

Mental Health Matters

Everyone Has A Story



Summer Bucket List:

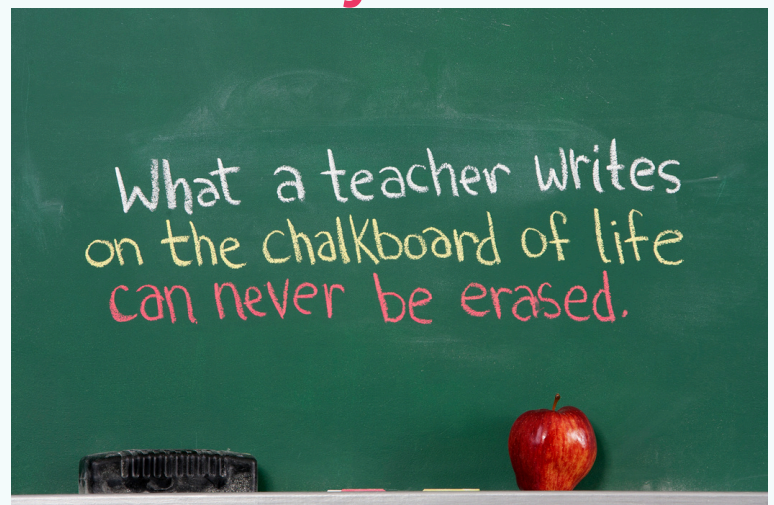
- Gaze at the stars
- Barbecue a new recipe
- Have a picnic
- Sleep under the stars
- Play in the rain
- Watch fireworks
- Take a road trip
- Watch an outdoor movie
- Enjoy a campfire
- Hike a new trail
- Visit a National Park
- Read a new book
- Learn a new hobby

May 2024

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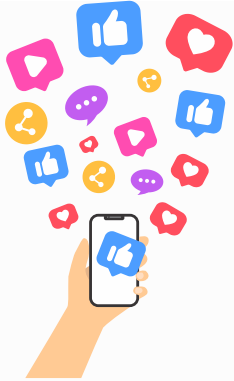
Teacher Appreciation Week
May 6-10

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month



DID YOU KNOW?

Mental illness affects more than 50 million Americans,
over 20% of adults in the U.S.

1 in 6 children ages 6-17 in the U.S.
experience a mental disorder.

Anxiety is the most commonly reported
mental illness in the U.S. followed
by depression



SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH: According to the U.S. Surgeon General, up to 95% of youth ages 13-17 and 40% of kids ages 8-12 report using social media and nearly 2/3 of teens report using social media daily with 1/3 report using it “almost constantly.” The Surgeon General’s advisory reports there is not enough evidence to determine if social media use is sufficiently safe for young people. While there are positive impacts of social media, the negative impacts are very alarming. Social media can provide benefits to students by providing connection and belonging for youth who are often marginalized such as students with disabilities. However, social media’s exposure to extreme, inappropriate, and harmful content drastically increases the risk for experiencing mental health diagnoses such as anxiety and depression. Young people who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media face double the risk of poor mental health which is alarming as teenagers indicated spending on average 3.5 hours per day on social media. When asked about the impact of social media on their body image, 46% of adolescents ages 13-17 report social media makes them feel worse, 40% report it neither makes them feel better or worse, and 14% report it makes them feel better. 64% of adolescents report being “often” or “sometimes” exposed to hate based content. Some social media platforms show self-harm and suicide content which has been linked to tragic deaths of young people. Social media can be excessive and problematic, impacting young people’s sleep.

What can we do? As parents and caregivers, we can establish limits and boundaries around screen time in our households such as putting all devices in the parent’s room at night to protect sleep as well as modeling more in-person connection with one another. Children and adolescents can set healthy boundaries such as limiting their time on social media, blocking unwanted content on their devices, limit sharing of personal information, and reaching out for help for themselves or others if they experience or witness harassment and abuse. For more information, visit: www.surgeongeneral.gov



Prevention & Support Staff Spotlight



#ToroNation

Ms. Lily Casolaro is the school social worker at Spanish Fort High School. This is her 4th year with the Toros and she is looking forward to watching her first freshman class graduate this year. Ms. Casolaro attended Troy University where she earned her bachelor's in social work and she earned her master's in social work from the University of Alabama. She earned her clinical licensure last year. Ms. Casolaro previously worked in outpatient mental health services. She lives in Baldwin County and she has an adventurous spirit. She loves to travel and try new foods. She enjoys baking. When asked what she loves most about being the school social worker at Spanish Fort High, she states that she loves to witness "light bulb moments" with students as she celebrates their growth and special life moments.

