

September 2021

# Youth News

Educational, Motivational, & Inspirational Stories

## Back-to-School College Planning

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L. *Youth News* magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. *Youth News* provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring educational, inspirational and motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

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# Youth News

## September 2021

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# Youth News



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I am deeply honored to work with these amazing people from our youngest writers to our retirees, we are all committed to educating our communities about the vast need for people to become foster, adoptive parents and mentors.

In this issue we're talking about *Suicide Prevention*. September is "Suicide Prevention" month, but please know we need to keep our eyes and attention focused on this issue everyday. Be there and care. It may help to save a life.

From city-to-city and coast-to-coast, you said "I Support Youth"

One of our team members may call you to ask for support. Please "*Answer the Call.*"

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, our focus is FAMILY: Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives of Youth.

Thank you,

*La' Toria*



# Back-to-School College Planning

Written By: Adria Kinney

School is back in session, and it's never too early to start planning for college! Here are tips on how to prepare for college as you begin this new school year.

**9th graders:** Start exploring possible career interests by thinking about your best school subjects. Do you love your Spanish class? Consider becoming a Spanish teacher or teaching English in a Spanish-speaking country. Are your highest grades in science? You might be a good fit for a medical career. Knowing possible career paths can help you decide where to apply to college by searching for schools that offer your desired program of study. 9th grade is also a great time to get involved in extracurricular activities.

**10th graders:** Continue to explore your career interests and try to take on leadership roles within your extracurricular activities. Build positive relationships with adults at your high school, such as your teachers, guidance counselor, club advisors, and coaches. Your guidance counselor will help you with the college admission process, and other

adults can write recommendation letters for you when it's time to apply.

**11th graders:** This is a critical year, as colleges look closely at junior-year performance. Work hard in your classes to get good grades, and consider challenging yourself by taking honors or advanced classes. You should also register for standardized tests, like the SAT or ACT, if you are interested in schools that require them. Finally, visit colleges if you are able.

**12th graders:** Maintain your grades, ask for recommendation letters, apply for financial aid and scholarships, retake standardized tests as necessary, and be sure to submit your applications on time. Don't stress! You will end up exactly where you are meant to be.



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**STYLES**

**ME**



**ABOUT**



# September is National Suicide Prevention Month

Written: Samantha Cooper

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, with National Suicide Prevention Day falling on September 10th. Since 2007, the suicide rates of young people have sky-rocketed. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among children and young people ages 10 to 24.

The COVID-19 pandemic has apparently worsened the issue as children have become more isolated from their peers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), youth suicide attempts (particularly by girls) increased by 22.3 percent from the summer of 2020, when compared to the previous year.

***If you or a friend are experiencing suicidal thoughts, help is available.***  
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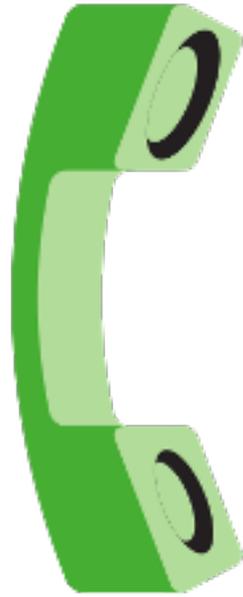


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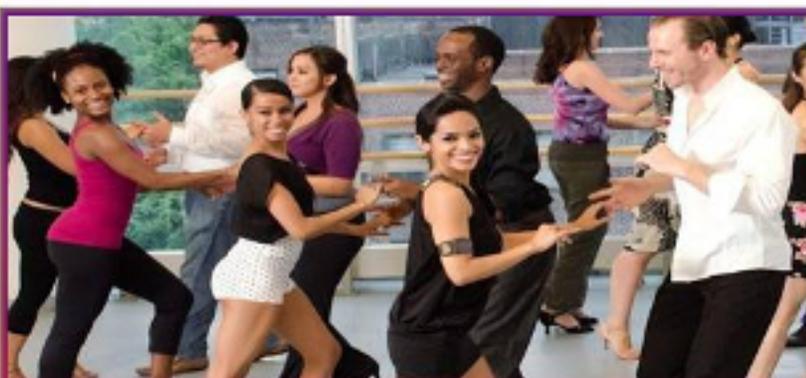
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# History of Foster Care in the USA

*The National Voice of Foster Parents*

Some of the earliest documentation of children being cared for in foster homes can be found in the Old Testament and in the Talmud. These references establish caring for dependent children as a duty under law. Early Christian church records also show children were boarded with "worthy widows" who were paid by collections from the congregation.

