

NEWSLETTER

*Whole School. Whole Community.
Whole Child.*

#10 | October | 2020

World Mental Health Day—10/10/2020



This year's World Mental Health Day came at a time when our daily lives have changed considerably as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These past months have brought many challenges for everyone. From the front line workers helping those in need, to the students and teachers needing to learn a whole new routine, to parents becoming full time teachers, playmates and workers, and sadly those who lost a loved one or their jobs. COVID-19 has truly effected every single person throughout our nation. With experiences like this it is easy to see the importance of programs that can assist those in need of mental health support. That is why the goal of this year's World Mental Health Day campaign by the World Health Organization was to increase investment in mental health. However, awareness and support does not have to stop with just one day, as now more than ever, it is important to make sure people know they are not alone.

This past May our School Health Team partnered with Empower Somerset of Somerset County and AtlantiCare Healthy Schools of Atlantic County to host the Quaranteen-ed: Apart but not Alone PSA contest through our Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child initiative funded by the New Jersey Department of Health. Our goal was to give students a platform to connect with others statewide and a chance to let them know someone is thinking about them and cares. The result, was far greater than we could ever have imagined. We received over 200 submissions statewide, along with emails from students and parents expressing how grateful they were for the experience they had taking part in the contest. On June 8th one overall state winner and one winner from each region (north, central, and south) were announced. However, in the end, we truly feel every participant came out as a winner.

Check out the [video](#) announcing the winners with a special thank you from our guest judge
Joetta Clark Diggs

The graphic features the word "APART" in large, bold, black letters with a white outline, set against a background of a hand painting a blue wall. Below "APART" is the phrase "but not alone" in a white, cursive font. To the right of the painting, there is a quote: "When you are unable to express yourself, but you desire emotional release, making art may help you to do it." At the bottom, the text reads "2nd Floor Youth Helpline 888-222-2228" and "Visit <https://www.2ndfloor.org/> for more information."/>

When you are unable to express yourself, but you desire emotional release, making art may help you to do it.

2nd Floor Youth Helpline 888-222-2228
Visit <https://www.2ndfloor.org/> for more information.

Madison Freifelder, Vernon High School

Brain Breaks

By starting good habits today you are making important changes to enhance your mental health. Although the term brain breaks is often used with children, it is important for both children and adults to take a few moments each day to take a step back from their routine and relax. Below you'll find some examples of brain breaks for all ages!

7 YouTube Channels for [brain breaks during distance](#)

[Brain Break Bingo](#) is a great way to get kids up on their feet for a few minutes !

Printable [breathing exercise activity cards!](#)

[Check out these quick brain breaks & stretches you can do from your seat!](#)

Are you an adult that needs a few minutes? Play one of these [awesome TedTalks](#) for kids so they don't lose focus while you take a minute to refill your coffee!

Action for Happiness has created an [Optimistic October calendar](#) to help keep a positive mindset as we enter into the holiday seasons.

National Bullying Prevention Month

October is also National Bullying Prevention Month. Bullying can deeply effect mental health. This school year let's work to better our mental health & watch out for others. Here are some ways to prevent bullying:

1. Help kids understand bullying: encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult, talk about how to respond to a bully, urge them to help other kids being bullied, and talk about strategies to stay safe.
2. Keep an open line of communication: Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help on tough decisions. Sometimes spending 15 minutes a day talking can reassure kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem .
3. Encourage kids to do what they love.
4. Model respect and kindness.

Cooking Corner

Last month we celebrated National Family Meals month. With much [research showing the importance of family meal time](#) in regards to substance use prevention and promoting positive mental wellbeing, our School Health Team felt it was the perfect time to introduce our latest Newsletter addition, the **Cooking Corner**. Here in the Cooking Corner you will be able to find healthy, fun, and easy recipes your family can enjoy making and sharing together each month!

Before we talk recipes lets learn some tips on [How to Keep Kids Safe in the Kitchen!](#)

Snack: [10 Healthy Halloween Treats](#)

Dinner: [The Best Sloppy Joe Recipe](#): use a whole grain bun or skip the bun all together!

Meatless Dinner: [Homemade Vegetarian Chili](#): this recipe can also be made in a slow cooker!

Dessert: [Pumpkin Bars](#)



As always, our [School Health Team](#) is available to provide resources regarding school health topics. Feel free to reach out to us any time with feedback or requests for resources. We are dedicated to improving the health and wellness of your school and community! Contact [Ashley](#), for assistance. We would love to hear from you!