



# Cultural Bridges

INFORMATION TO HELP FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT **ENGLISH**

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Between School  
and Home

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Dear Readers,

For ten months now, we have seen signs everywhere telling us to stay six feet apart, emphasizing the need for physical separation. While I agree that this is a very important message to help keep us safe, we don't need to be emotionally distant. Physically apart, yes, but that social connection is exactly what families and children need during this pandemic. We need to make an effort to connect –digitally- with each other. And believe me, I know how hard it is to get excited about another online event!

We need to take a chance to reach out within our school community virtually and with social media. As with many of the ISD schools, PTAs are offering creative events such as coffee chats, coloring contests, and talent shows. For details, see the calendar on page 12. PTAs have also created Facebook pages, WhatsUp and WeChat groups so parents can keep in touch with each other (page 15).

February is Black History Month, making it the perfect time to highlight African American culture and the Black experience in our District.

During these ten months, Cultural Bridges outreach and support has been in high demand. We have connected with many families who reached out to us, helping them to get the resources that are available for the Issaquah School District community. We understand that it is especially difficult to seek support when English is not your first language, and you may never have done something like this before. Our program is offering Community Presentation Events by Zoom where we share available resources to help families in our District. If you would like to know more about these events, please send us an email at [culturalbridges@isfdn.org](mailto:culturalbridges@isfdn.org).

We are welcoming a new member to our editorial team! Laura Ni is now Cultural Bridges Assistant Editor. Laura is a longtime parent in our District. She has two beautiful girls in Apollo Elementary, and she has been an important part of her PTA for many years. We are very excited to have her on our team!

We sincerely hope that 2021 brings health, peace, love and fun to your family. Remember that in these uncertain times, our program is here to support you. Don't hesitate to contact us; we would love to hear from you!

**ALICIA SPINNER**  
*Cultural Bridges Program Manager*  
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**Cultural Bridges**  
Issaquah Schools Foundation

Building relationships between families from diverse cultures, their children, the Issaquah School District, and the broader Issaquah community.

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# Supporting Students During Remote Learning

The Issaquah Schools Foundation is consistently working to provide resources that effectively support our community – our current focus is on funding what students need most during remote learning. The Foundation remains committed to providing resources that support students both inside and outside the classroom.

**Academic Support** The Foundation funds teachers' time for after-school homework help. Particularly during remote school, time with a teacher is valuable and the Foundation supports student access to extra help they may need with their schoolwork. Each of the high schools and some of the middle schools have already implemented an after-school homework support program via zoom. Be sure to ask your student's school principal about this resource.

**Social & Emotional Support** Our current circumstances are challenging for everyone, including our students. So, we want to be sure we are supporting their social and emotional needs. Funded by the Foundation at all 5 middle schools, Character Strong curriculum offers a combination of social emotional and character development that is effective during remote learning as well as in the school building. Character Strong helps support a positive culture by teaching kindness, respect, selflessness, patience, humility, forgiveness, and honesty.



**Basic Needs Support** Via our Tools4School program the Foundation will provide 1200 school supply packs to students in need this year. We still have some available if you know of a family in need of supplies.

One of the specific supplies in demand this year is headsets. School from home means students participating in class via a computer, a scenario that can be extra challenging with multiple students and/or family members in a small space. Headsets can help reduce the noise but are not something everyone can afford. As such, the Foundation has made them available, helping with school time at home. If you or someone you know needs a headset with a microphone, please talk to your school counselor.

Support for other basics such as food, clothing, bus passes etc., are covered by a number of resources in our community including the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank and the nurses fund available at each school. Anyone may ask the school nurse or counselor about options for support.



**Professional Development** With funding from the Foundation, the Issaquah School District provided a professional development opportunity required for all counselors, Positive Behavioral Social Emotional Support (PBSES) and Special Education Specialists, ISD Equity and district personnel with training from renown speaker, Ashley McGirt, on how to handle trauma from racism. This is part of the ongoing PBSES intervention work and with a larger focus on trauma informed education to benefit all students.



# At home in the community.

It's more than hospitals and clinics. It's knowing what your family needs.  
And your first name. It's getting kids to be active, and young adults through college.  
Making it easier to live well. It's creating healthier communities, together.

## SWEDISH ISSAQUAH

751 NE Blakely Drive  
Issaquah, WA 98029  
425-313-4000  
[www.swedish.org/issaquah-kids](http://www.swedish.org/issaquah-kids)



# Getting to Know Alaina Sivadasan, ISD Executive Director of Equity

**CULTURAL BRIDGES:** Tell us about your position and what you do on a day-to-day basis.

**ALAINA SIVADASAN:** I am the Executive Director of Equity and my position is focused on Executive Limitations-16 (EL-16). EL-16 was adopted by the School Board and states. The official job description states:

"We believe that each student has the potential to achieve, and it is our responsibility to provide all students the opportunity and support needed to meet their highest capability in a safe and welcoming environment. We acknowledge that systemic and institutional inequities and bias exist, creating barriers for student achievement and well-being. We are committed to raising the achievement of all learners regardless of race, status, varied ability, mental health, English language fluency, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, trauma impact, and geography. Our culture should promote the identification and removal of barriers causing predictability and disproportionality of the highest and lowest achieving groups."

My work is focused on six key areas within EL-16:

1. Environment and Culture.
2. Data and Disproportionality.
3. Family and Community Engagement.
4. Community Partnerships.
5. Recruitment of staff of color.
6. Retention of staff of color.

On a day to day basis, I am setting up systems, meeting with other departments, meeting with the community, and putting plans in place to bring EL-16 to life and meet the needs of our students, families, and staff.

**CB: Why did you choose to work as the ISD Executive Director of Equity?**

**AS:** I am passionate about equity and diversity, and I feel the language and areas of focus in EL-16 are critical to allowing all of our students to feel they are important and that they matter. Being a person of color, having a husband and children of color, and being a former Elementary Principal, I feel that I have the lived experience and heart to do this work. I truly want the Issaquah School District to create an environment where all students, staff, and families thrive and feel a sense of belonging regardless of their race, religion, sexuality, identify, or ability.

**CB: What advice would you give to a parent who doesn't know how to talk to their kids about race?**

**AS:** District has an Equity and Cultural and Family Partnership website that you can access for resources, school and district information/videos, and updates on our work. Our website will be updated with a new look soon, and we appreciate your patience until that happens. The website is here: <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/equity>

**CB: Any exciting news you would like to share?**

**AS:** This year, the Issaquah School District rolled out Equity Building Leaders in each one of their school buildings. The Equity Building Leaders are supported by the Equity Department and their role is to be an equity and diversity resource to the buildings.



**CB: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself outside your work.**

**AS:** I am married and have two wonderful children. We love to travel as a family and enjoy skiing, hiking, and all things sports.

We also have a new puppy in our family. Her name is Rosie!



# Finding Balance Between School and Home

BY JUDITH FERNSTROM  
School Counselor at Grand Ridge Elementary

**School from home is hard.**

**It's hard for students.**

**It's hard for teachers.**

**And it's hard for parents and guardians.**

Two of the most difficult parts of this situation, especially for our youngest students, are the loss of social connection and differentiating between school and home. School and home used to be two very separate places. Now there is a constant struggle between which behaviors are appropriate for school and which ones are better for home, especially since they are now the same place. For some students, distance learning feels like there is no break from school any more. Additionally, social connections are the main incentive for some students to go to school. Dealing with the loss of that connection can be challenging. This loss can lead to sadness, loneliness, and grief, which impacts their behavior at home and can then impact your entire family and home life.

## Tips and tricks to help students and parents cope during this confusing time

**If you believe your child is dealing with serious mental health concerns**, please reach out to your school counselor or the Swedish School Based Mental Health Counselor assigned to your school. Their contact information can be found here: <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/counseling-services/SBHC>

**Your relationship with your child as their parent or guardian, as opposed to your relationship with them as their homeschool teacher, is the most important.** They need you to continue to be their safe, caring adult. We know this is a challenging time for everyone and due to the increased stress levels, it is quite likely that there will be times of frustration, on both sides. Here are two ideas to help you maintain those relationships and restore them when needed.

-Be prepared to spend time restoring that relationship after a tense moment or disagreement. When you both feel calmer is a great time to apologize and reaffirm to your child that their feelings are important to you. Then, take time to resolve the conflict, model how to manage big feelings and teach how to cope with stress.