It was English Poor Law, however, that led to development and eventual regulation of family foster care in the United States. In 1562, these laws allowed the placement of poor children into indentured service until they came of age. This practice was imported to the United States and was the beginning of placing children into homes. Even though indentured service permitted abuse and exploitation, it was a step forward from almshouses where children did not learn a trade and were exposed to horrendous surroundings and unsavory adults. Various forms of indenturing children persisted into the first decade of this century.

In 1636, less than thirty years after the founding of the Jamestown Colony, at the age of seven, **Benjamin Eaton** became this nation's first foster child.

In 1853, Charles Loring Brace began the free foster home movement. A minister and director of the New York Children's Aid Society, Brace was concerned about the large number of

immigrant children sleeping in the streets of New York. He devised a plan to provide them homes by advertising in the South and West for families willing to provide free homes for these children, whether for charitable reasons or whatever help these children could be to them. In many cases, these children were placed in circumstances similar to indenture. However, Brace's daring and creative action became the foundation for the foster care movement as it exists today.

As a result of the New York Children's Aid Society's placements, sectarian social agencies and state governments became involved in foster home placements. Three states led the movement. Massachusetts, prior to 1865, began paying board to families who took care of children too young to be indentured. Pennsylvania passed the first licensing law in 1885 which made it a misdemeanor to care for two or more unrelated children without a license. South Dakota began providing subsidies to the Children's Home Society after it was organized in 1893 for its public child care work.

During the early 1900's, social agencies began to supervise foster parents. Records were kept, children's individual needs were considered when placements were made, and the federal government began supporting state inspections of family foster homes. Services were provided to natural families to enable the child to return home and foster parents were now seen as part of a professional team working to find permanency for dependent children.



# SEPTEMBER NATIONAL FUN DAYS

|              |                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| September 7  | Labor Day                            |
| September 10 | World Suicide Prevention             |
| September 11 | Patriot Day                          |
| September 12 | National Native American Day         |
| September 18 | National Clean Up Day                |
| September 19 | International Talk Like a Pirate Day |
| September 21 | International Day of Peace           |
| September 25 | World Lung Day                       |



Hello  
September.

# In Honor of Friendship Month

Written By: Melanie Rush

Much thought and research has gone into the importance of family and romantic relationships. While these relationships are essential to our lives, friendships also play a critical role in our success. Healthy friendships have been found to improve mental health, self-esteem, even our [long-term health](#). Some may argue that all relationships have an element of friendship. Despite being crucial to our overall well-being and happiness, friendships sometimes take the back seat to our other relationships.

In my own life, my friendships have supported me through the best and

worst times of my life. From the death of loved ones, job losses, and everyday insecurities, to the still ongoing worldwide pandemic, my friends have been there for it all. During the past year, the bonds between myself and my “chosen family” have strengthened. We navigated through social isolation, the threat of a deadly virus, social justice movements, and grief. After getting laid off from my old job last September, I was blessed to quickly find a new position, where I met one of my best friends. In honor of Friendship Month this September, take time to reflect and celebrate the friendships in your life. If you have a friend you want to get closer to, consider meeting up and taking turns answering [36 questions](#) designed to increase closeness. Take a moment to express your appreciation and gratitude to your friends and loved ones for who they are. Remember, life is short and good friends are gifts.

# Honoring Native Americans



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# Senior Citizens Recognition

Written By: Ronald Neubauer

We senior citizens (I'm 69) have received much national recognition, and I not-so-humbly offer that the recognition is well-deserved. For this August article, I'll begin with National Senior Citizens Day. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed August 21st as a day to celebrate the accomplishments of senior citizens and to raise awareness of issues that affect their quality of life. But national recognition of seniors in the United States began over two decades earlier.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May as Senior Citizens Month. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson changed the name to Older Americans Month and Congress passed the Older Americans Act that paved the way for financial and other benefits for seniors. The Older Americans Act established the Administration on Aging; introduced federal financial and other support for nutrition, transportation, adult day care, and legal services; and led to the Medicare program for health care. Every subsequent president has formally



proclaimed May as a time to remember and honor older Americans. President Biden's proclamation of 21 May 2021 can be found by searching on the internet "A Proclamation on Older Americans Month, 2021 | The White House."

