

## Our Vision - A Gift Economy

We are glad to communicate further with you about how we arrived at our current tuition structure, and our plan to move towards an ever more equitable tuition policy at iBme. Our ultimate vision is to support our programs, teachers and staff through a gift economy, where payments and offerings are not seen as transactional or commodified, but rather money and resources flow from where they exist to where they are needed in a cycle of generosity. We mourn that as a society, we are not yet at the point where we could sustainably implement this model.

Our current tuition structure is what we at iBme have determined, for the time being, to be as progressive and equitable as possible while being as grounded in our current economic framework as necessary for financial sustainability. The policy and payment structure is set at a contribution of 1% of family income per teen per retreat, up to the full \$2500 cost of the retreat.

We acknowledge that our policy is still regressive in that it uses a fixed percentage to calculate tuition. This structure disadvantages lower income earners whose basic expenses are a much higher proportion of their overall income than what is needed for basic expenses for high income earners. Our structure also favors very high-income earners as we cap our tuition at \$2,500, essentially treating someone who makes \$250,000 the same as someone who makes \$750,000 a year.

Over time, we would like to move towards a more progressive tuition policy, where resources flow from those families and communities with more resources towards those communities and teens with the least, with full willingness in both giving and receiving. Our programs are only possible because of the contributions of each member of our community - every teen, mentor, teacher, parent, office staff and the wider mindfulness community, and so our vision is that we all move towards orienting to the needs and resources of each member, as well as the whole iBme community.

This would represent a significant shift in our cultural collective consciousness. In dominant American culture, we do not orient towards other peoples' needs but instead orient towards concepts of "deserve" and "fairness" or "equality" within the context of vastly inequitable economic systems. We also orient towards notions of value (price) being measured by the market rather than by sustainability needs.

Our plan is to continue to experiment with different ways of engaging with money that continue moving from where we are now to where we want to be. Overtime, we want to learn what works and what can be improved until teens and their families and communities fully understand and engage with our experimentation in ways that are sustainable for all. Towards that end, we welcome your feedback about how well our communication here has supported you in reaching clarity about how much you will give.

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