

WHAT HELPS US

Monroe School District's Newsletter for Social and Emotional Wellness



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[SEL in Monroe Schools](#)

[Connecting with Friends](#)

[Healthy Activities](#)

[Family Connection](#)

[Mental Health Matters](#)

[Resources](#)

WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

In the Monroe School District we serve the whole child. This means teaching is more than engaging students in academic instruction, but also developing your child’s resiliency and long-term opportunity for wellness and success. Social emotional learning builds lifelong protective factors that improve grades and graduation, prevent substance use and mental health disorders, and reduce crime and poverty.

In this and future editions of “What Helps Us,” we will unleash access to the eight life changing protective factors promoted by the Sources of Strength program at Monroe High School.



The Sources of Strength Wheel is a tool our students use to identify areas of strength we can lean into during difficult times, and areas of deficit that we can build-up to better weather the storms of life. As you thumb through this first issue of “What Helps Us,” we hope you will find new ways to “Work the Wheel” for yourself and your family!



SEL in Monroe School District



SEL Takes a Village

From the first day of kindergarten through graduation, our students learn how to be good students, citizens, and friends. This is important work, and it takes a carefully coordinated effort.

In classrooms, **teachers & school counselors** teach students how to identify feelings, manage conflict, and ask for help. When students need extra support, they turn to their school counselors for a listening ear and thoughtful guidance.

Some students need a little extra help to focus, learn, and succeed. For students showing behavioral struggles, the school team including a student's **teachers, school counselor, administrator, & school psychologist** may come together to help. For those in special education, the **District Behavior Analyst** may provide additional support.

Not all of our students are dealt a fair hand in life. To help fill in the gaps, our **school-based social workers, behavioral health specialists, prevention specialists, and family liaisons** work to wrap around our young people and their families in support of increased stability and good health.

We strive to work closely with **parents and community partners**, because raising extraordinary students takes a village.

Coming soon: Monroe SD's SEL webpage at www.monroe.wednet.edu/families/SEL

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This newsletter is a collaborative effort among school district departments. If you are interested in contributing to future issues of this newsletter, please contact us at sel@monroe.wednet.edu for more information. All are welcome!

Connecting with Friends

Remote Activities to Keep Us Connected

We may be stuck at home, but we can still have fun with our friends!



Online Parties

Tips:

1. Prepare all the materials before joining the online party.
2. Send meeting reminders to each other beforehand.
3. Useful resources
 - a. Online Lego Competition (bit.ly/onlinelegos)
 - b. Trivia at home (kahoot.com)
 - c. Craft ideas: HP Print, Play & Learn (bit.ly/hpcrafts)
 - d. Newspaper fashion show (Pinterest.com)



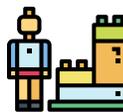
Zoom Tea Party



Online Makeup Party



Online Treasure Hunt



Online Lego Competition



Online Playdate/Hangout



Trivia At Home



Online Craft Party



Zoom Newspaper Fashion Show



Zoom Talent Show



Online Book Club



Math Calculation Competition



Poem Club



Coding Club

Learning Together

Does anyone miss learning together with their friends or classmates? Here are some fun ways that you can learn together remotely!

Tips:

1. Book Club: Read before you join so that you can share your valuable insights.
2. Calculation Competition: Prepare a timer before you start.
3. Poem Club: Share or create your own poem with your friends.
4. Coding Club: Create and design a website or play *Scratch* together (scratch.mit.edu).

Healthy Activities

Healthy activities are important for wellness. Not only do they boost our physical health, healthy activities provide nourishment for our hearts and minds. **What are healthy habits and activities for your family?** We asked some MSD families this very question!

One family, **the Chapmans,** told us they'd intended on camping Memorial Day weekend. But with COVID-19 AND a terrible weather forecast, they decided to go camping...in their backyard. One of their children, Ethan, challenged himself to stay outside for the whole weekend. And guess what? He did it!



Ethan's mom, Kim Chapman said, **"Every Memorial Day weekend we camp and go to the Winthrop rodeo...so this year we recreated it in the backyard."**

The Chapman kids camping in their backyard to recreate their favorite Memorial Day traditions.

At the rodeo Kim says the family always eat ice cream cones and play mini golf. "We recreated the rodeo events; we set up mini golf with plastic cups, had story time, sang *Proud to be an American* at the top of our lungs, ran obstacle courses in the rain, ate our sweet treats, caught a frog, and set off fireworks!"

In the end it only rained on the last day. "But between the tent, kids play house, and our canopy, we had lots of options for fun." What can be more healthy than playing outside and finding ways to have fun? Like Kim said: "So many memories were made."

Before Memorial Day weekend we gave the **Ndukwe family** a special challenge.

Pamela (mom) and Collins (dad) were given a list of "healthy activities" from our partner, Sources of Strength. I asked them to read the list, pick some activities, and report back on what they'd recommend to other families.

The activity this family chose? **Host a nighttime dance party!** Pamela reports, "We held our dance party one night. We played some Kids' bop and Nigerian music." Once the music started they copied dance moves from the music video. They were jumping, dancing, laughing. "Then, my son got his play microphone. My husband even used my son's foot as a microphone! It was so fun. By the end of the night my husband was really tired!...We realized that just doing things together makes the kids happy. It makes us happy."

They found other fun healthy activities to do together too. They have begun a new family tradition where they **cook together as a family.** After finding a new recipe from their cookbook, mom and dad cook with all the kids. Then, the best part? They enjoy the meal together, outside.



The Ndukwe family trying out new healthy recipes. Even their young kids are learning to cook together!

So, what healthy activities do you do with your family?