Although seniors are not the only ones that face a definite end-of-life phase, it is the more "natural" circumstance. Next month, I will highlight hospice care, which helps patients and their loved ones deal with the end-of-life phase.



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120,000 children and teens are waiting to be adopted. The number of children in foster care nationwide increased 2.3% this year to 437,465. Making it a figure that has risen every year since 2012. Studies indicate that one out of every four youth who age-out of foster care will end up in a homeless shelter within three years.

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# Youth Spotlight



**Liam**

Written by Loney Nguyen

Liam is a 6'2, hard working, sport enthusiast and male model. This young man began college this year to pursue a degree in media broadcasting, combining his love of sports into a career as a professional sports anchor. Liam will begin the ROTC program in his college soon with plans to serve his country in the United States military.

Growing up, sports has always played a major part in Liam's life, which has helped shape his interest in working in this field. Liam earned his 2nd degree black belt at the young age of 10. This naturally gifted athlete has skills in sports ranging from baseball, basketball, soccer, swimming, lacrosse, tennis, and cross country running. If he had to choose his favorite sport, it would be football. This athlete also has an amazing and strategic mind, competing and winning chess tournaments in middle school.

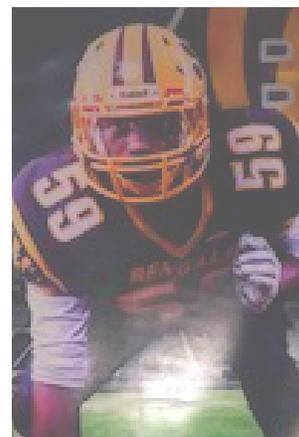
From his early childhood years until graduating high school, he always knew he would have a career in the sports industry. When he was younger, Liam often said he wanted to become a sports attorney, working on behalf of professional athletes. As he got older, he discovered his talent for being on the mic

and in front of the camera.

Today, Liam is the host of a sports show on KFAM Youth Radio, where he gives the latest news and personal updates on high school, college and professional athletes. No sport is off limits for him, he studies sports on a daily basis and enjoys citing facts that few people know about. Liam, is currently employed at an elite gym, and works out between 1-2 hours every day. He also tries to eat healthy as often as possible.

Outside of sports, Liam enjoys modeling and is a gifted musician. When he was four or five years old he wrote a rap song, that if it got into the right hands today would become a number one hit! This star athlete enjoys giving back to his community as much as possible. He often volunteers in the community to help people in need and participates in neighborhood cleanups.

Make room ESPN, Liam is heading your way!



# Cancer in Children

Written By: Lenna

Cancer develops in children as a result of mutations in genes that lead to uncontrolled cell growth.

According to the National Cancer Institute, this year there were an estimated 10,500 new cases among children from birth to the age 14. The tragic news is that 1,190 of those children were expected to die from the disease, but the encouraging news is that the death rate from 1970 to 2016 declined by 65%.

There are multiple types of cancer. Common cancers in adults and children are leukemias, brain and other central nervous system (CNS) tumors, and lymphomas. Though treatment among adults and children are not the same, common treatments are surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, and stem cell transplants, all performed by pediatric oncologists who specialize in the care of children with cancer. A children's cancer center usually includes primary physicians,

pediatric rehabilitation specialists, pediatric nurse specialists, social workers, and psychologists. The Children's Oncology Group(COG) is the world's largest organization for conducting clinical research to improve the safety and effectiveness of pediatric cancer treatments.

Lastly, health effects can develop later in life because previous treatment affects children physically and emotionally into adulthood. Therefore, childhood cancer survivors must receive follow-up care throughout their lifetime to monitor their health.