-In the school setting, using a 5:1 ratio of positive statements to corrective statements is a common technique that teachers use to maintain and repair relationships with students. For every correction or negative reminder try to give 5 positive, encouraging statements. Be sure to be authentic though as children are experts at telling when an adult is being fake or insincere.



## Establish a designated school space to help your student easily differentiate between “being at school” and being at home.

-It does not need to be an elaborate schoolroom. It can be as simple as a square of blue tape on the floor where the learning device lives and most of the learning happens. With that said, flexibility is key because there may be times when more space will be needed for a large project, or your student may want a comfy spot to do their independent reading.

-Be sure that their school space has access to an outlet for charging and all the supplies they need for the day like charging cords, paper and pencils, headphones, and daily schedules. Please be sure to reach out to your school for help getting set up with technology or school supplies, even headphones.

-Help them become more independent learners by: having them practice navigating through all their learning platforms on their own, posting their daily schedules in their learning space and helping them learn to make daily checklists of “to-dos.”

**Encourage social connection with peers even if it is only virtual.** That might be as simple as turning on their cameras during class morning meetings. Check with your school to see if they are able to offer any social opportunities such as a lunchtime meet up with the counselor and/or PBSES coach. Social connection is a critical part of mental health well-being so finding ways to be creative about it now is incredibly important. Please do have conversations with your students about the importance of being safe, appropriate, and kind when interacting virtually.

**Remember the importance of getting enough sleep, exercise, food and water.** These simple things can be challenging even in the best of times and right now it can be especially difficult to take care of these basic needs for both children and adults. A consistent nighttime routine, time to run around outside (even in the rain) and eating and drinking enough water are great first steps to meeting these needs.

Finally, be sure to take care of yourself too. It is definitely harder to take care of others when you are stressed, tired or hungry. We are living through a global pandemic. Everyone’s stress level is high and his or her capacity for dealing with that stress is diminished. Everyone is doing the very best that they can, children included. Remember to always extend grace, kindness, and patience to yourself and all of those around you.

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## Meal pick-up on Mondays and Thursdays

The meal program has been extended through the end of the 2020-21 school year. The District is serving free, nutritious meals to all children 18 and younger, regardless of income or enrollment in the Issaquah School District.

### What?

Free breakfast and lunch to all children 18 and under

### Who can get these free meals?

Children or their parents/guardians

### When?

Mondays and Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pick up breakfast and lunch for three days on Mondays

Pick up breakfast and lunch for two days on Thursdays

### Where?

Elementary Schools: Endeavour, Grand Ridge, Issaquah Valley, Sunset

Middle School: Beaver Lake

High Schools: Issaquah, Liberty and Skyline



All the details for the meal service during remote learning can be found here:

<https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/supports/meals>

# School Events: Connect to Your Community

BY SANDRA VANDERZEE  
*Issaquah School District Parent*

"It takes a village." Did you ever hear this statement when you started having kids? I thought that by the time my kiddos started school, my village would be well established: my kids would have a large group of friends, I'd have a group of moms, and some of them would have teenagers who could babysit for us! Then, four years ago, we uprooted and moved to Washington. There went my fledgling village!

Good news though: my family and I attended every school event - from fundraisers to book fairs to science fairs and I am pleased to report that a new village has been built! I have met many wonderful people who have become like family to me, all while establishing a connection with our school community and getting to know the teachers and staff.

## Participating in school events is so important - whether virtual or in person!

-You meet new people! It's hard as an adult to make friends sometimes. If you are shy, or feel socially awkward, it can feel very intimidating to find a space where you can meet new people. At school events the pressure is off. Everyone is there for the same reason, so you automatically have something to talk about.

-You get to connect with your community. I can't tell you enough how helpful it is to talk to other families in your neighborhood. Finding out the best dentists or pediatricians, connecting on after-school activities, meeting friends to have play dates with.

-Do it for the kids! Your children love any opportunity to show you what they have been doing at school. They are so proud of the space where they are learning. They want to introduce you to the new friends they have made, and all of the teachers and staff who consistently fill their buckets. Going to a school event is a simple way to show your love and let your children feel seen.

We're all in the same boat when it comes to remote learning. Everyone is feeling disconnected from one another as we silently pray that this pandemic will end soon. There may not be any in-school events, but virtual events are just as important to participate in - maybe even more so!

Attend a virtual coffee chat, participate in the coloring contest, or visit the virtual book fair. Join your school's WhatsApp or Facebook group. All of these activities are designed to do one thing: keep you connected. Good luck with your village building, and I hope to see you on Zoom!





# Self-Advocacy

By JULIA KROOPKIN, HANNAH WEE, JEEWON JUNG  
TECH (Teens Encouraging Community Health) Influence the Choice's Youth Board

## COVID has been especially hard for teenagers

My mom often tells me this story from when she was in college. One of her friends got a bad grade on an assignment, and they were very upset. Later, this friend's mom emailed the professor asking them to let her daughter redo the assignment. A college student had their mother advocate for them to a professor. On one hand, you could say that this was a good thing: that this mother just wanted the best for her child. On the other hand, we have to remember that this person was already in college and her mother might not always be there to help. Being a forty-year-old calling up your mom to talk to your boss about giving you a raise might not look so good.

Self-advocacy is when you figure out a way to solve your own problems - whether that means talking to a teacher about a school assignment or talking to your parents about going to therapy. Self-advocacy is incredibly important in developing problem-solving skills and being able to communicate well with others, but lots of teens struggle with it. When you begin to feel like you want to advocate for yourself, it can be challenging conveying that to others, especially to the people who have been advocating for you up until that point. In this article, we will show how to best advocate for yourself and your needs, no matter your age or circumstance.

**Asking for Help From Teachers** There are times when I need to reach out and ask for help if I am struggling to get the answer to a problem. I would first go to my friends because I didn't feel comfortable asking my teacher. As I entered high school, asking my friends wasn't effective, so I took a deep breath and decided to step forward to my math teacher. I questioned myself a hundred times - what if we already covered this in class? Will my teacher get mad at me? What if my teacher gives me a weird stare and thinks I am dumb? But my teacher's smile cleared up the restless thoughts rushing through my head and I asked even the smallest questions that popped up. Teachers are always willing to help students not just because it's their job, but because they sincerely want their students to be successful.

**Talking to Parents** It is difficult to share every thought with a parent or guardian because sometimes, they just don't understand being a teenager. We hide things from our guardians, but at the same time, we don't feel good about not sharing with our parents and assuming that they will never understand. As a child, I always had fun winning board games, taking turns choosing a movie while cuddling in blankets, and making a mess in the kitchen with my family. Now, these moments are rare because I am busy with my own work and we don't make time for movie or board game nights anymore. So it's possible that because the time we spend together shrank, our parents don't have the opportunity to really understand what's going on. So what if we try

to start spending 20 minutes every day to start a brief conversation? Maybe these conversations will help our guardians better know who we are as a person.

**Getting Professional Help** Sometimes, asking parents or teachers for help isn't an option, or isn't the help that you are looking for. Sometimes, we need support from someone that isn't directly involved in our personal lives, or someone with a professional background that can provide well-informed help. There is a negative stigma surrounding asking for help in our society, especially regarding mental health. As a consequence, people, especially teens, are uncomfortable with seeking professional help. However, mental health is not something we should dismiss or be ashamed of. Similar to how we need to maintain a healthy physical body, we also need to take care of our mental health. Experiencing change and challenges in mental health can happen to anyone at any age. There is nothing to be ashamed about getting help. In fact, getting help soon is important in figuring out ways to overcome our difficulties and take care of our mental health.

**Your voice matters.** Your community has your back and will always be there for you in times of trouble. You know yourself the best so it is crucial to let your voice be heard. Your voice matters to the community and yourself, so be brave and take the first step to voice your own opinion.

## Teen Link

<https://www.teenlink.org/>  
(866) 833-6546

Teen Link is a Washington group centered around teens offering support for teens, but there are adults available as well. You can text, call, or chat online with a Youth Crisis Specialist, anonymously and under confidentiality. The Teen Link website also provides resources for mental health, substance abuse, stress, and other teen-related topics, including a resource guide called Where to Turn for Teens (WTTFT).

