Willmore: Rainbow Seven Domains master teacher, RCS Curriculum Director, RCS resident naturalist and RI Co-Founder

**The Art of Storytelling and The Hero's Journey**

Led by RCS lead teacher, Jenny Armocida and RCS's Creative Director Justin Pilla

**Inner Alchemy: Different Spiritual Traditions of Self**

Led by RCS's Director of Counseling, Will Ray

**Mindfulness as Playfulness: Experience the first-hand the transformative power of play**

Led by Lucy MacGregor: RCS preschool lead teacher, Rainbow Institute Mindfulness Consultant and Mindful Schools certified teacher

**What Does Centering as a Contemplative Practice Look like at RCS: The nuts and bolts of a 40 year legacy**

Led by a RCS Alumni students and a Rainbow Seven Domains master teacher

**Beyond Mathematics and Linguistics: Blending the Spiritual and Mental Domains**

Led by Omega Program Coordinator and Lead Teacher, Susan Waddell and Omega's Sacred Geometry Teacher Mark Hanf

**Holistic Psychotherapy: Using the seven domains to provide clinical care**

Led by RCS's Director of Counseling, Will Ray

**Educating for Empathy, Equity and Social Justice**

Led by RCS's Director of Equity, Danae Aicher

**Rites of Passage: Integrating these transformative, coming of age experiences into class culture and curriculum**

Led by Creative Director, Justin Pilla and Jason Cannoncro, RCS Seven Domains master teacher

**Theater as a Transformative Practice: Image and applied theater in the classroom**

Led by RCS Theater teacher, Ange Moore

**Mindfulness and Movement: Ground learning in the body by weaving mindful practice into active learning**

Led by RCS Athletic Director and Physical Education teacher, Mark Strazzer

***Creating Heart Spaces for Learning: The brain science of mindfulness, compassion and learning.***

Led by Lucy MacGregor: RCS lead preschool teacher, Rainbow Institute Mindfulness Consultant and Mindful Schools certified teacher

***Resourcing for Bolstered Resiliency: Mindfulness of Mind and Body***

Led by Sarah Shoemaker, Academic Director of the Black Mountain Academy and founder of Your Embodied Breath, a mindfulness based consultancy. Sarah has worked as an educator and school administrator through various schools, from public to clinical/residential, and maintains that whole-child wellness be a central consideration as we raise this generation of children. She is a Mindful Schools Certified educator, and is pursuing next steps in a career path in trauma-informed healing practices.

***Holding the Space: How to integrate mindfulness into your community in a sustainable and intentional way***

Led by Lucy MacGregor: RCS lead preschool teacher, Rainbow Institute Mindfulness Consultant and Mindful Schools certified teacher

***Using Positive Discipline and Compassionate Communication to Nurture Healthy Relationships***

Led by RCS Lead Teacher and RCS Parent Council Representative

***There is no mindfulness without the heart: Sufi perspectives on awareness, love and the message of unity,***

Parents, education and healthcare professionals most often conceive of mindfulness as essentially limited to a cognitive function of the brain. When deeply considered, mindfulness is actually seen to be just one aspect of a fully developed and enlivened heart. The spiritual tradition of Sufism carries profound insights into the nature and maturation of the heart psychologically and spiritually. Participants in this seminar will have the opportunity to experience some of the Sufi practices which bring healing, peace and divine connection to the heart.

Led by Dr. John Laird, founder of the Great Smokies Medical Center and Co-Founder of the Great Smokies Diagnostic Laboratory (now Genova Diagnostics). He practiced integrative and holistic medicine in the Asheville area for 17 years. Dr. Laird was responsible for the passage of landmark 1994 NC legislation legalizing the practice of alternative medical therapies and physicians. He has been a student of Sufism for forty years and currently directs the Shafiiyy INstitute of Health and Healing in Napa Valley, California.

***Mindful Campus Design***

Led by RCS Facilities Director, Max Mraz

***What If We All Just Led With Compassion? Exploring techniques that empower compassionate collaboration among teachers, families and students***

Led by Susie Robidoux: Rainbow Seven Domains master teacher, RCS Dean of Faculty and RCS professional development coordinator

***How does heart-centered education impact our own lives?***

Participate in the kinds of experiential exercises that we do at Rainbow that are designed to open your heart, leading to healing and transformation. These exercises can impact, not only how you are with children, but also enrich your own life and your relationships with others. Ultimately, when we open and deepen our hearts, we carry and transmit more peace and love as we serve others.

**Led by RCS Founder Nura Laird**