

CHILDREN'S HEALTH
**MIND, BODY
AND SPIRIT**
ALL CONNECT TO WELLNESS

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By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

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Johnson County Library

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Children are Our Future

I'm sure these are words many of us have said or heard in our lifetime. What's great about this is — it's true!

Just think, we, too were the hope of our parents and community. They were counting on us to do better than they did, solve society's problems and ensure that they would have a better life in their old age. If we examine what we have accomplished today, what would we find? The point is, everyone should live their life with a consciousness to make a difference and live with the satisfaction that we have given our best.

Looking back, at a very young age I was already exhibiting talent as a writer. I was writing poems or being asked by others to write something. My grandfather called me often to his side to read a letter someone from down home had sent him. It made me feel important at the age of 10 to do this for him. Then, he would dictate his words so I could write his letter. He'd smile after I read it back to him and soon, off he would go to the post office to mail it. It never occurred to me that I was fulfilling his dream of helping him in his old age.

In this issue, we present three of our community's extraordinary kids who have won over my heart: high school senior, JoVon, an up and coming youth umpire and aspiring sportswriter; Alexis, a very active and smart pre-teen; and 8-year-old Officer Oliver who is warming the hearts of many nursing home residents. Tim DeWeese, director of Johnson County Mental Health, offers advice and tips to families to help maintain consistency, togetherness and positivity in the home. Measles cases are on the rise. We remind parents of the importance of vaccinating their children against this preventable childhood disease and more.



I invite you to join me in nurturing and protecting our greatest assets — our children. We would love to hear from you. Share your heartwarming story on the contributions a child you know and admire is accomplishing at ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com.

To your health and happiness.

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

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P.O Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131
816.361.6400
kcourhealthmatters.com

PUBLISHER

Ruth Ramsey
ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING

Donna Wood
dwood@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Jeanene Dunn
jdunn@kcourhealthmatters.com

EVENT COORDINATOR

Barbara Bartholomew
bebe@kcourhealthmatters.com

HAVING AN EVENT?

GOT QUESTIONS?
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

WANT TO ADVERTISE?