## The Garage

<https://www.issaquahteencafe.org/>  
(425) 395-7341

The Garage is a nonprofit teen café in Issaquah, a safe space created exclusively for teens. All services provided by The Garage are free of charge. Currently, the café space is available for five teens at a time to sign up to do remote learning at The Garage, following COVID-19 guidelines. Teens can also book free virtual counseling sessions on Mondays and Tuesdays.

## Friends of Youth

<https://friendsofyouth.org/mentalHealth.aspx>  
(425) 392-6367

Friends of Youth provides counseling to youth and families, individually and family. It is important to note, however, that there are fees associated with Friends of Youth counseling services, meaning a guardian is required to handle insurance and fees.

## Motivating Tweens and Teens and Building Better Brains

Last Fall, ParentWiser invited the psychologist Sharon Saline to give lectures on how to successfully motivate teenagers for hybrid learning and beyond, and how to improve children's executive functioning skills such as organization, focus and prioritizing. Dr. Saline has more than 30 years' experience on ADHD, anxiety, learning differences and mental health challenges and their impact on school and family dynamics.

During the lectures, Dr. Saline mentioned the importance of daily routines based on collaboration. But before diving into her talk, she brought up the importance of realizing that inequities in access to hybrid education exists. Families might not talk about their difficulties related to lack of adequate academic related equipment because of the shame or prejudice. If your family is currently experience this, it's OK to talk to the school or district for more support.

**5 C's method:  
self-control,  
compassion,  
collaboration,  
consistency  
and celebration**

Dr. Saline shared the 5C's method: self-control, compassion, collaboration, consistency and celebration. Maintaining self-control is being able to manage yourself as a parent before trying to deal with your child who is upset. Showing more compassion is not just for your kids but also for yourself. Collaboration means working with your child towards goals matter to you and your kids. Consistency doesn't mean perfection, but means doing what you say you are going to do more often than not, and demonstrating steadiness as a parent. Finally, celebrate to acknowledge and validate what your children have done or what they have tried, even if it doesn't turn out successfully.

Dr. Saline also talked about the fact that motivation is actually linked to several executive functioning skills related to what's often referred to as the "thinking brain". This is the part of the brain that figures out what's worth paying attention to, and how to do it. In neurotypical kids, executive functioning skills mature around the age of 25, but in kids with ADHD, Autism spectrum or other learning disabilities, this could be delayed 3 years or more.

So, executive functioning challenges impact learning. The more severe executive functioning challenges, the higher likelihood of learning disabilities. And of course, the executive function skills that are related directly to motivation have to do with time management, planning and impulse control, prioritizing, and the ability to shift and be flexible, switching from one thing to another. These are important skills that help a student get through the day and complete projects, papers and tests; skills that are necessary for successful learning.

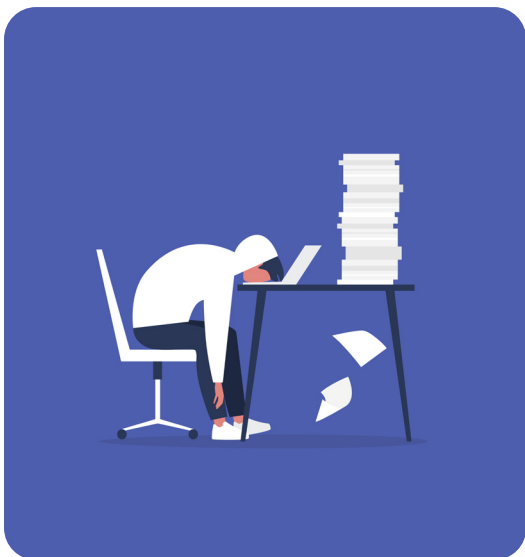
**For online school, it's common to see some regression of kids' behavior. Anxiety, for example, is one of the major factors that affect motivation right now.**

Interests stimulate motivation so it helps to identify incentives that matter to them. To find the incentives, we need to do a collaborative process. Parents and kids need to work together to find out what matters to them, come up with a list. A weekly or twice-a-week short family meetings is suggested. The goal here is to reduce conflicts in the family. Try to spend some time with your teens doing things that matter to them.

For example, watching a show they've chosen, shopping on Amazon for things they need. Parents need to focus on accomplishments rather than punishments.

At this moment, screen incentives will also work if this is what your teens want for after busy school day. Concern over too much screen time may not relate to the play screen time right now because this may be the best motivation or award for your kids.





**How to motivate your kids?** There are different strategies. Motivation can include how to initiate a task, doing things on time and meeting deadlines, setting up a goal, managing attention and resisting direct distraction, staying focused on it. As for current specific online challenges, kids are struggling with many issues. When initiating a task, remember to break things down into small achievable steps. Smaller goals encourage self-confidence. Then with each success, kids will be more willing to try other things. It's always better to achieve something small than nothing at all. Again, celebration is very important, we want to help kids be noticed for their efforts in the face of criticism or insecurity or unhappiness that they may be receiving on a daily basis. Set up a daily guide or a daily routine to stabilize your kids. Kids can use daily routine to focus themselves. Because when you have a routine, you don't have to think about what to do, people just know this is the next thing. It's the same with listing the steps of a process or activity. We want to assist kids in learning how to routinize some activities so they can then redirect themselves.

It's also important to slow things down. We want to help our kids do one thing at a time. If your child is not listening, or remembering the things you are giving them, use "The Rule of 3:" make eye contact with your kids, state the direction and have them repeat the direction. Remember to encourage your kids along the way, also remember to be kind to yourself, this is such a hard time to be a parent and particularly a parent of a teenager.

We are experiencing a wide range of daily emotions now: anger, disappointment, worry, sadness, loneliness. Each of these is increasingly harder to manage for kids. As parents, we can rely on the 3R's: Reflecting and listening to our kids, recognizing their patterns of worries and noticing what's going on and finally resetting things if the previous plan does not work out.

Dr. Saline reviewed the executive functioning skills that are critical for school and life as well as different strategies for improving them: Impulse and emotional control, setting reasonable goals and sticking with them, cognitive flexibility and shifting, organization and prioritizing, initiation and sustained attention, working memory, self-evaluation.

### 5 easy ways to make your child's homework more manageable using the above strategies:

1. Create an incentive-based system for doing homework with your child or teen. Start by figuring out how long they can actually work before becoming distracted. Then set up a plan for a total studying time that includes establishing work periods for this amount of time which is then broken up by TIMED breaks of no longer than 10 minutes. Breaks can include snacks, texting, Facebook, a phone call, walking around the house or going to the bathroom.
2. Go over the homework assignments before starting. At the end of the study period, your child earns a privilege or reward that you've chosen together. For one family, that reward could be one show on television; for another, it could be a specific amount of computer time or reading a story together on the sofa. Whatever works for your family and is interesting for your child or teen is a good choice. REMEMBER, kids with ADHD get bored with routines so you will likely have to update or change this reward regularly.
3. You may have to work alongside your child or teen to make sure that work is actually getting done and to answer any questions they might have. Use the opportunity to catch up on your own work, bills or Facebook.
4. Avoid comments about how he could do things differently (re: better). Leave that to his teacher. Your job is to provide a supportive, consistent environment to do the homework.
5. Make a point of casually noticing when you have a homework period without arguing. Let your child or teen know that you are proud of the ways they approached their work and tried to do it, even if everything wasn't completed. You want to encourage their efforts so they'll keep trying in the future.

To learn more about ways to motivate your tweens and teens, or how to improve your child's executive functioning skills please check Dr. Saline's full-length lectures on ParentWiser (<https://www.parentwiser.org/>).



