

Culture COUNTS

OCM BOCES

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October 2021

Optimism, positive thinking generate long-term health benefits — here's how to get started

This issue of *Culture Counts* begins with something all of us need on a regular basis: a dose of self-care. As you may already know, self-care means more than just regular exercise, sleep and healthy food. Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Several health benefits can emerge from positive thinking, including:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physical well-being
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress

Focus on Positive Thinking

You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you are creating a new habit, after all. Here are some ways to think and behave in a positive and optimistic way:

- **Identify areas to change.** If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you usually think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute or a relationship. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.

Continued on Page 2



Welcoming Messages

A spirit of warmth and acceptance greeted OCM BOCES students this year as they returned to school. Chalk drawings like this one appeared on the sidewalks outside the Cortlandville Campus, greeting students as they stepped off the bus for the first time.

“TO GET THE FULL
VALUE OF JOY,
YOU MUST HAVE
SOMEONE TO DIVIDE
IT WITH.”

— MARK TWAIN

Please turn to the
next page to find
more resources
for self-care.

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WELLNESS COUNTS

Optimism, positive thinking generate long-term health benefits

Continued from previous page

- **Check yourself.** Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.
- **Be open to humor.** Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.
- **Follow a healthy lifestyle.** Aim to exercise for about 30 minutes on most days of the week. You can also break it up into 10-minute chunks of time during the day. Exercise can positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn techniques to manage stress.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your ability to manage stress in healthy ways.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you. Think about things you're thankful for.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>

Embrace fall traditions with activities that are healthy & fun

Fall is one of the most beautiful times of year! It's also one of the busiest. Here are some fun fall activities that can double as a workout:

- 1. Raking Leaves** - Raking is no one's favorite part of fall, but it is one of the best workouts you can get. While the leaves' colors are turning, it's time to get those muscles burning!
- 2. Apple picking** - You could spend hours walking through an apple orchard trying to find the perfect apples — not to mention, once you burn all those calories, you will have a bushel of apples to make into healthy recipes.
- 3. Gardening** - While most people think of gardening as a spring activity, the fall is when gardens are ready to be harvested and prepped for next year. Fall is also the time to plant those bulbs for next year.
- 4. Picking from the Pumpkin Patch** - Walking the pumpkin patch will help you burn off extra calories. Pick a big one for added weight lifting, although not too big as to cause injury. Keep your back straight and lift with your knees! And don't just use those pumpkins for carving jack-o'-lanterns, make



Continued on next page

WELLNESS COUNTS

Fall traditions offer many ways to exercise

Continued from previous page

some fall pumpkin recipes and enjoy the incredible health benefits of pumpkins, too!

5. Football - Playing a game of touch football is a fun way to get some exercise with the whole family — not to mention the fine motor skills, teamwork, and numerous other benefits that playing sports offers for you and your children.

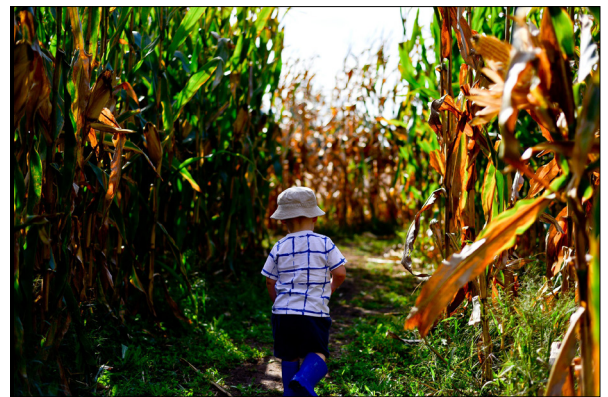
6. Hiking to view foliage - What could be better than spending some time to take in the beauty of the fall season while getting in a good workout? Connecting with nature has a calming effect on the mind.

7. Biking - If you're looking for a higher intensity workout, try bicycling instead of hiking. The long winter is approaching, so this might be your last chance to take that bike out for the season. What better way to take in more of the beautiful sights of autumn in a shorter period of time?

8. Corn Maze - The corn maze is a staple of the fall season and a great way to get exercise without even realizing it. Think of all the calories you'll burn as you aimlessly wander around the maze looking for a way out. Just don't get lost — or do get lost and burn some extra calories in the process!

9. Nature Scavenger Hunt - Turning your nature walk into a fall scavenger hunt for the kids is a fun way to get them moving and enjoying nature!