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CONTRIBUTORS

Oliver Davis

Brandi Davis

Tim DeWeese

Teresa Gerard

Tenille L. Lawson PharmD, BCPS

Christopher Leitch

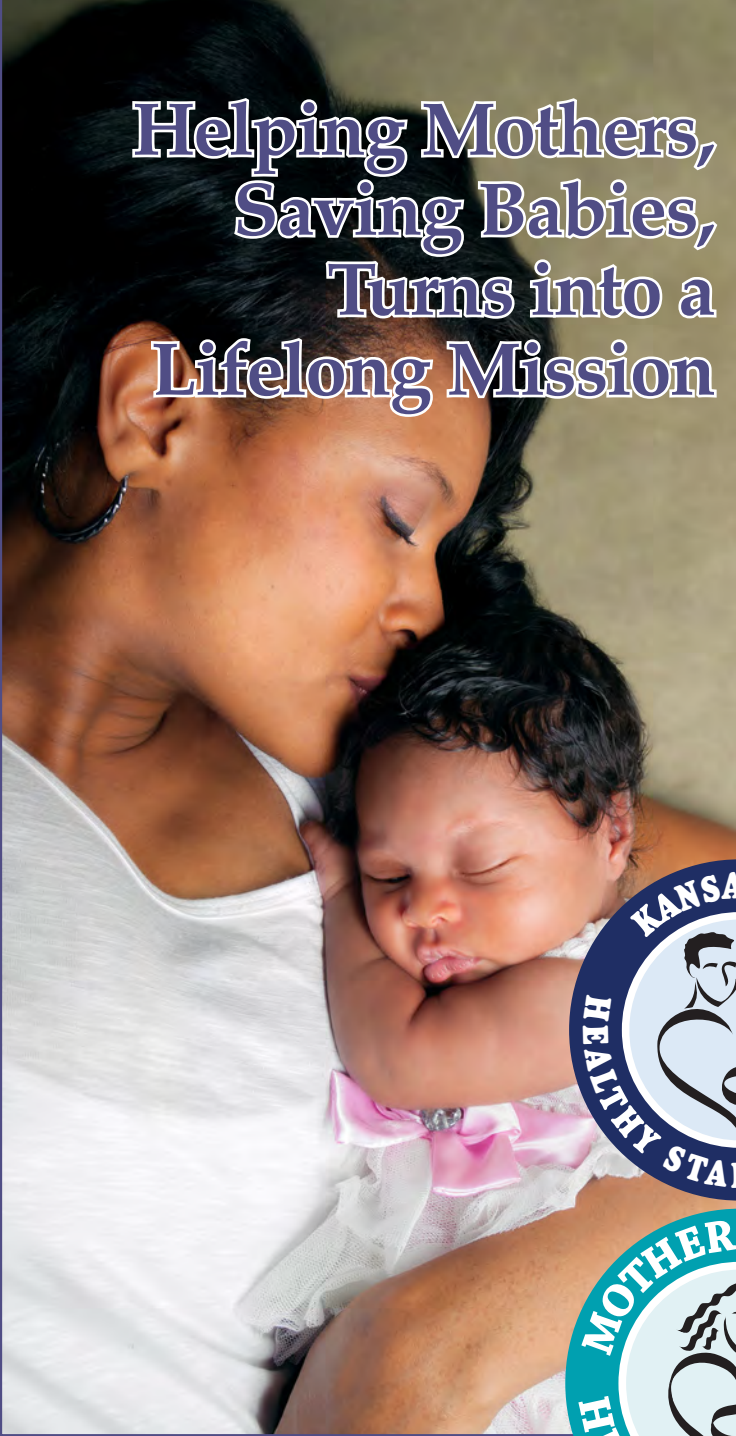
Alexis Olivares

Cristina Martina Olivares

JoVon Ray

Marisa Rouser

Helping Mothers, Saving Babies, Turns into a Lifelong Mission



"Our goal is to be the foremost authority in the region on infant and maternal mortality and serve as a link to health and wellness resources in Missouri and Kansas."

— Tracy Russell,
MCHC Executive Director

IT'S NOT EASY TO LOOK AWAY WHEN A MOTHER AND BABY FACE BARRIERS THAT KEEP THEM FROM REALIZING THEIR BEST HEALTH OUTCOMES.

Twenty-three years ago, Mother & Child Health Coalition (MCHC) established the Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative (KCHSI), to support at-risk and underserved mothers from pregnancy through 18 months of their infant's life. KCHSI provides care coordination and case management through medical home and home visitation models, to improve the health of mothers and prevent infant deaths. This is especially critical for black babies, who are twice as likely to die prematurely as other infants.

Actions speak louder than words

Saving babies has fostered support from diverse community partners to tackle identifiable barriers and supply culturally appropriate prevention methods. THE GOAL: increase awareness by use of community health workers to educate mothers one-on-one about the importance of early prenatal care and to connect them to resources to improve health outcomes.

Who We Serve

Families in the following ZIP code areas are eligible for services offered by the Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative program: 64109, 64111, 64124, 64126, 64127, 64128, 64130 and 64132 in Jackson County, Missouri and 66101, 66102, 66104, 66105, 66106 and 66111 in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

The Keys to Success: Education, Prevention and Partnerships

Measurable results include: improved health of vulnerable, high-risk pregnant women and infants through increased number of women receiving early prenatal care; increased rates of breastfeeding and immunization; and awareness about safe sleep environments for infants. Other programs implemented by Mother & Child Health Coalition include:

- The Mid America Immunization Coalition (MAIC)
- Safe Kids Metro KC
- Breastfeeding Collaborative
- Safe Sleep Task Force
- Safe Haven for Newborns
- The Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Committee

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

MCHC welcomes support in the form of volunteering and tax-deductible donations. To learn more about these extraordinary programs, to volunteer, or make donations call 816-283-6242 and visit www.mchc.net

Cutting-Edge Best Care for Stroke Survivors

Each year, as many as 500,000 individuals experience a spinal cord injury. And, as many as 15 million suffer a stroke. MidAmerica Rehabilitation Hospital, now offers the first EksoGT™ robotic exoskeleton, indicated for stroke and spinal cord injury rehabilitation.