# SCHOOLS EVENTS

## ALL SCHOOLS

Jan 1: Winter Break, No School  
 Jan. 13-27: Highly Capable Program 2nd  
 Grade Referral Window Open  
 Jan 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no school  
 Jan 25: Teacher Work Day, no school  
 Feb 15: President Day, no school  
 Feb 16-19: Second Winter Break, no school

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

### Apollo

Jan. 6: Red Robin, Landing To-Go Spirit Night  
 Jan. 13: Variety Show Tryouts – Virtual  
 Jan. 13, 19: Virtual Incoming Kindergarten  
 Information Night 2021-2022, 6:30pm  
 Jan. 27: Variety Show Rehearsal - Virtual  
 Jan. 29: Apollo's Got Talent Variety Show  
 Feb. 1-5: Lunch for Break Food Drive  
 Feb. 3: 6:30pm: PTA General Meeting  
 Feb. 1-28: Virtual Multi-Cultural Month  
 Mar. 3-13: Slide to the Finish Playground  
 Fundraiser

### Briarwood

Jan. 11: 6:30pm, PTA Meeting  
 Feb. 8: 6:30pm, PTA Meeting  
 Mar 15: 6:30pm, PTA Meeting

### Cascade Ridge

Jan. 4: New Family Connection  
 Jan. 4, 4pm: Site Council  
 Jan. 14, 6:30pm: Q&A with Principal Sehlin  
 Jan. 14, 6:30pm: PTSA Member meeting  
 Jan. 19: Virtual Talent Show  
 Feb. 26: Staff Appreciation  
 Mar. 1, 4pm: Site Council  
 Mar. 1: Book Fair  
 Mar. 25: Virtual Science Fair

### Challenger

Jan. 19, 7pm: PTA General Meeting on Zoom

### Clark

Jan. 6: School Materials Distribution  
 Jan. 26, 6pm: Kindergarten Parent  
 Registration Information Meeting via Zoom

### Cougar Ridge

Jan. 5: KG – 2nd Grade Kindness Club  
 Jan. 13: Student Materials Distribution  
 Jan. 12: 7pm PTSA Meeting  
 January: Artwork Submissions for yearbook  
 January: Every Thursday Cougar Ridge Family  
 Book Study, 7pm via Zoom  
 Feb. 9: 7pm PTSA Meeting  
 February: Valentine cards arts & crafts activity  
 February: Lunar New Year week long activity  
 – Library with story reading, music with  
 Chinese songs, art – paper lantern  
 Mar. 9: 7pm PTSA Meeting

### Creekside

Jan. 27: Kindergarten Registration  
 Information Night via Zoom, 6pm  
 January: Virtual Movie Night  
 February: Virtual Cultural Night  
 Mar. 16, 7:00 p.m.: PTSA Meeting

### Discovery

Jan. 27: 2021-2022 Kindergarten Info Night  
 Jan. 8 -Feb. 6: Eager Reader Month – Take an  
 Adventure to the Land of Reading  
 Feb. 10: PTSA General Meeting

### Endeavor

Jan. 13: Student Materials Pick Up  
 Jan. 10-Feb. 7: Eager Reader  
 Feb. 23, 7pm: PTSA Membership Meeting

### Grand Ridge

January: Individual Picture Day  
 Jan. 6, 2pm -5pm: Materials Distribution  
 Jan. 11, 7pm: Book Discussion, Habits 1-5  
 Jan. 19, 7pm: Book Discussion, Habits 6-11  
 Jan. 21, 4pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Jan. 27, 5pm: Virtual Kindergarten  
 Information Night  
 Jan. 27, 7pm: Book Discussion, Habits 12-18  
 Feb 4, 7pm: Book Discussion, Habits 19-25  
 Mar. 22, 4pm: PTSA General Meeting

### Issaquah Valley

January: Spelling Bee  
 Jan. 19, 7pm: General PTA Meeting  
 Jan. 20, 6pm: Literacy Night  
 Feb. 21 - Mar. 5: PTA Award Nomination  
 Mar. 23, 7pm: General PTA Meeting

### Maple Hills

Jan. 19 -Feb. 9, 8:15am: Third Grade Music  
 Club, Every Tuesdays, (check school website  
 for registration)  
 Jan. 208am -5pm: Materials Pick Up Day,  
 3rd-5th ONLY  
 Jan. 26, 7pm: Virtual Kindergarten  
 Information Night 2021-2022  
 Jan. 7/14/21/28, Feb. 4/11/25, Mar. 4/11/18/25,  
 7pm: Good Night Yoga Club with Mrs. Stratford  
 Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, 5pm: Cooking Club  
 with Mrs. Tutor  
 Feb. 23-Mar. 30, 8:15am: Fourth Grade Music  
 Club, Every Tuesday

### Newcastle

Jan. 8: Yearbook Cover Art Contest  
 Submission Deadline  
 Jan. 27, 6:30pm: PTSA Meeting +  
 Principal Chat Time,  
 Mar. 22, 6:30pm: PTSA Meeting +  
 Principal Chat Time

### Sunny Hills

Jan. 8-Feb. 11: Eager Reader program  
 Jan. 12, 6:30pm: Community Connections  
 with Mr. Baynes  
 Jan. 13- Jan. 27: PTA Award Nominations  
 Jan. 28, 6:30pm: PTA General Meeting  
 Mar. 11, 6:30pm: PTA General Meeting

### Sunset

Jan. 6,7: School Materials Pick up

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Jan. 7 -Mar. 5: 8th Graders Gibson Ek  
 applications  
 Mar. 10: 8th Graders: Gibson Ek lottery

### Bever Lake

Jan. 6,13,20,27: Library Book Pick Up Day  
 Jan. 15: Yearbooks Purchases online deadline  
 Feb. 25: Purim  
 Feb. 28: Bahai Nineteen-Day Fast  
 Mar. 10,11: Maha Shivaratri  
 (Festival for Lord Shiva)

### Issaquah

Jan. 19-22: We Rise Above Week  
 Jan. 27, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Jan. 29: MVP Celebration  
 Feb. 24, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting

Feb. 25, 3:45pm: Equity Advisory Council  
 Feb. 26: MVP Celebration  
 Mar. 1 – Mar. 5: We Are Silent Week  
 Mar. 24, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Mar. 26: MVP Celebration

### Maywood

Jan. 6: SEL – Second Step  
 Jan. 13: SEL – MLK Day Assembly  
 Jan. 21, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Feb. 12: Yearbooks Order online deadline  
 Jan. 15/19, Feb. 9/23, Mar. 9/23: Minecraft  
 Club meeting, 3:45pm (check school website  
 for application form)

### Pacific Cascade

Jan. 6: Picture Day, 8am – 5pm  
 Jan. 12: ISD Reflections Reception  
 Jan. 20, 3pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Feb. 1 - 28: National Black History Month  
 Feb. 4: Sapporo Snow Festival  
 Feb. 26: PTSA Award Nominations Due  
 Mar. 1: WSPTA Essay Contest Due  
 Mar. 1: WSPTA/Game Development  
 Competition Due  
 Mar. 2: Read Across America Day  
 Mar. 17, 3pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Mar. 29: Holi Celebration  
 Mar. 31: Cesar Chavez Day

### Pine Lake

Jan. 6, 13: Picture Day  
 Feb. 24, 1pm: PTSA General Meeting

## HIGH SCHOOLS

Feb 3, 12-3pm: Great Careers Conference  
 The goal of the conference is to educate  
 Issaquah School District high school students  
 about careers they can pursue through  
 certificated, apprenticeship, or two-year  
 degree programs. For more information, visit:  
<https://www.isdstemandcte.com/great-careers>

### Skyline

Jan. 5: Late IB Exam Registration deadline  
 Jan. 18: Class of 2020 Senior Spotlight  
 submission deadline  
 Jan. 19, 4pm: Equity Team Meeting  
 Jan. 21, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Mar. 18, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting

### Gibson Ek

Jan. 21, 6:30pm: PTSA General Meeting

### Issaquah

Jan. 8: Senior Yearbook Ad (Final Deadline)  
 Jan. 12, 6:30pm: District Reflection Reception  
 Jan. 14: New Family Ambassadors' Mixer  
 Jan. 15, 9:30am: PTSA General Meeting  
 Jan. 31: Last Day to purchase Yearbook  
 Feb. 12, 9:30am: PTSA General Meeting  
 Mar. 1: WSPTA Game Development  
 Competition Due  
 Mar. 1: WSPTA Essay Contest Entry Due  
 Mar. 1: WSPTA Scholarship Due  
 Mar. 12, 9:30am: PTSA General Meeting

### Liberty

Jan. 26: PTSA Membership Meeting, 6:30pm  
 Jan. 27: Deadline: Online Learning Program  
 Accepting Applications for Spring 2021  
 Feb. 4 - 11: PTSA Event: Save the Date for the  
 Class of 2021 Online Senior Auction

# ParentWiser Events



## Stress and Anxiety

Wed, January 20, 2021, 4:00 - 5:15 p.m.  
 Speaker: Lisa Damour, Ph.D.  
 Dr. Damour will explain the key to understanding how stress and anxiety operate, both under everyday conditions and at times of heightened concern and disruption. She'll instruct on how to keep pressure and tension from reaching toxic levels, how to support our students managing stress and anxiety and provide the most reliable strategies for managing ongoing tension.