Source: <https://www.communitycare.com/News/Articles/10-Activities-Fall-Fitness>



Exercise class and 'haunted' book kick off activities at Main Campus

Wellness Committee Update: Main Campus

At Main Campus, a free monthly exercise class called "Group Centergy," led by Patrick Shaw of Instructional Support Services, is being offered to anyone at BOCES who is interested, although enrollment may be limited. [You can](#)

[find the flyer and detailed signup information here](#). Also, if you would like to join a lunchtime book club at Main Campus, just pick up a copy of *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson and join the group at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 27. Email Terri Hewitt at thewitt@ocmboces.org for details or [click here for a flyer about the next meeting](#).

WELLNESS COUNTS

Wellness committees get underway across all programs

If you are interested in joining the wellness committee for your building, please contact one of the wellness committee coordinators below:

- Beth Salatti & Mari Ukleya - Adult Education/Main Campus
- Chelsea Portaleos - Transition Classroom
- Elizabeth Henrichs - Seven Valleys
- Elizabeth Sargent - SKATE rooms
- Emily Funiciello - Cortland Alternative School
- Erin McLaughlin & Kim Capalongo - Special Ed/Cortlandville
- Julie Allen - CTE/Cortlandville Campus
- Marybeth Longo/Melissa Muller - Thompson Road
- Rhonda Buckley - Innovation Tech
- Tess Tracy & Dan Hesler - Crown Road
- Sean Coppola - STARS



Recipe: Use plentiful fall apples to make sweet, doughy egg rolls

Turn a convenient fall snack into a favorite dessert favorite with a quick and easy recipe for apple pie egg rolls perfect for dipping in whipped cream or caramel sauce.

- Submitted by Shankevia Dean from Crown Road Campus

Ingredients

- 3 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and diced into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 egg roll wrappers
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- Whipped cream or caramel sauce, for serving

Instructions

1. In a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat, combine the diced apples, lemon juice, cinnamon and sugar.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the cornstarch with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water then add it to the apple mixture. Stir together the mixture then bring it to a boil and cover it. Reduce it to a simmer and cook the mixture until the apples have softened slightly and the mixture has thickened, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the apple mixture from the heat, stir in the vanilla extract then transfer the mixture to a bowl to cool completely.
4. Fill a small dish with water and line a baking sheet with paper towels.



5. Once the apple mixture has cooled completely, arrange the egg roll wrappers on a dry work surface then using a slotted spoon, portion about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the apple mixture in the lower third of each

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WELLNESS COUNTS

Continued from previous page - Recipe for Sweet Egg Rolls

wrapper. Beginning at the bottom of the wrapper, roll the egg roll up while folding the edges inward. Wet your finger in the water and run it around the edges then seal the egg rolls shut.

6. Add at least 4 inches of oil to a large, heavy-bottomed stock pot set over medium-high heat and attach a deep-fry thermometer to the side.

7. Once the oil reaches 360°F, add 3 to 4 egg rolls and fry, turning occasionally, until golden brown. Remove the egg rolls from the oil and transfer

them onto the baking sheet. Repeat the frying process with the remaining egg rolls, returning the oil to 360°F between batches.

8. Serve immediately with whipped cream or caramel sauce for dipping.

Prep time: 20 mins Cook Time: 4 mins
Total time: 24 mins Servings: 8

Find the full recipe: <https://www.justataste.com/apple-pie-egg-rolls-recipe/>

CULTURE COUNTS

Circling up around our values — helping students feel heard

By Randi Downs

Instructional Coach

Recently, I had the pleasure of facilitating a relationship circle with our Thompson Road Career & Technical Education seniors and teachers in the Health Occupations class. We began by choosing a value that we would like to demonstrate while in the circle. Some of the value words students chose were honesty, equality, truth, compassion, and empathy. We all wrote our words in bold lettering and placed them on the floor in front of us. For the rest of the circle, which lasted quite a while, everyone shared their “why’s”, their questions, their passions, their fears, and so much more.

Students connected with their teachers in that shared circle space.

They felt heard — and said so. At the end of the circle, our group felt a little closer, and each and every student jumped up and returned to their work, carrying their value word with them.

When challenges arise, as they will, it is our hope that the essence of those words will remain in that classroom and in the actions of the students and teachers throughout the year. After I left, I realized that I had just witnessed something that the pandemic had robbed us of — connection. For the first time in months, we felt together and seen, and part of something extraordinary.

As we go through these opening times, please remember that circles can be a simple, yet powerful tool and that just the act of writing a single word can elevate the experience even more.