This amazing cutting-edge exoskeleton technology helps patients get back on their feet earlier to relearn correct step patterns, weight shifting, and posture.

“The EksoGT offers many benefits to our patients who are relearning to walk after a stroke, as the device promotes early mobilization and can help improve gait speed and distance, which are critical factors for optimal recovery,”

—Tiffany Kiehl, Chief Executive Officer,
MidAmerica Rehabilitation Hospital.

The wearable device helps patients stand and relearn to walk, while gaining confidence and freedom. In addition, it mobilizes patients earlier in their rehabilitation, for optimal outcomes.

Clinical evidence suggests that including EksoGT gait training in inpatient rehabilitation for stroke improves independence in functional mobility. Most patients take an average of 400 steps their first-time training in the device. It is the most clinically used exoskeleton. Patients around the world have taken over 90 million steps in more than 200 rehabilitation institutions around the world.



5701 West 110th Street
Overland Park, KS 66211
913.491.2400

For questions about the admission process, or if you would like to tour MidAmerica Rehabilitation Hospital, contact Jessica Bratkovic, Business Development Director at 913-491-2400.



Stroke rehabilitation— Life-changing results

For stroke survivors, rehabilitation can be one of the most important parts of recovery. Our hospital offers innovative, customized therapy programs to improve function and strength, getting patients back into the community for the activities they love most.

Learn more at
midamericarehabhospital.com



The Joint Commission Disease-Specific Care Certification in Amputee Rehabilitation, Brain Injury Rehabilitation, Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation and Stroke Rehabilitation



MidAmerica
Rehabilitation Hospital

5701 West 110th Street
Overland Park, KS 66211
913.491.2400





Early to Read, Early to Succeed

By Christopher Leitch

Community Relations Coordinator, Johnson County Library

Reading is a major public health issue. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, talking, singing, and reading to a child are essential for early brain development which is connected to better health outcomes later in life. Similar studies show that there is a connection between low literacy, poor health and children who struggle with reading in school. Challenges with literacy can often manifest themselves in physical and emotional problems, too.

Acquiring language is a basic human skill that kids start to develop as soon as they're born. The Johnson County Library offers families and caregivers many early literacy resources to help their kids become comfortable and confident language learners.

6 by 6 Ready to Read

The Johnson County Library's popular early literacy program, "6 by 6 Ready to Read," turns 10 years old this fall. This program encourages parents to talk, read and sing songs with babies and children to help them understand and use language. "6 by 6" refers to the six pre-reading skills which kids should experience by age six.

Practice these six skills at home, in the car, on the bus, or any other time you're spending time together.

1. HAVE FUN WITH BOOKS: Kids who look at, touch and hold books develop tactile knowledge and will naturally want to learn to read. Tactile learners learn by touching and doing. They understand and remember things through physical movement.

2. LOOK FOR LETTERS EVERYWHERE: Children need to recognize letter shapes, differences and that they are related to sounds. This letter knowledge is a precursor to reading. Practice by singing the alphabet song and looking at the letters.

3. NOTICE PRINT ALL AROUND YOU: Print awareness starts with helping kids notice that print on signs, boxes, labels and toys is meaningful and interesting.

4. TAKE TIME TO RHYME: Children love to play, and when they play with words and the smaller sounds in words, they are developing an early literacy skill called phonological awareness.

5. TALK, TALK, TALK: Use lots of words with young children, even when they don't understand. The more words children hear, the larger their vocabularies become.

6. TELL STORIES ABOUT EVERYTHING: The ability to describe things and events and to develop stories is referred to as narrative skill. Talk about your day and ask open-ended questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no".

The Johnson County Library offers "6 x 6" in each of its 14 early literacy spaces.. The library boasts an expansive collection of kids books and hundreds of story times scheduled at the branches. All public programs at the Johnson County Libraries are provided free of charge.

For more information about "6 by 6" call the Johnson County Library, at 913-826-4600 and visit www.jocolibrary.org/6by6. •



Kansas City

POWERFUL SHIFT AIMS TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City
leading the way to helping families proactively
pursue better health.