## The Upstanders – film discussion w/ Swedish Mental Health

Wed, March 3, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.  
 Speaker: Tori McBride  
 Join us for a discussion with Tori McBride, Behavioral Health Supervisor at Swedish Medical Center and ISD school counselors, after watching The Upstanders from home February 8-10th. An IndieFlix Original Documentary for ages 13+, The Upstanders

explores cyber-bullying, bullying among friends, families, co-workers and the brain science behind it all. The film highlights new laws and programs already reducing bullying in schools and shows us how we can learn to make a difference together to create systemic change.

## Powerful Studying Techniques

Wed, March 3, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.  
 Speaker: Gretchen Wegner  
 Research reveals most students aren't taught how to study, and the strategies they devise by themselves don't work. Also, brain science points to some very clear, easy-to-implement (and even motivating!) strategies that are proven to work, if only students knew them. Ready to upgrade your, or your students', study skills? Gretchen Wegner's presentation condenses the complex neuroscience of learning into a simple 3-steps. Participants will learn the science behind effective study strategies, and walk away with an

easy checklist for what to do before each test to rock your learning... and your grades! Middle and high school students are invited to attend with a caregiver.

**ParentWiser events are FREE to attend for PTA or PTSA members of any school in the Issaquah School District, or \$10 donations are requested for non-members or guests from other districts. For registration information, visit: <https://www.parentwiser.org/events>.**

**Some of our speakers are also video recorded and posted online at <http://ParentWiser.org/watch-online> for access by any PTA or PTSA member of Issaquah schools. All parents are invited to join your child's school PTA or PTSA for ParentWiser and other benefits! Visit your school's website for details.**

## Community Events

### Newcastle Area Youth Artist Call Friday, January 15, 2021 Grades K-12

Newcastle Arts Council and Newcastle Library are now accepting submissions from local youth artists for the 2021 Spring Newcastle Area Youth Art Exhibition. Let your imagination soar and share your art with the community. The art exhibition will be held virtually with the possibility for displays at locations throughout the Newcastle community through the month of March. All mediums considered. For more information, visit <https://kcls.org/> or send an email to Vicki Heck: [vaheck@kcls.org](mailto:vaheck@kcls.org).

### Study Zone Plus Tuesdays Grades K-5 [3:00 to 5:00 p.m.] Grades 6-12 [5:30 to 7:30 p.m.] King County libraries

Study Zone is online homework help from volunteer tutors. Students in grades K-12 can work with a tutor or find recharge activities, language and reading support. Connect to Zoom using your computer, tablet or smartphone. Or, dial in using a home phone or smartphone. For more information, visit <https://kcls.org/studyzoneplus/> or call (425) 462 9600 or (800) 462 9600

### Community Resource Center Tuesdays [1:30 to 3:00 p.m.] Wednesdays [2:00 to 4:30 p.m.] King County libraries

All are welcome! Get the help you need at the virtual resource center. We are living in stressful times and you may find yourself in need of support for: cash assistance, employment and training, education, housing, food assistance, health/medical care, legal assistance, dispute resolution, mental health treatment, substance use treatment, transportation/ORCA Lift. For more information, visit <https://kcls.org/> or call (206) 362-7550.

## Cultural Events

### Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day January 18 [11:00am – 4:00pm]

Free online performances and activities for all ages by the Washington State Historical Society. For Zoom details and more information, visit <https://www.washingtonhistory.org/event>.

### Workshops, Community Rallies and More

Many events have gone virtual in 2021, but there are still plenty of ways to mark the MLK Day holiday this year! <https://www.washington.edu/mlkweek/events/>.

### Celebrate MLK Day with a Walk in the Park Lake Sammamish State Park Jan. 3 - 18

Learn about his life and his dreams with quotes along the pathway. Many of his quotes are as relevant today as they were in the 1960s when he initiated change while speaking out for civil rights. MLK's most famous speech— "I have a dream..." — is captured in its entirety at the end of the walk. The walk will begin at Tibbetts Beach and takes you along the lakeshore to the Sunset Beach bathhouse.

### Black History is Washington History February 25 [6:00 - 7:30 p.m.]

This is the first in a series of lectures about Black History in Washington. Join this insightful conversation from the comfort of your own home. How does place impact culture? In Seattle's case, it means going against the grain. While hip hop thrived in New York and Los Angeles, individuals like Sir-Mix-A-Lot found success by styling to the beat of their own drum in the Pacific Northwest. Join Dr. Daudi Abe for a discussion of his book Emerald Street: A History of Hip Hop in Seattle and learn more about the growth of hip-hop in our region. This is a virtual event via Facebook Live @HistoryMuseum by the Washington State Historical Society.



# Hunger and the Shame that Often Goes Along With It

By LAURA NI

*ISD Apollo Parent and Cultural Bridges Assistant Editor*



2020 was a difficult year for everyone. We have been experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic for more than 10 months and it's still not clear when this will be over. While we are following all the safety rules and keeping social distance from each other, we are aware that people's lives have been upside down because of the economic devastation. Luckily, Issaquah School District families have many resources available for them. These resources are not only for low-income families, but for everyone who needs support during this difficult time.

Unfortunately, in many cultures there is a social stigma associated with getting resources. In a recent Fundraising event of the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, a Latino woman revealed her experience. People feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to ask for help. When you live in a community surrounded by many wealthy families, the hesitation to get help from organizations such as the food bank is strong and real. The lady mentioned her concern about other people's prejudice and the fact that she was afraid that her own daughter was going to be embarrassed in front of her friends and school classmates.

A similar situation hits the Chinese community. People often assume that most of the Chinese livings in our area have high tech jobs and that they were not affected by the current economic situation. This is not true. Just think about how many Chinese restaurants we have locally. Not to mention the many Chinese-owned small businesses that won't be able to survive during the pandemic. Chinese, as well as all the other local communities, are suffering tremendously this year. However, many of them are hesitant to seek help, just like the Latino lady. They have their pride and don't want to let others know their situation. They are willing to work harder and to sacrifice themselves instead of asking for help. They don't want their friends or other people to look down on them; they don't want their children to be or feel excluded. Some of these families are willing to take multiple jobs to be able to support their families. However, they are struggling to take care of their children.

We know that it can be especially difficult getting resources of all ethnicities when you don't speak English well or when it is the first time you are seeking support. Families don't know where to turn. Our Cultural Bridges Program offers Community Presentations Events by Zoom where we share resources available and we help families in our District. If you would like to know more about these, please send us an email at [culturalbridges@isfdn.org](mailto:culturalbridges@isfdn.org).

The solution is not simple, but at least there's one thing we all can do, open communication and reach out to others. We need to let people know that we have resources available and that there is no shame in asking for help. Everybody, regardless of cultural background, is going through this pandemic just the same. No matter whether you give help or get help. As a community, we need to go through it together. Reach out to your neighbors, and your friends. Share resources on your Facebook page, you never know who might need them!

**If your family is struggling to keep your cupboards and fridge full of healthy, nutritious food, the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank can help. For all the details on their food shopping services: <https://www.issaquahfoodbank.org/>.**



# Families Supporting Families Virtually!

BY SHAMITHA SRIDHARAN

Issaquah School District Parent and Family and Community Engagement PTSA Coordinator

Did you know that parents and guardians are creating groups to keep in touch with each other? These groups are a great way for our communities to support each other during this pandemic and beyond.