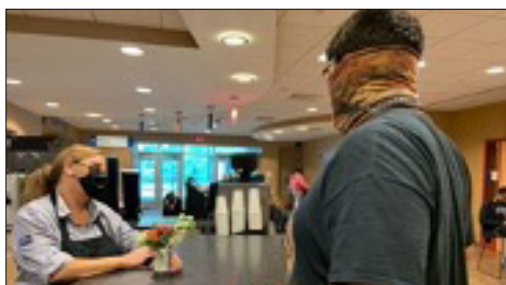
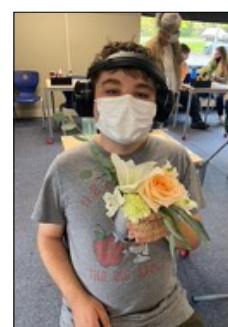
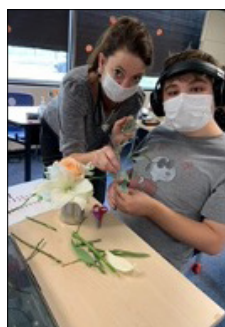
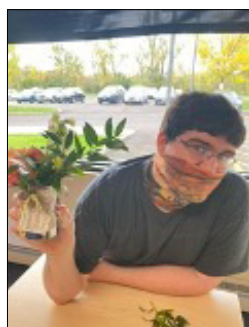
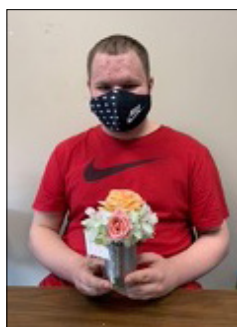
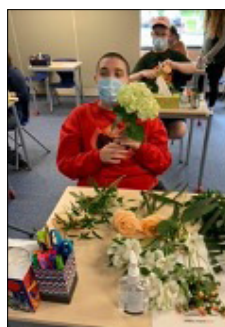
Please reach out if you would like to have help in planning a circle in the upcoming weeks.



CULTURE COUNTS

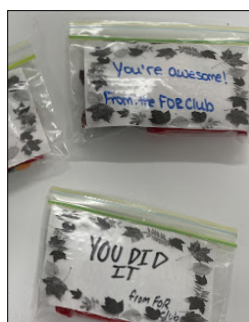
Students recycle cans, spread kindness 'one bouquet at a time'

In the OCM BOCES Transitions program at Onondaga Community College, students demonstrated a unique act of kindness by repurposing event flowers and sharing them across campus. To do this, the students created upcycled aluminum can vases, then arranged the flowers into bouquets. The students paid it forward by "Spreading Joy One Bouquet at a Time!" to OCC staff members at Coyne Hall, the dining center and the student center. - Submitted by Elizabeth Sargent

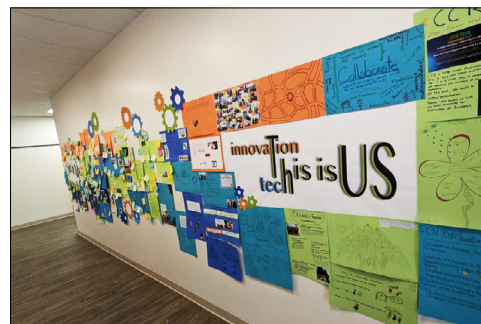


Kindness is spreading ... Friends of Rachel clubs recruit, plan events

During the first few weeks of school across all of Student Services, our Rachel's Challenge FOR Clubs and KC Clubs have been busy spreading kindness! Clubs have been busy recruiting members and planning events. Here are a few pictures of the amazing work our clubs have been doing. From left to right are photos from STARS, Cortlandville, Innovation Tech and Cortland Alternative School. - Submitted by Dan Hesler



CULTURE COUNTS



‘This is us’ — Students build community by creating a mural

Part of building a positive school culture is building community. At Innovation Tech, students started the new school year by describing themselves in writings and pictures and posting their creations in a hallway that displayed the words, “This is me.”

Their classmates, in turn, responded to the writings with colorful post-its full of positive comments and feedback. Later, after students had shared about themselves as individuals, they switched their reflections to the school as a whole: “Who do we want to be as an Innovation Tech community?” Students then

posted their ideas on the other end of the hall, which featured the words, “This is us.”

The final creation is a beautiful, multi-colored mural that combines the two reflections. Principal Trista Brundage said it was a great way to kick off the first few days of school.


“This community-building orientation allowed students to dig deeper into who they are as individuals, as well as how they can fit into and contribute to the Innovation Tech community,” she said.

Coming next month: Enjoy a new format for Culture Counts

Starting in November, this *Culture Counts* newsletter will still be created as an “e-newsletter,” which means the photos and stories will appear directly in your email, rather than only be presented as a pdf attachment. We are switching to this new format for several reasons:

- You will be able to open *Culture Counts* on your mobile phone and read it with ease, rather than trying to pinch and expand the pdf.
- The content will be more accessible to people with disabilities.
- We will be able to measure the effectiveness of our content by seeing which stories, recipes and other resources appeal to you the most.

Of course, if you prefer, we can still provide this document as a pdf. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact jwiegand@ocmboces.org. If you are interested in signing up for additional BOCES newsletters, [click here](#).



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