Mrs. Amber Eurgil is the senior counselor at Spanish Fort High School. This is her 7th year as a Toro and her 12th year as a school counselor. She has been in education for a total of 21 years. She earned her bachelor's in education with a history composite as well as her master's in school counseling from the University of South Alabama. Mrs Eurgil lives in Spanish Fort with her husband and they have three children; Isabella, age 21; DJ, age 19; and Canon, age 16 who is a junior at Spanish Fort High School. Her family loves Braves baseball, boating, and going to the beach. When asked what she loves most about being the senior school counselor, she describes it being super rewarding to watch her student transition to college or the workforce.

Dr. Sharon Lawless is the sophomore school counselor at Spanish Fort High School. She has been with Spanish Fort High School for 8 years and previously taught English. She has received her education from The University of Mobile, University of South Alabama, and the University of Sarasota. When asked what she loves most about being the sophomore school counselor at Spanish Fort High School, she stated working with the students.

Mrs. Jena Lindsey is the junior counselor at Spanish Fort High School. This is her 9th year with the Toros and she has been a school counselor for 14 years. She has been in education for 20 years. She earned her bachelor's in early childhood education from Auburn University and her master's in school counseling from the University of West Alabama. Mrs Lindsey and her husband of 24 years have two children; Walker, age 19 and Madelyn, age 15 who is a freshman at Spanish Fort High School. Her family loves Auburn football and visiting the lake. Mrs. Lindsey says that being the junior counselor is very rewarding and she loves watching the students succeed and making a difference in their lives.

Mr. James Rhea is the freshman counselor at Spanish Fort High School. He coaches football and basketball. This is his first year at Spanish Fort High School and his fourth year in education. He previously served as school counselor at a school in Huntsville, AL. Mr. Rhea earned both his bachelors in communications and his master's in school counseling from The University of South Alabama. He is currently working on earning his EDS in school counseling. Mr. Rhea lives in Mobile with his dog, Knoille, a blood hound and labrador mix. He enjoys doing home projects and working on cars. He loves playing golf. Mr. Rhea enjoys building rapport with the students he coaches and he finds working with freshman students to be most rewarding as he helps them transition into high school.

THE TEAM



Pictured left to right: Dr. Sharon Lawless, Mr. James Rhea, Mrs. Amber Eurgil, Ms. Lily Casolaro, and Mrs. Jena Lindsey

May is Tourette's Awareness Month

Tourette's Awareness Month is a campaign that seeks to raise awareness of Tourette Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary movements and vocalizations known as tics. The latest research indicates that Tourette's Syndrome may affect about 1.4 million people in the U.S. and about 1 in 50 children ages 5-14 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, parent reported data found that 1 out of every 333 children 3-17 years of age in the United States have received the diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome which is 0.3% of children. Boys are about 3 times more likely to have Tourette's than girls. Children from all racial and ethnic groups as well as socio-economic backgrounds have similar estimates for the diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome. There is no cure for Tourette Syndrome; however, there are treatments available to help manage the tics. There are medication and behavioral treatments if tics cause pain or injury, interfere with school, work, or social life or cause stress.

Brad Cohen



Brad Cohen is a motivational speaker, teacher, school administrator, and author who has Tourette Syndrome. He was born in 1973 and throughout his young childhood, he was accused of being a troublemaker by his teachers and teased by his peers for making noises (tics) that he could not control due to Tourette Syndrome. After graduating college from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois with a degree in elementary education, he was rejected by 24 elementary schools before being hired at Tritt Elementary School in Cobb County, Georgia. As a new teacher, he was named Georgia's First Class Teacher of the Year in 1997. In 2005, Cohen's book, *Front of the Class: How Tourette Syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had* was published. He appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show (see link below) in 2006 and in 2008, the book was made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, *Front of the Class*. The Brad Cohen Tourette Foundation is a nonprofit that helps raise awareness and support for children with Tourette Syndrome.

[Click Here](#)



"a positive outlook breeds success, just as a negative outlook breeds failure."

-Brad Cohen