SCHOOL	GROUPS	HOW TO JOIN
Apollo	Facebook, WeChat and WhatsApp	<a href="mailto:lauraapollopta@gmail.com">lauraapollopta@gmail.com</a>
Cascade Ridge	Cascade Ridge Coyote Den Facebook and Whatsapp	<a href="mailto:community@cascaderidgeptsa.org">community@cascaderidgeptsa.org</a>
Challenger	Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ChallengerPTA2.6.6/">https://www.facebook.com/ChallengerPTA2.6.6/</a>
Grand Ridge	Facebook and WhatsApp	<a href="mailto:grptsadiversitydirector@gmail.com">grptsadiversitydirector@gmail.com</a>
Newcastle	Kinder Parents Facebook	<a href="mailto:newcastleptsa.outreach@gmail.com">newcastleptsa.outreach@gmail.com</a>
Sunny Hills	Sunny Hills Elementary Families Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/896745840459521">https://www.facebook.com/groups/896745840459521</a>
Sunset	Facebook groups for each grade	Search Facebook for "Sunset" and "grade". For example "Sunset 5th" or contact the PTSA.
Beaver Lake	Beaver Lake PTSA Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/blmsptsa">https://www.facebook.com/blmsptsa</a>
Issaquah Middle	Issaquah Middle Parents Facebook, IMS Latinos WhatsApp, IMS 家长群 Kinder parents WeChat	<a href="mailto:face@issaquahmiddleptsa.org">face@issaquahmiddleptsa.org</a> (email can be written in Spanish, Chinese, or English)
PCMS	PCMS Families WhatsApp	<a href="mailto:atha.drake@gmail.com">atha.drake@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:jrtfigueiredo@yahoo.com">jrtfigueiredo@yahoo.com</a>
Issaquah High	IHS en Español WhatsApp IHS in Chinese WeChat	<a href="mailto:IHPTSAface@gmail.com">IHPTSAface@gmail.com</a> (e-mail can be written in Spanish, Chinese or English).

If you don't see your school listed, ask the PTA/PTSA of your school.

Several district-wide Facebook groups are available as well. Please research these larger groups carefully to determine whether they are a good fit for your beliefs and values.

For other languages:

- Spanish group on WhatsApp. To join, send a message to: [alispinner@yahoo.com](mailto:alispinner@yahoo.com)
- Chinese group on WeChat. To join, send a message to: [lynn\\_cdd](mailto:lynn_cdd)
- Korean group on Kakao Talk - To join, send an email to: [chanjooart@gmail.com](mailto:chanjooart@gmail.com)

Please note that most of these groups are managed by parents and guardians and are not official Issaquah School District or PTSA groups. Please work with the group admins to make sure the groups are helpful and useful to your community.

You may find that joining a group for your school and reading your school, PTSA, and district eNews and following their social media channels will keep you informed.



# The Importance of Talking About Mental Health

By HILLARY COHEN  
School Based Mental Health Counselor, Swedish at Liberty High School

Just as taking care of your physical health is important, so is taking care of your emotional health. Especially now with all that is going on in our communities and our world, paying attention to and taking care of our emotional health is of the utmost importance. Feelings of isolation, anxiety and sadness have increased during this time of quarantine and social unrest. Experiencing mental health struggles is part of being human. However, the topic can still be difficult for people to talk about and can lead to individuals struggling and not accessing care and services that can help them feel better.

The partnership between Swedish Medical Center and the Issaquah School District has created an opportunity for ALL students in the district to have access to mental health care. Any student enrolled in the Issaquah School District can be seen by a School-Based Mental Health Counselor at no cost to the student or their family.

## What do the School-Based Mental Health Counselors (SBMHCs) do?

- SBMHCs are licensed clinical social workers (LICSWs) and have extensive clinical training. We work with students individually on problems/goals that students have identified that they need support around.
- SBMHCs don't have the ability to adjust a student's schedule, or help with/give out information about school credits.
- Counseling services with the School Based Mental Health Counselors are voluntary.

We are bound by HIPPA laws and will not divulge any information regarding counseling services without student and/or family permission. In accordance with state law, adolescents age 13 and over may consent to confidential mental health counseling without parental knowledge or consent. In the case that a student discloses they have plans to hurt themselves or others, or if they disclose that someone is hurting them, the appropriate authorities will be notified, as well as parents.

## Common mental health struggles that students may experience

- Anxiety: Some anxiety is normal, but when not properly managed, anxiety can become problematic and interfere in our daily lives.
- Depression: This is different than normal sadness.
- Suicidal thoughts: Although depression and anxiety can lead to suicidal thoughts, these thoughts can happen without any other mental health issues present.
- Excessive stress.
- Feeling unable to cope with emotions effectively.
- ADHD: Inability to concentrate, sit still or stay organized.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Eating Disorders: Restricting and monitoring food intake, etc.
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).



## Tips for talking about mental health with your student

(This is appropriate for and encouraged to do with ALL ages):

- Share your own feelings and experiences with your child – this will normalize talking about mental health (NOTE: sharing all emotions with your child is important, even anger and sadness. This teaches kids and teens that all emotions are part of the normal human experience, not just the positive emotions).

For example, "I know you are feeling sad and frustrated about not going back to school right now. I'm feeling that way too, about working from home. It's okay to feel this way, and we will get through it together."

- Ask your child directly how they are feeling, and let them know that whatever they are feeling is okay and is normal. \*TIP: just listen. It may be tempting to try to help them and jump in to make them feel better. Just stay present and listen and validate their feelings.

- Let your child know that talking to you is a safe space for them by providing validation. For example, "I don't judge you for what you're saying", or "Thank you so much for sharing that with me. I know that was really hard."



## Social media and mental health

We are still learning about the impact that social media and the digital world has on us and our mental health. Researchers tell us that the use of social media is linked to increased anxiety, depression, poor body image, and lower self-esteem in kids and teenagers. It can also lead to increased loneliness, as there is less in-person interaction, and more online, superficial interactions.

Despite this, using some form of social media is likely unavoidable or unrealistic for your child. The goal should be to balance the time spent on social media and knowing when to log off (i.e. when they start to feel down or badly about themselves based on what they are looking at).

## Suicide prevention support

When talking about mental health, it's crucial to include the topic of suicide, and signs to look for. As we continue to talk about this openly and directly, more doors become open for people to get the help they need.

According to Forefront Suicide Prevention (an organization based at University of Washington), suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24 in Washington and the United States. Two youth are lost to suicide each week in Washington State. Due to complex cultural factors, rates of youth depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and attempts are at an all-time high.

Suicide is preventable, and you don't need special training to help prevent it. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize the warning signs, showing compassion, and offering support.

## Signs to be aware of in students can include:

- Talking about wanting to die.
- Showing anger or irritability.
- Feelings of being a burden to others.
- No interest in favorite things.
- Talking about feeling trapped or wanting to escape.
- Becoming isolated and withdrawn.
- Increasing sleep difficulties.

## How to respond:

- Empathize with your child and listen to what they have to say in a non-judgmental way.
- Directly ask your child if they are thinking about suicide.
- Remove any dangers in your home (i.e. any firearms need to either be removed or locked up in a safe, dispose of all old medications and lock up current ones, etc.).
- Get your child the help they need immediately.

## People in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, or those who know someone in crisis, should do the following:

- Call 911 and say, "There's a threat of suicide" and ask for a "designated crisis responder." Or go to any hospital emergency department or urgent care clinic.
  - Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or En Español: 1-888-628-9454.
- \*TIP: put these numbers into the contacts in your phone. You never know when you or someone you know might need it.
- Text the Crisis Text Hotline: Text "HOME" to the number 741741 any time 24/7 to chat with someone via text.



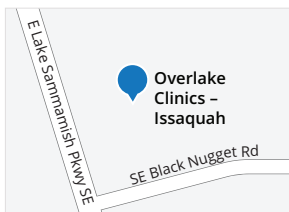


The doctor can

see you now.

*Really, we mean now.*

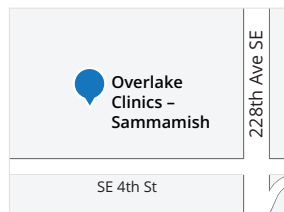
Get in line online at [overlakehospital.org/urgentcare](http://overlakehospital.org/urgentcare)



**Overlake Clinics - Issaquah**  
**Urgent Care**

Every Day, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.  
Phone: 425.688.5777

5708 E Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE  
Issaquah, WA 98029



**Overlake Clinics - Sammamish**  
**Urgent Care**

Monday-Saturday, Noon-10 p.m.  
Phone: 425.635.3080

22630 SE 4th St, Suite 300  
Sammamish, WA 98074

# Be Happy Now

By KIM FOSTER  
Happiness Coach at Be Happy Now

I can't believe we're starting a new year – I'm excited to leave 2020 behind, yet apprehensive about what this year will bring. Will it be better experiences, or more of the same? We are all worn out, tired of "Covid changes" and missing the way things used to be. We're worried, overwhelmed, and don't know what to expect. Me too. I miss my friends, I miss group exercise classes, I miss seeing my parents. Even though I try to be a positive person, I feel like I've been living with a constant undercurrent of anxiety rippling along under my thoughts like Issaquah Creek after a big rain.

