



Cornell University
Office of the Dean of Students

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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to encourage Virginia Tech to provide ongoing Art of Living courses as part of the important trauma relief efforts that are currently in place. The Art of Living is a non-profit international organization founded by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in the 1980's. Art of Living techniques have been taught to millions of people around the world. The organization offers courses and programs aimed at eliminating stress, creating a sense of belonging, restoring human values, love, compassion, and encouraging people from all backgrounds, religions and cultural traditions to come together in celebration and service. My impression and personal experience with this organization has been incredibly positive and I recommend that the course be offered to all VT community members.

I recently took the beginners 5-day Art of Living course offered at Cornell University. The course provided me with powerful tools for stress-reduction, positive thinking and healthy living. The curriculum included small and large group discussions on topics related to personal, physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. I found these discussions quite valuable as they provided an opportunity to reflect, process experiences, and develop meaningful connections with those in the class. Specific yogic breathing and meditation techniques were also skillfully taught throughout the 5-days. These exercises facilitated a powerful release of emotions and letting go of negative thought patterns and anxieties, followed by deep restorative rest and a very real sense of personal healing and peaceful transformation. Upon completion of the course, all participants were taught how to continue the simple yet powerful exercises at home and were also invited to practice together through continued informal group sessions.

The Art of Living course draws and welcomes individuals from all backgrounds i.e. different ages, cultures, religions, personal experiences, etc. The 20+ participants in my course ranged from undergraduate, graduate, staff/faculty and community members, representing many backgrounds and various degrees of experience - including no experience - with other personal development courses. People joined the course for an equally diverse range of reasons. I felt that all participants were honored, respected and valued for who they were and the unique backgrounds they represented. There was a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow together while remaining focused on our individual needs and goals. The course far exceeded my expectations and I have since experienced a new level of peacefulness, clarity of thoughts, joy, physical energy and reduction of everyday stress.

At Cornell, the Art of Living is a registered student organization that meets regularly and offers ongoing courses such as the one I recently took. I highly recommend for Virginia Tech to establish a similar group that may offer these courses on an ongoing basis. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for further discussion. I can be reached at 607.255.0087. Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Warm Regards,

Sophie Sidhu
Assistant Dean of Students