

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

## EVERYONE HAS A STORY

*"Be thankful for what you have;  
you'll end up having more. If you  
concentrate on what you don't have,  
you will never, ever have enough."*

Oprah Winfrey

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Adoption Month
- Prevention & Support Staff  
Spotlight
- World Kindness Day
- Native American Heritage Month
- National Diabetes Month
- Managing Holiday Stress

Begin and finish your days  
with thoughts of gratitude.  
Those first and final moments  
set the tone for the many  
minutes that fall in between.

ERICA LAYNE

November 28, 2023

#givingtuesday

• • • November 2023 • • •

# November is Adoption Month

Mrs. Mary Beth Nelson is a kindergarten teacher at Fairhope East Elementary School. She and her husband, Kenny, are both adopted. Mrs. Nelson was adopted from an orphanage in Kolkata, India when she was 7 months of age, by Mrs. Pat and the late Mr. Jim Lee. Mr. Nelson was adopted through a domestic placement. The two met at their mutual social worker's retirement party when they were both 3 years of age. They both grew up in Fairhope and began dating while sophomores at Fairhope High School. They married and now have 3 children, James (17), Abby (14), and Evie (8). Mrs. Nelson works part time at Children of The World, Inc, matching children with their forever families.



Adoption is a core value for the Nelsons and their families. In 2017, they traveled to India to bring home their daughter, Evie, age 2 at the time. Evie lived in an orphanage and had developmental delays and vision needs. Evie immediately bonded with her parents and siblings, making their family complete. Evie, age 8, attends Fairhope East Elementary School. She loves playing soccer, basketball, gymnastics, crafting, and drawing. The Nelson family loves spending time together, especially traveling to Disney World and Universal Studios.

## CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

BRINGING LOVE, HOPE, &  
HOMES TO THE ORPHANED.

*Psalm 68:5*

Children of the World Inc was founded by Mrs. Pat Lee (Mrs. Mary Beth Nelson's mother). Mrs. Lee is a Fairhope native and she and her late, husband, Jim Lee, had 10 children, 4 were "homemade," 5 were adopted internationally, and one came to spend the night, then stayed until she left home for college. Mrs. Lee recalls being called to adopt in 1973. It was during the years that followed, she was led to start the agency now known as Children of The World Inc. Mrs. Lee is lovingly referred as "Grandma Pat" by over 2,000 beloved children adopted through Children of The World for the past 25+ years. COTW believes that the birthright of every child is to be in a loving and nurturing home. COTW assist prospective adoptive families and birth mothers with a "hand holding" experience as they help navigate the journey to parenthood. The agency provides both international and domestic adoption programs. For more information, visit [www.childrenoftheworld.com](http://www.childrenoftheworld.com)





# PREVENTION & SUPPORT STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*"He is always present in our hallways, constantly making his presence known with the faculty, students, and families. He is the most nurturing, kind, and patient individual I know. He is always in a happy disposition and helps me see the cup  $\frac{1}{2}$  full in all situations."*

*-Rebecca Johnson, School Counselor*



**Deputy Keith Stoffle**  
Belforest Elementary School

Deputy Keith Stoffle is the School Resource Officer for Belforest Elementary School. Belforest has over 1100 students Kindergarten through sixth grade. Deputy Stoffle has been with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for sixteen years and this is his second year serving Belforest Elementary School. Deputy Stoffle has worked in law enforcement for 27 years. He is retired from the military reserves after serving in the air force for eight years and the coastguard reserve for 23 years. Deputy Stoffle and his wife live in Belforest. They have 2 adult children and four grandchildren with one on the way. Deputy Stoffle enjoys doing projects at home and traveling, especially visiting his grandchildren in Colorado. Deputy Stoffle loves building relationships with the students and teachers at Belforest. He enjoys being in the classrooms teaching safety programs and DARE curriculum to all the grade levels.

## World Kindness Day

**World Kindness Day is  
Monday, November 13, 2023**

According to [www.stand4kind.com](http://www.stand4kind.com), up to 1 out of 5 kids living in the United States, shows signs or symptoms of a mental health disorder each year. Most of these students who need mental health services (nearly 80%) will not get them. We should all spread kindness and reflect on Mother Teresa's quote:

*"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across waters to create many ripples."*

**7 WAYS TO START MAKING KINDNESS THE NORM IN YOUR DAILY LIFE:**

- 1 Send an uplifting text to a friend or family member.
- 2 Let that guy merge into traffic with a wave and a smile.
- 3 Include intentional moments of kindness, laughter and delight in your daily routine.
- 4 Go slightly outside of your comfort zone at least once a day to make someone smile.
- 5 Share a compliment with a co-worker or friend.
- 6 Reach out to a family member you haven't spoken to in awhile.
- 7 Treat someone to a cup of coffee (a friend, stranger, or even yourself).