## Les Brown

Motivational  
speaker/ Author  
*Foster Care/ Adopted*

# From Foster Care to Fame

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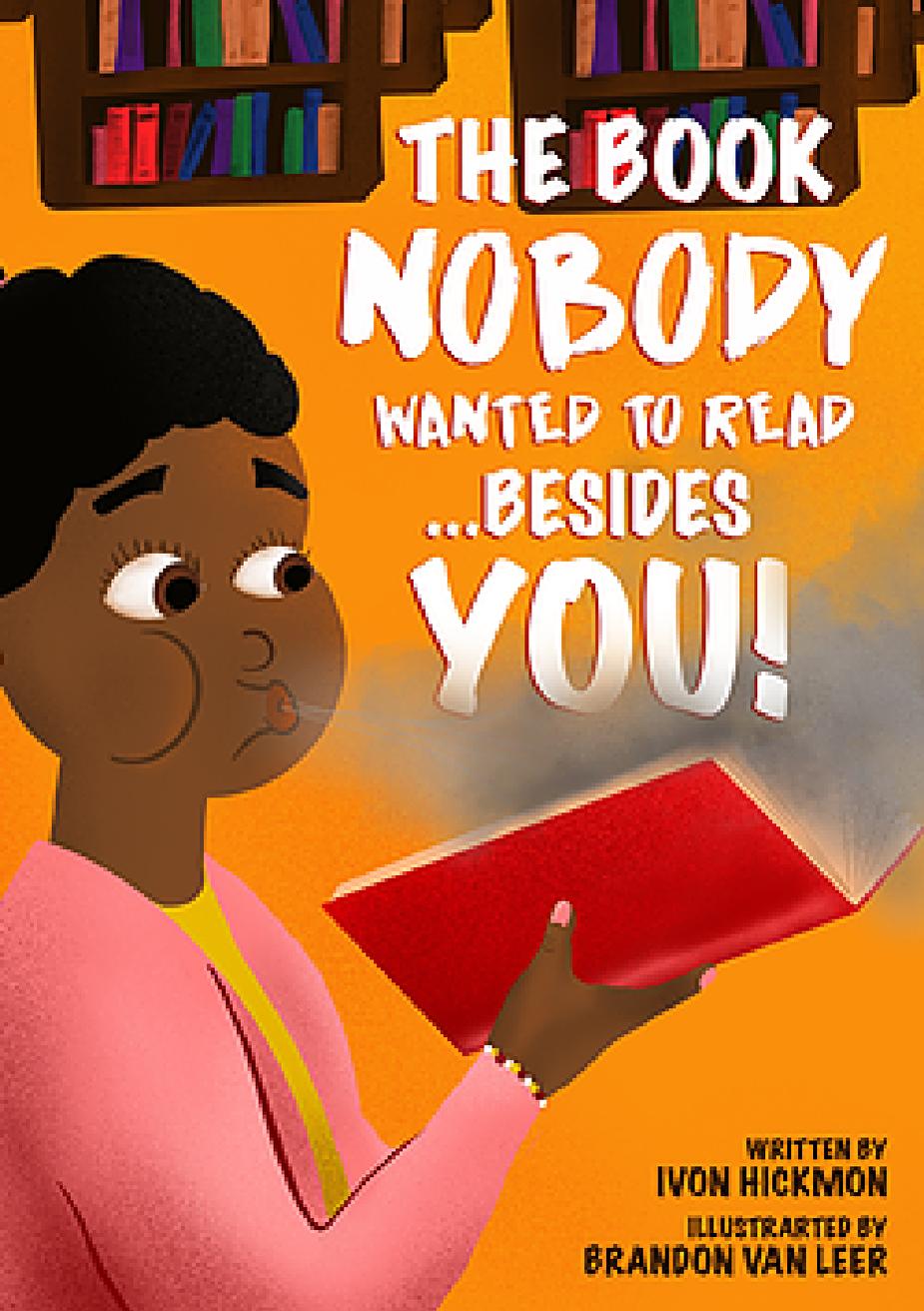
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football scholarship with honors and being selected as team captain and MVP.

A true "girl dad," Ivon spends hours visiting both his daughters' schools, cultivating children through the power of reading. These visits propelled Ivon to release his debut children's book, *The Book Nobody Wanted to Read...Besides You*, a fun and silly book that introduces children to emotional intelligence and inclusion.

**Inclusion**

**Diversity**

**Unity**

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This beautiful story captures the need for inclusivity and emotional intelligence. Readers are introduced to the protagonist, as she shows empathy and compassion towards our book character. By definition, inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group. Inclusion must be taught and fought for. Equipping children is essential for this life's journey. Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. This dynamic story teaches your children a proven, practical tactic to develop emotional intelligence skills. After reading this story, children will be empowered to love and embrace themselves fully and gain awareness of their emotional state.