Sometimes the answer is obvious: we can exercise, put limits on screen time, or eat healthy meals. But sometimes it's less obvious, and less traditional. Whatever you're doing, if you find yourselves laughing, smiling, enjoying the moment, feeling calm, or catching your breath, you're doing something healthy for yourself and your family.

Family Connection

For many people, family is a key source of strength and support – especially during the past few months of school closure and quarantine with loved ones! We asked our students how their families are helping them stay strong and focused, and this is what they said:

"They've given me the space to get my work done without distraction." ~ Noah Wilson, Senior

"They gave me all the support I needed through high school to succeed." ~ Kevin Rojas, Senior

"The first week we started Zoom meetings, I remember my parents waking up in the morning and going through the emails and Canvas to see if I had a class and what time. My dad helps me with my French class assignment when I need help. They also push me to do all my work so I can reach my goal to get good grades."

~ Emerance Bernard, Junior

"My mom printed out an easier schedule to read because it was hard to understand." ~ Andrea Compton, Junior

"They have reminded me to get work done and kept the house quiet while I was taking quizzes or AP tests."

~ Anonymous Bearcat, Junior

"They helped me stay motivated and on track with all of my assignments." ~ Anonymous Bearcat, Sophomore

...Mind the quarantine blues...

Tip for parents:

Remember that the school closure has been tough on kids who miss their peers and normal activities. Consider allowing a little extra screen time for your teen to connect with friends, and spend time talking to them about how they are feeling.

Remember:

Amidst the stress of change and adjustment in the past months, it is important to allow a little extra grace – for your child and yourself!

Some of our high school students shared their deep frustration and sadness over missing out on the last several months of school. They shared that, not only do they miss their friends and teachers, they also miss learning! They miss the routine and the fun they have at school.

One student shared about her family:

"I wish they understood that I don't just use school to socialize, I want to learn too. I haven't done much work at home so they think that I act the same at school, but I don't, I'm more productive at school than I am at home."

As adults, we need to remember that our young people spend an incredible amount of their time and energy on school activities, and when they do not have that, they feel a significant loss.

Mental Health Matters

Many of us regularly engage in physical exercise for good physical health. There are also activities we can do each day to keep our mental health strong! For a good mood-booster, try talking to a friend, video-chat with a loved one, make yourself a delicious snack, or one of these...

Make a **glitter jar**.
Students of all ages
love the calming effects
of glitter jars.

Instructions:
bit.ly/glitterjarsforkids

Practice gratitude!
Make a **gratitude chain**
by writing down one
thing – every day – that
you are grateful for and
watch your chain grow!

Each day when you wake
up, **think of three things**
that you are excited
about!



The impact of the Coronavirus has been stressful on people of all ages in recent months. This pandemic has become a widespread mental health crisis, just as much as a physical health crisis. The stress of health risks, job losses, school-based changes, quarantine, and the loss of access to loved ones and favorite activities is hard on all of us.

If you or a loved one is struggling with feelings of sadness, overwhelm, anger, hopelessness, or if you just need someone to talk to, help is available!

Contact your school counselor (available September through June), or call the MSD Student Support Advocates at 360-804-2528.

For a multitude of resources in Snohomish County, dial 2-1-1.

We will get through this, Monroe.

Stay strong, stay healthy!

Make a Feel Good Plan

Feel Good Plans are a list of things you can THINK, SAY & DO to feel better and relieve stress when tension rises. You can make one for you, or one for your whole family!

1. **THINK:** Write down some positive thoughts that you can remember, and that will help you calm your mind. Example: *"I am trying my best and working hard. This stress is temporary."*
2. **SAY:** Think of some empowering phrases that energize and uplift you. Example: *"I got this!"*
3. **DO:** List things that help you calm your brain and body. Example: *Breathe, sing, talk to a friend.*



Finding Mental Health Support

Summer sunshine may be almost here, but the blues can strike at any time. And given the challenges in recent months alone, we all need a little extra support. *Remember that help is only a phone call away!* If you or a loved one would like to talk with a mental health professional in the community, here are some tips to get connected...

Call your insurance company.

Ask them:

- *What are my behavioral health benefits?*
- *Do I have a deductible or a co-pay? (These are amounts that you may need to pay.)*
- *Do I have a limit on the number of appointments that will be covered?*
- *Please send me a list of providers in my area who accept my insurance.*



In case of an emergency

Call 911 immediately

For non-emergencies

Call the free and confidential Snohomish County Crisis Line at (800) 584-3578. They are available 24 hours a day.

Or call the MSD Student Support Advocates at (360) 804-2528. They will gladly help you explore your options.

Local Resources

Food Services:

Sky Valley Food Bank
www.svfoodbank.org
Tel: (360) 794-7959

Maltby Food Bank
www.maltbyfoodbank.org
Tel: (360) 668-7900

School lunches will continue to be available for students throughout the summer. Call your school for details.

Crisis Services:

Snohomish County Crisis Line
Tel: (800) 584-3578

Financial Support:

Take the Next Step
www.ttns.org
Tel: (360) 794-1022

Safe Teen Shelter:

Cocoon House
www.cocoonhouse.org
Tel: (425) 877-5171

Childcare:

Boys and Girls Club of Monroe
bgcsc.org/snohomish-clubs/monroe-club
Tel: (360) 794-4775

Monroe/Sky Valley Family YMCA
ymca-snoco.org
Tel: (360) 805 1879

School District Staff:

School Counselors
Call (360) 804-2500 and ask to be directed to your school counselor
(September through June)

MSD Student Support Advocates
Tel: (360) 804-2528

Special thanks to:



Washington State
Health Care Authority



MONROE
SCHOOL DISTRICT