**make kindness the norm.**

#WorldKindnessDay  
#MakeKindnessTheNorm  
[www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org)

# Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month or commonly referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. It is a time to reflect and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and contributions of Native people. In 1986 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed November 23 to November 30 as “American Indian Week.” However, after much advocacy by Native leaders in the US, President George H.W. Bush passed a bill with Congress, declaring November as “National American Indian Heritage Month.” Below are some Native American trailblazers.



**Jason Momoa, (Pawnee, Native Hawaiian), star of Aquaman**



**Sharice Davids (Ho-Chuck), 116th House of Representatives**



**Creed Humphrey (Potawatomi Nation), Kansas City Chiefs center**



**Temryss Lane (Golden Eagle Clan, Lummi Nation), professional soccer player and sports journalist and analyst.**



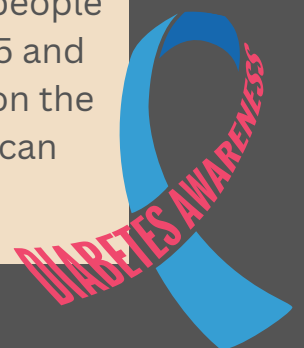
**Anthony Kiedis, (Mohican), musician with Red Hot Chili Peppers**



**John Herrington, (Chickasaw), astronaut and in 2002 was the first member of a Native American tribe to fly in space**

## • • • National Diabetes Month • • •

November is National Diabetes Month. It is a time for communities across the United States to bring awareness to the disease that affects 37.3 million people in America, that is 11.3% of the population. It was first recognized in 1975 and officially declared by President Ronald Reagan in 1981. For information on the warning signs of diabetes and how to manage diabetes, visit the American Diabetes Association at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).





# • • • Making Our Spirits Bright • • •

The holiday season is upon us. Often, this time of the year can be overwhelming, stressful, and bring unwanted depression during what is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year. The Mayo Clinic provides helpful tips on managing the holidays so that you have a stress free and enjoyable season with family and friends.

- **Plan ahead.** Make lists and keep an organized calendar of what events and commitments you wish to participate.
- **Say no.** No is a complete sentence so give yourself the permission to say no to invites and requests that cause you stress.
- **Plan spending.** Create a budget and stick to it. While giving gifts brings us joy, we should not go into debt doing so. There are lots of creative ways to give gifts that are more affordable. Examples include, baking goodies or making gifts such as pottery, soaps, pepper jellies, and lotions.
- **Create relaxing surroundings.** Create a pleasant home by lighting candles, opening your windows on a pretty day, or playing music. Research has found that listening to music and citrus scents can boost feelings of well-being.
- **Maintain healthy habits.** Make time to move your body. Drink lots of water particularly before heading to a holiday party so you won't be apt to overindulge in unhealthy foods.
- **Share feelings.** For many people, the holidays can be depressing especially after the loss of a loved one or relationship. Give yourself grace and validate your feelings. Some traditions may need to be altered. Communicate with your loved ones and lean into your support system.
- **Respect differences.** Our families often have differences in perspectives, and we are better able to navigate that when we embrace one another and lean into our similarities or engage in something productive together, such as a service project or a fun experience together.
- **Be realistic.** You are only one person, and you can only do so much. Set boundaries and give yourself grace.
- **Take a break.** Take the time for your own self-care. Take a nap, read a book, watch something funny. Laughter truly is good medicine and will relieve physical tension in your body.



November 28, 2023, is **GIVING TUESDAY**. Giving Tuesday is a global movement to inspire all of humanity to be radically generous. Giving Tuesday falls annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

There are many ways to give.

## GIVE TIME

- Volunteer at a local Thrift Shop, Prodissee Pantry, or shelter.
- Visit a local nursing home.
- Volunteer with your school's PTO

## GIVE SUPPORT

Our local nonprofit agencies need financial support more than ever. You can give monetarily or create a fundraiser or drive through social media.

## GIVE GRATITUDE

- Write a thank you note to a public servant.
- Make a treat basket for a local first responders' office, your school staff, or a nursing home.
- Share social media posts thanking community helpers.

## GIVE HELP

- Help your neighbor with yard work, moving their trash can, etc
- Cook a meal for someone who has been sick or has a new baby.
- Organize a relief drive to help pay for someone's rent or utilities.

## GIVE SKILLS

Use your talents and gifts for others. For example, give lessons or tutor a child who is struggling with a subject.