**About the Author:** The youngest son out of three boys to military parents, Ivon found his dreams of playing among the NFL greats were closer than he'd ever imagine. Ivon's football career journeyed from "last man" on the roster to earning his

A portrait of a man with a shaved head and a goatee, sitting on concrete steps. He is wearing a blue textured blazer, a purple shirt, and a grey patterned tie. He has his hands clasped in his lap and is wearing a watch with a brown leather strap on his left wrist. The background shows a brick wall and more steps.

**Ivon Hickmon**



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Large Vision Business Network Mixer

# 2020

HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL  
NEW YEAR

Building  
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# Returning to Sports Post-Pandemic

Written By: Jordan Peters

As an athlete who chose to stop playing sports during the pandemic, it is intriguing to see my peers go through with their athletics. Personally, I chose to stop playing sports due to people in my household having an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Currently, my school has lifted all restrictions on athletics. With the increased outbreak of COVID-19, including the Delta variant, I feel that we should continue with safety measures.

Dr. Wilson, who is an epidemiologist that studied at Yale medicine says, "Delta was spreading 50% faster than Alpha, which was 50% more contagious than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2"

Safety measures such as continuously wearing masks indoors, social distancing, having sports outside or in well ventilated areas when applicable, and getting vaccinated are still needed.

Additionally, schools can keep athletes safe by doing frequent COVID-19 tests as well as making sure athletes wash their hands, and keep them away from their face at all times. From a youth perspective, what are we teaching the younger generations if we continue to prolong doing all that we can to end

covid? How is this teaching the upcoming generations to handle things in the future? With environmental crises such as ice caps melting, there is no doubt that unidentified diseases will be in our future.

For the first time in over a year, I will be participating in athletics. This is extremely frightening but also provides a sense of normalcy for me. As we continue on the road post pandemic, it is important that we continue to take the necessary measures for athletes to be safe.



(<https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/5-things-to-know-delta-variant-covid>).

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# FORGIVENESS

is a perfectly selfish act. It sets you free from the past.

Brian Tracy quote 2016



## "Pardon Day" A time to Reflect on Forgiveness

Written By Paula Margus

Pardon Day is celebrated on September 8. The word 'pardon' has a legal meaning: 'a release from the penalty of an offense by a higher authority figure'. (<https://nationaltoday.com/pardon-day/>). Pardons by American presidents and U.S. state governors are probably familiar. Presidents throughout American history have exercised their constitutional authority to pardon for federal offenses. George Washington was the first President to exercise the pardon power in 1795.

While Pardon Day might have a contentious origin, it has a more universal meaning – a day to seek and give forgiveness. Pardon Day allows us to reflect upon our feelings and aim to be more forgiving.

Forgiveness is the desire to let go of negative feelings towards a person who has wronged us. It's an act of goodwill and involves a change of attitude from the person that has been wronged. Forgiveness is one of the principal teachings of many religions. For example, Buddhists believe that forgiveness is a critical step on the path towards enlightenment. Judaism views forgiveness as a pious act, even if the person who was wronged hasn't received an apology. In Islam, forgiveness is a prerequisite to find inner peace and is a better course of action whenever possible. (<https://nationaltoday.com/pardon-day/>)

We can also reflect on Pardon Day as an opportunity to incorporate forgiveness as part of our belief system, and not just to be recognized one day a year.



When it's time to say goodnight to your little ones, turn on:

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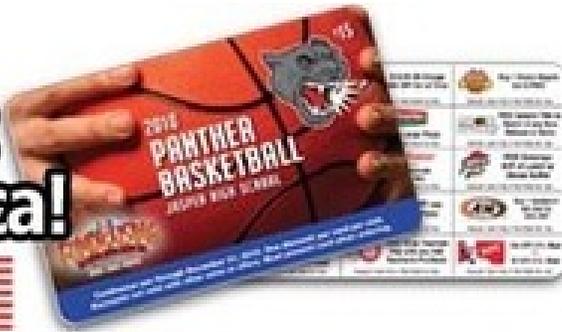
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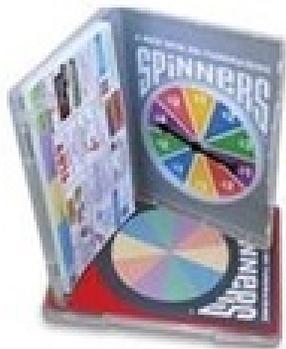
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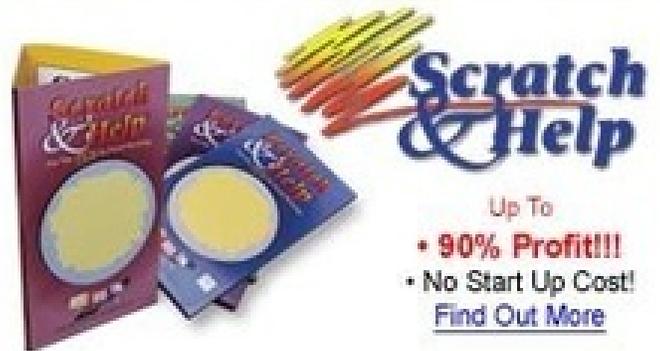
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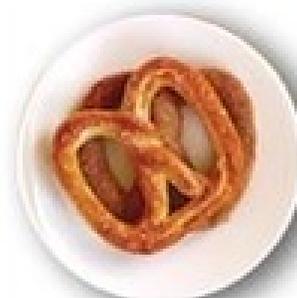
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# The Mindful Corner

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling.

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling.

Take a mindful minute

Breath-in  
Breath-out  
Relax

## The Five Minute Journal

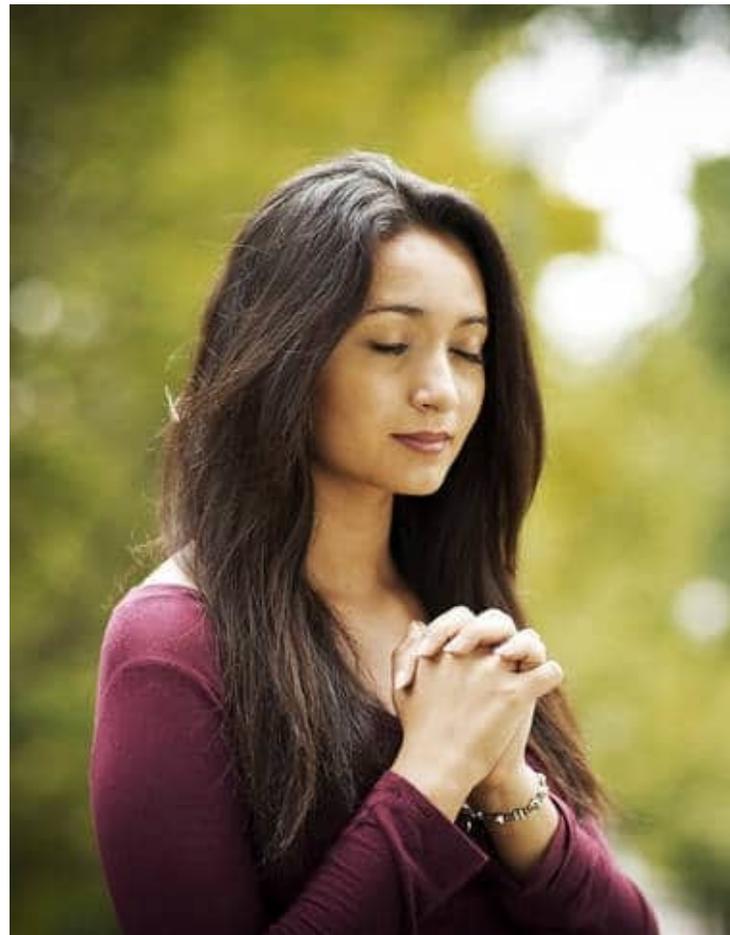
This exercise is centered around gratitude, a positive psychology technique. Here are 5 daily questions to answer in your journal of choice:

**IN THE MORNING**- Set your intention for the day

- (1) What are you grateful for?
- (2) What would make today great?
- (3) Daily affirmation. I am...