Well, what can we do? It's a new year and we can take a pause and a deep breath and think about how we can best take care of ourselves as we continue to navigate these challenges. Because it will take extra care, extra self-love, and extra intention to help ourselves in these unusual times.

**Self-compassion is the key.** Self-compassion involves being warm and understanding with yourself when you're suffering. It means treating yourself with the same compassion you'd offer others – treating yourself as you would your best friend. How can we practice self-compassion?

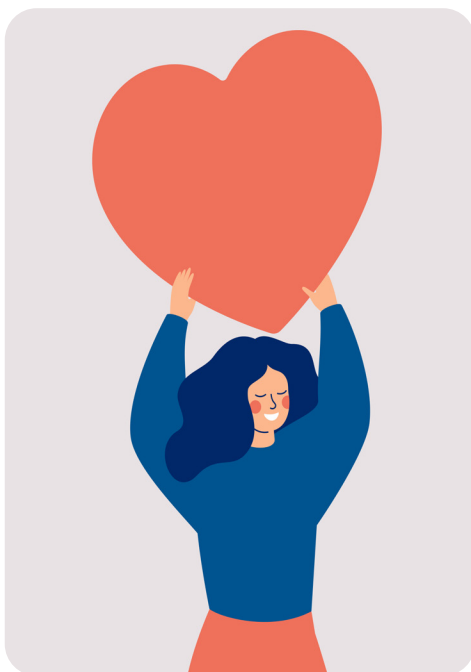
**1. Drop perfectionism and high productivity** Give yourself a break! We don't need to be perfect parents in this pandemic (or ever!). Know that you are doing the best you can and that some days it's absolutely okay to do the bare minimum!

**2. Honor your emotions** we're all in this together, and everyone feels grief, frustration, anger, sadness sometimes. It's okay. Honor those feelings. Is there a friend you can call to talk about them? It can also be helpful to write them down, in a journal. Whatever you and your family members are feeling, it's okay.

**3. Self-care** self-care is not selfish. It is critical for keeping your energy and attitude upbeat, so that you can help others in your family! When you are having a tough day, ask yourself "what would help me feel better?" Find moments for self-care where you can – a quick walk around the block, a few minutes reading a good book, or a quick call with a friend can help you recharge your energy.

**4. Flip your thoughts / flip your focus** So much of our mood and experience comes from what we focus on, what we think about and what we choose to say. Things may be happening that we do not like or can't do anything about. We often can't change the situations, but we can change our perspective!

- Whenever you notice negative emotions or feel stuck, stop and listen to the words you are saying to yourself. Are they helping you feel better, or not? If not, how can you change them?
- Instead of focusing on what we can't do, focus on what we can.



**5. Turn off your "inner critic" voice** We all have an inner voice telling us what to do, how we messed up, and so on. This critical voice is never a worth listening to, especially not now! Focus on turning down the volume of your inner critic, and instead focus on 1 or 2 things per day that you DID do well (extra-credit if you write them down!). This allows you to be kinder to yourself.

**6. Journal – write about your stressful experiences** This can allow you to release negative emotions. Also, try writing a letter to yourself as if you were a compassionate friend.

**7. Gratitude and savoring: we all want more joy in our lives** More joy can be found if we allow ourselves to enjoy the simple things that we still have. Gratitude is one way to do this. When we notice the small things that enrich our lives (a call from a friend, a great book, the sunlight streaming through the window), we feel more happiness. Savoring involves letting yourself fully enjoy and take in what is beautiful or interesting to you (a nice meal, the smell of the rain on your walk, the warmth of the water in your shower). When we give more attention and appreciation to the small things in our lives through gratitude and savoring, our joy increases.

This list is as much a reminder to myself as it is to you. Of course I'm not 100% successful at practicing what I preach here – not at all! Let's do the best that we can at being extra-kind and extra-gentle with ourselves. I'm rooting for you – take care of you, and I'll work on taking care of me as well.

# CARE: Consciousness and Racial Empowerment

By CHEMBE FONTAMA  
Issaquah High School Student

In 2016, CARE was started by Issaquah High School Alum from the class of 2019, Engubia Fontama. Then under the name Minority Student Union, the organization's purpose was to educate students and our Issaquah community about different racial and cultural groups' experiences, history, and current events to ultimately provide a better learning and living environment for the racial minority students at Issaquah High School. Thanks to the help of administrators, MSU was changed to Consciousness and Racial Empowerment which served to also provide a safe space for minority students to express themselves, relate, learn, and teach one another in a casual environment.

Though CARE has achieved new heights in terms of providing equity and slowly, but surely, changing Issaquah High School's environment for the better, it took many years of ongoing education and raising awareness to do so. As a very small and young club, CARE was able to celebrate, acknowledge and educate Issaquah High School's student and teacher body, on the different cultures, hardships and experiences that the many different racial groups of IHS faced. CARE did this by utilizing its diversity to understand the perspectives of different students and administrators alike to raise everyone's awareness and vastly improve Issaquah High School's culture. CARE organized events such as assemblies with insightful speakers, who were able to speak on their experiences, classroom discussions about race and how racial factors play into the daily life of many students, and yearly IHS' Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month events made to provide context on the Black experience at Issaquah High School.

Today, CARE still holds these ideals true, in fact even more. In the past two years CARE has grown to a diverse group that spans across all 4 grade levels. Having diversity is proving to be extremely useful to CARE; students in CARE are learning about different stories and experiences more than ever before and therefore they are able to optimize for the best way to form educational resources to distribute to the rest of IHS. This isn't to say that CARE is by any means done accepting students, CARE is always looking for better ways to communicate and enhance the racial awareness all around the Issaquah School District and the job cannot be done without the detailed input of its students. To join CARE, students can simply email their advisor, Ms. Hutch at [HutchH@issaquah.wednet.edu](mailto:HutchH@issaquah.wednet.edu), or they can Direct Message the official CARE instagram [@care\\_ihs](https://www.instagram.com/care_ihs).

Thanks to the trailblazing of the first members and administrators of CARE, a new pathway has been paved allowing new groups such as the Issaquah School District Student Equity Council to come into fruition. The ISD Equity Council, is a group of students that spans across all schools in the Issaquah School District. Their leaders have created an efficient system to provide our district's leaders with the information they need to improve, and directly improved our school's through projects and events of their own.

As we approach Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month, it is especially important for all parents to know that as much as Issaquah High School, its students and staff have made leaps and bounds in improving its culture, there are still large fragments of the past that are detrimental to the learning environment and racial understanding of our students.

I encourage all parents to reinforce the learning experiences many of their students have at school, by creating an environment that promotes actively learning about and celebrating racial diversity and the nuances within it. Though, CARE, Principal McCormick and the rest of the ISD try to do an amazing job at educating our students, and promoting a safe school environment, real change is made in our Issaquah communities, in our neighborhoods, and our homes.

It is paramount that each and every student learns about different students' experiences so they can utilize that knowledge to see issues and conflicts from a different perspective, therefore enhancing every student and parent's ability to support minority students while also preparing their child to be a helpful part of our community.

Lastly, in creating this environment, it is important to recognize the different areas that all people lack knowledge about and to educate yourself or seek out people you can learn from, to build a home environment and community that promotes love, deep understanding, empathy and equality.

It is paramount that each and every student learns about different student's experiences so they can utilize that knowledge to see issues and conflicts from a different perspective.



# The Black Voices Of The Present

By KENZA NGATCHOU  
*Issaquah High School Student*

Black History month has always been the time to celebrate the Black people that helped shape our world. It has always been the month where we learned about the Civil War and Martin Luther King's great speeches. In elementary school, we'd sit cross-legged on the classroom reading rug and nod along as we were led to believe that racism was over and done with. But racism and the fight for civil rights are not just things of the past.

These past few months have looked like pages straight out of our history textbooks. Crowds of people hoisting signs and flags, waves of protestors clashing with walls of riot shields and clouds of tear gas, the tear-stained faces of those who had their friends and family taken away from them by police brutality. Amidst a global pandemic, a stressful election, and a chaotic 2020, the Black Lives Matter Movement has managed to spread across the world, spawning new reforms and anti-racist policies in its wake.