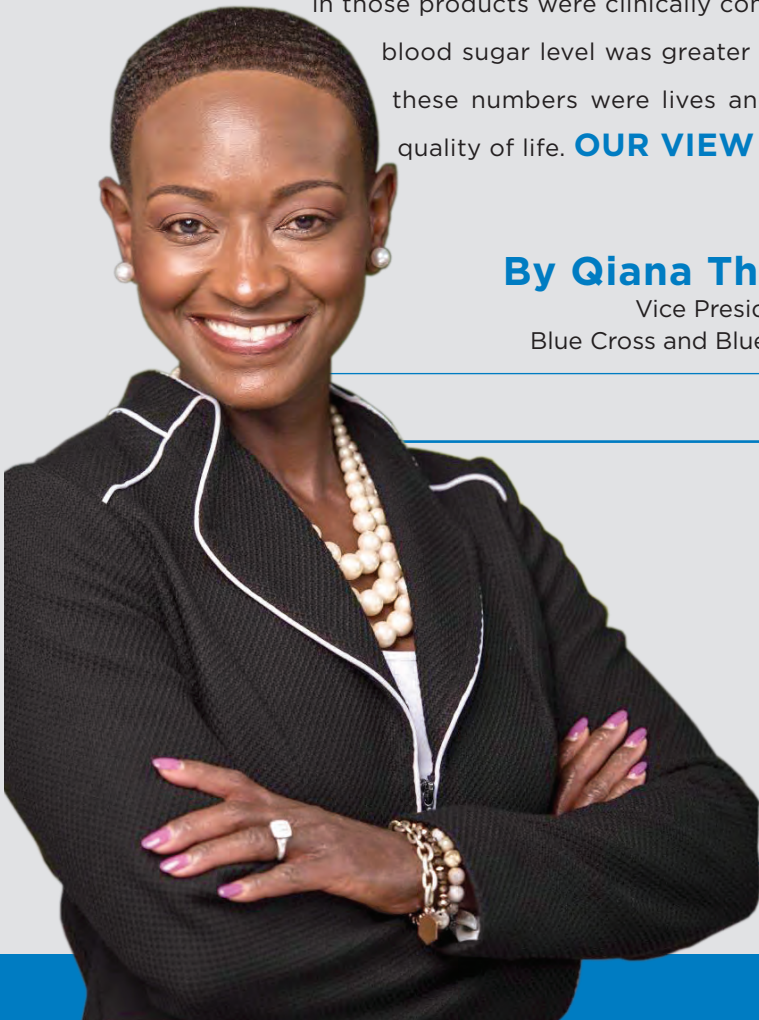
In 2017, it was clear to our organization that many of our benefits and health plan resources were reactive provisions for sick care versus preventive health care. Frankly, we'd been mopping up the flood on the floor versus shutting off the faucet. We took an honest look at the prevalence of chronic conditions diagnosed in our network and weren't pleased with the stats on the page. For example, when data from two of our most popular products, HMO and PPO plans, were combined, we learned that 25.09% of the 15,225 diabetic members in those products were clinically considered in "poor control." Meaning, their average blood sugar level was greater than 9%. More importantly, we knew that behind these numbers were lives and stories of individuals experiencing diminished quality of life. **OUR VIEW SHIFTED...**

By Qiana Thomason, MSW, LCSW

Vice President, Community Health
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City (Blue KC)

In Kansas City, the zip code where I grew up in Jackson County, Missouri, compared to where I live now in Johnson County, Kansas, shows a 10-year decrease in life expectancy. How can someone's life expectancy shift so dramatically from one zip code to another? The most important factors in this disparity are education, income, environmental resources and alarming differences in health outcomes.

TURN PAGE FOR MORE INFO





Dr. Dana Bowen-Matthew, Distinguished Law Professor, Author of “Just Medicine” and Conference Keynote Speaker addressing attendees on racial equity in healthcare.

My role as Vice President of Community Health at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City (Blue KC) exists because as an organization we see the direct impact a community in which someone lives, works and plays has on their health. These health outcomes are directly correlated with socioeconomic and environmental factors referred to as the social determinants of health, as well as our personal lifestyles.