**AT NIGHT**- End your day on a high-note and reflect

- (4) 3 Amazing things that happened today...
- (5) How could I have made today even



# Message from the *Editor*

**Loney Nguyen**  
**Editor in Chief**



As summer winds down and the wonder of fall begins, I enjoy taking the time to reflect on the beauty of nature as it recharges my philanthropic spirit. In my clinical practice, I often remind my clients to take the time to practice mindfulness in every aspect of their lives. Something that is particularly special to me, is spending time with mother nature. As my responsibilities have grown in my professional life, I have made it my intention to take time away from work so I can “refill my cup.” One way I did that this summer was to take a trip to Las Vegas to connect with my “forever family” and visit the Grand Canyon for the first time. The Grand Canyon West Rim, was an idyllic place to recharge your energy and reconnect with nature. There was a sense of peace

that I felt gazing into the vast untouched, sacred land of the Hualapai tribe. I share this personal journey of mine to remind us all the importance of taking the time to center yourself and find your peace. Working within child welfare, the world of advocacy and the journey of healing from trauma or supporting a loved one in their healing is all emotionally taxing work. To all the professionals, volunteers, resource parents, mentors, thank you for all that you do. Please make sure you take the time to “fill your cup” so you can continue pouring love to all of our children.



**About the Editor-in-Chief:** Ms. Loney Nguyen pronounced (Lonnie) is a licensed clinical social worker, professional model, and servant leader. Loney is the Director of Programs for WHALER’s Creation and serves as Editor in Chief of Youth News magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER’s Creation and Maryland’s appointed Foster Youth Ombuds. An expert in youth engagement, she has over 13 years of lived and professional child welfare experience in Maryland, and 7 years supervisory experience in the District of Columbia. An international pageant Queen, she was crowned Miss Baltimore United States, 2019 and Miss Vietnam DC, 2014 respectively. When she is not competing in pageants, she volunteers her time as a local/national pageant judge, coach, and teaches life skills & etiquette classes to encourage a positive self image that ignites the Royal Queen/King in youth and adults.

# Meet our TEAM

## GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM Youth Under 21



**Liam**, a photographer / host of 60 Second Sports Talk on KFAM Youth Radio. He is a recent high school graduate with dreams of becoming a professional sports anchor or sports attorney.

# Foster



**Lenna** is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience.

# Adopt



**Tolu** is an African writer, who uses her voice to advocate for change. She writes articles, poetry and screenplays alongside finishing her first novel to be published Spring 2022. When she is not writing, she loves fashion and cloud watching.

# Mentor



Jordan, enjoys running, sports, and writing. As of now, she is not sure what career path she wants to pursue, but writing and academic maybe apart of her future.

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# Meet our TEAM

## GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM Contributing Writers over 21



Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, "What you speak is what you seek." As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.



Ronald Neubauer retired in February of 2018 after being an attorney in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps for 21 years and then a Defense Department civilian for 20 years. He specialized in international law and was privileged to work in 38 countries. In addition to volunteering as an editor and writer for WHALER's Creation, he also volunteers with Inova Fairfax Hospital and Compassus Hospice and Palliative Care. His hobbies include playing guitar, sailing, and reading.



Paula Margus, is a Quality Program Specialist, is always looking for opportunities to make improvements. She applies this to her personal life as well and enjoys helping others to improve their lives. She is very involved in her community and is passionate about youth advocacy, social justice and equality; animal rescue/adoption and health self-advocacy.

Paula is a long-time resident of VA.

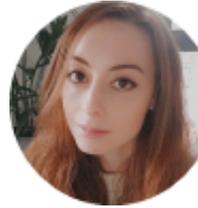


Adria Kinney loves reading and writing and is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for underserved youth. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in International Education, and resides in Washington, D.C. where she works as

Program Officer for FHI 360.



Sarah Holcomb is a Human Resources professional and a graduate student studying organizational psychology. With a passion for personal development, she lives by the mantra "I never dreamed of success, I worked for it" (Estee Lauder). In her spare time, she enjoys staying active and riding her electric scooter around Washington, D.C., which she calls home.



Christa Cooke is a software engineer with a keen interest in technology, LGBTQ+ issues, politics, and the intersections between the three. She is an aspiring writer and avid sci-fi and fantasy reader, with a dream of one day publishing a novel of her own. Christa has spent much of her twenties traveling; she's now chosen to make Washington D.C. her home, close to her chosen family.

Coming Soon



Samantha Cooper is a 20-something writer living in the DMV area. She runs a blog, "Scoop's Animation Corner" where she reviews animated movies and TV shows. She is also the co-runner of the YouTube channel, "Chamber of Spoilers."

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