It's such a bittersweet thing to witness, especially as a Black teen. People get angry over someone saying Black voices, Black people, Black lives matter, as if the opposite sentiment hasn't been flung at us through all the systemic racism running deep through America's roots. The fact that millions of people have come together to stand for what is right is inspiring and beautiful, but it is also a reminder of all the hardships that people of color in America have had to endure.

For most of my life, one group of people has told me that racism has been in steep decline ever since the civil rights era. Rosa Parks sat down at the front of one bus, and segregation evaporated into thin air. Meanwhile, another group of people has instructed me to always speak respectfully and move slowly around the police, that I need to work twice as hard as a Black woman to get anywhere in life, and that people will try to tear me down for daring to exist with brown skin, but I'd have to learn to move past all of it and keep thriving anyways.

Despite how easy our history lessons make it seem, centuries of discrimination and injustices can't be undone with a few protests. Though the BLM movement has made definite progress, it has still only scratched the tip of the systemic racism iceberg. Don't let people make it out to be a thing of the past.

With the energy that the Black Lives Matter movement has garnered, more and more people of color have the chance to make their voices heard. If we keep the momentum going, and keep putting our combined efforts together, we will eventually reach racial equity, even if that point is decades away.

This coming February, let's treat Black History Month not only as a time to honor the Black voices of our past, but also as a time to uplift the Black voices of the present.



# Celebrating Black History Month All Year Round

By KANDACE BARTON  
Issaquah School District Parent

Celebrating Black history began as a way of remembering and celebrating important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. It is celebrated in February in the United States, Canada & Germany, while in Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, it is observed in October. Living here in the U.S. as well as having lived abroad in the U.K., it has always been extremely important to me and my family.

As a Black family in the Issaquah School District, we are almost always challenged to find out and often disappointed to learn that Black history is not acknowledged and/or celebrated outside of our very own doing. In the spirit of friends who want to learn more and do more, I'd like to offer ways to do just that!

## 1. Think locally.

You don't have to travel far to give your child/children Black history experiences. Every single city in the United States has been impacted in some way by African Americans. Find the Black history events, organizations and celebrations in your city and start participating. (See page 13 to get information on some events.)

## 2. Watch movies about black history and/or the black experience during family movie night.

The next time you sit down with your kids to watch a film, pick one that is representative of the Black experience to help you open up conversations about Black history in America.

## 3. Donate books about Black history to your child's classroom.

Teachers do a lot of heavy lifting when it comes to teaching our children. There is a limit to what they can teach, though, because of state standards and budget. Consider donating some books about Black history to your children's classrooms to give the teachers a hand in expanding their students' knowledge about lives and experiences of African Americans.

## 4. Incorporate learning about Black history into family vacations.

Whenever my family goes on vacation, we almost always visit a museum or two. When you go on family vacations, be intentional about adding Black history stops on your itinerary. Whether you're visiting a stop on the Underground Railroad or going to a local African American museum in the city you're visiting, make learning about Black history a part of your fun.

- Bonus: Learn the words to the Black National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

If schools & communities "keep relegating the story to just February," they're missing the point of Black History Month -- the responsibility does not rely solely on your child's in-school learning. The real, true and honest work is done at home.

## How to Talk About Race and Protests with Children

If you want to learn more about this topic, watch one of the ParentWiser talks by Rosetta Lee: Talking to Kids About Race and Bias for students in grades K-5 or 6-12 at <http://ParentWiser.org/watch-online>.



With funding from the Issaquah Schools Foundation, the Issaquah School District provided a professional development opportunity required for all counselors, Positive Behavioral Social Emotional Support (PBSES) and Special Education Specialists, ISD Equity and select district personnel with training from renowned speaker, Ashley McGirt, on how to handle trauma from racism. This is part of the ongoing PBSES intervention work with a larger focus on trauma-informed education to benefit all students. To learn more about Ashley McGirt, visit <https://ashleymcgirt.com>.

*"This was the best training I've had this year - while much of the content was already familiar to me, the way Ms. McGirt presented it was powerful, accessible, and compelling, and I feel better able to continue the conversation with others as a result. Additionally, I've got several new resources to connect students to care, and several new books to read that I have not seen on other lists. I am very grateful for the privilege to receive the training."*

# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!



**Cultural Bridges** serves Issaquah School District families to increase parent engagement and lead to greater student success.

We provide navigation support, host parent/student events and publish quarterly magazines translated in seven languages.





# Fueling Success for Every Student, Every School.

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# GREAT CAREERS CONFERENCE

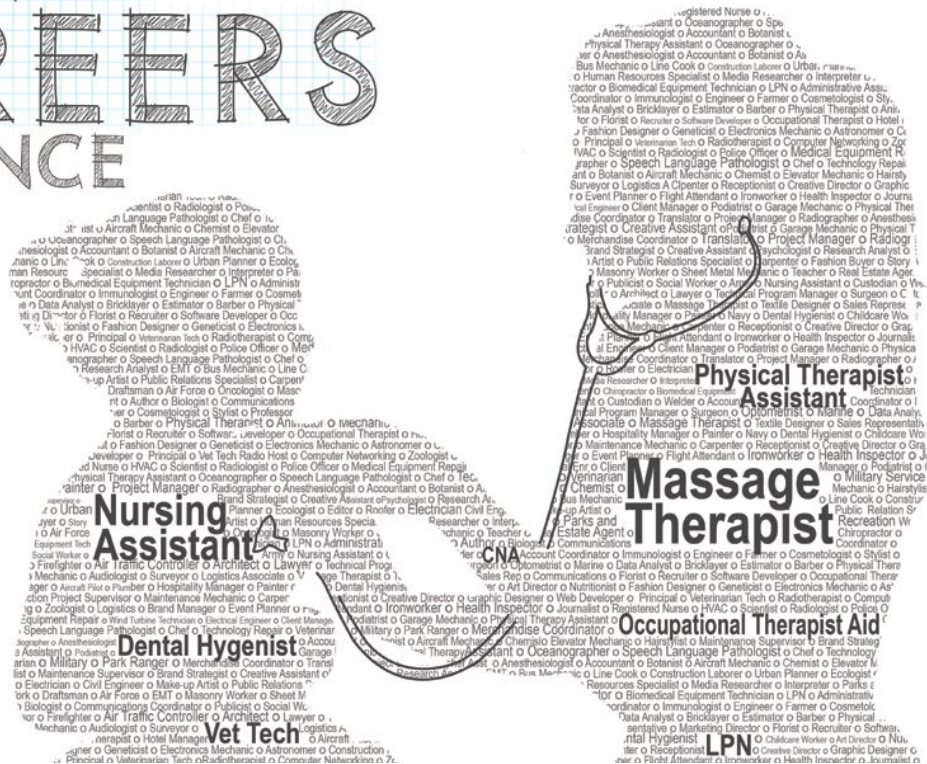
FEBRUARY 3, 2021 • GRADES 9-12

12:00pm - 3:00pm



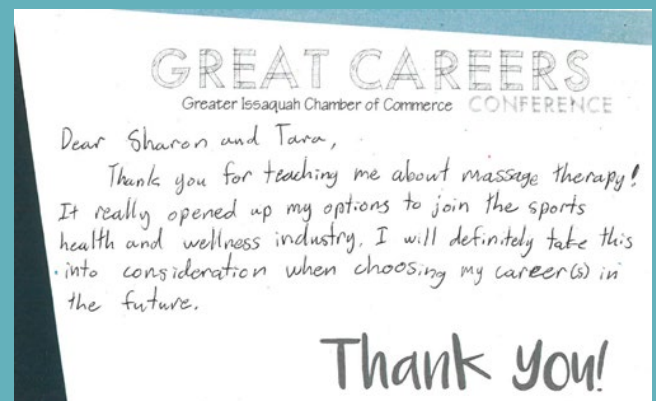
Register by  
January 27, 2021

<https://www.isdstemandcte.com/great-careers>



DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE

The Great Careers Conference, held in partnership with the Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, introduces students to secondary education options outside the typical four-year career path. The goal of the conference is to educate Issaquah district high school students about careers they can pursue through certificated, apprenticeship, or two-year degree programs. This year will be our first virtual conference, please visit: [www.isdstemandcte.com/great-careers](http://www.isdstemandcte.com/great-careers) for more information and to register.



ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

To learn more information about Issaquah Schools Foundation, visit our website, or contact us at 425.391.8557

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