As the executive owner of Blue KC's Community Health strategy, I challenge myself daily with how to leverage our role as Kansas City's leading health insurer to improve health and facilitate smarter spending, while being a catalyst that addresses the holistic needs of our members and the community. It's a zealous aim, but one that I'm proud to say we're actualizing with benefits, programs and partnerships.

Birthing Innovative Programs and Partnerships

Blue KC is birthing new benefits like the Diabetes Prevention Program and forging strong partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals. One example is the recent Heartland Health Equity and Patient Centered Care Conference held on August 6 and 7, which we co-sponsored with the University of Kansas Medical Center. The Heartland Conference is a regional summit aimed to

advance health equity and promote strategies, much like the two discussed within this article, to address health disparities within the states of Missouri and Kansas. Bringing health systems, providers and community-based organizations together allows us to address health equity from all angles. By combining perspectives from attendees such as primary care teams, community health constituents, equity advocates and thought leaders, we collectively examined health equity within the context of patient care and put emphasis on solutions. The biggest takeaways from the conference include:

1. Multi-sector partnerships combined with public policy advocacy through a “health in all policies” lens is needed to effect structural change and improve community health; and
2. Healthcare practitioners who are addressing social determinants of health with their patients cannot fully address these needs without understanding the toxic stress within their social context, to include discrimination.

Diabetes Prevention Program

Understanding that most chronic conditions are preventable, lifestyle-based and heavily dependent on our socioeconomic and environmental circumstances, Blue KC



is eliminating financial barriers attached to certain benefits. We are most proud of the 2018 introduction of our Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), available to most members as a preventive health benefit. Included in this free program are a personal health coach, weekly lessons, small groups for support; wireless scales and activity trackers for individuals at risk of developing diabetes. DPPs are 12-month programs composed of 16 weekly sessions, then a monthly session for one year. By April 2019, the DPP had 1,579 participants who lost a combined 9,191 pounds over six months.

Diabetes Self-Management Education

Recognizing that coverage doesn't always equate to access, we also changed how we cover Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) courses by moving the benefit in front of the deductible versus behind the deductible. This is a significant impact as DSME classes can range from \$300 - \$800 depending on the provider. The course teaches individuals who already have diabetes about the condition, self-management techniques and incorporates nutritional support to help people manage the condition. This benefit change is another financial and health literacy barrier removed and made more accessible for members.

Keep Your Eyes on Us, We're Here for Good!

In this edition of ***Our Health Matters™*** and others that will follow, we spotlight how Blue KC is committed to changing the health landscape of our community.

In our next series, I'll share details on our Medical Home investments and outcomes. For those not familiar with this term, medical homes are a primary care value-based healthcare system designed to provide high-quality, seamless healthcare to patients, while managing healthcare spending. In other words, compensating providers for high-quality patient outcomes.

Step by step, we're building a foundation for equity focused, member-centric high-quality care. Blue KC will continue to deepen its investment and commitment to holistic care through the upstream factors like the social determinants of health that influence health the most.

For more from Qiana Thomason, follow her at [linkedin.com/in/Qiana-Thomason](https://www.linkedin.com/in/Qiana-Thomason), or on Twitter at [Twitter.com/Qiana_Thomason](https://twitter.com/Qiana_Thomason).



Dr. Stacey Daniels-Young (left) and Qiana Thomason with City of KCMO Councilwoman, Melissa Robinson (middle), who received one of the Heartland Health Equity Awards for her championship of community-centric health equity.



Blue KC and The University of Kansas Medical Center conference leaders with keynote speaker, Dr. Dana Bowen-Matthew.



Brussels Sprouts with Mushroom Sauce

This side dish is also delicious when made with CAULIFLOWER, KALE, CABBAGE, COLLARDS, BROCCOLI, or TURNIPS. Cooking time may vary for different types of vegetables.

Makes: 2 servings

NUTRITION INFORMATION FOR 1/2 OF RECIPE

Calories	54
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Monounsaturated Fat	0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	0 g
Linoleic Acid	0 g
Alpha-Linolenic acid	0.1 g
Omega 3 - EPA	0 mg
Omega 3 - DHA	0 mg
Cholesterol	0 mg
Total Carbohydrate	10 g
Dietary Fiber	4 g
Total Sugars	2 g
Added Sugars included	0 g
Protein	5 g

MINERALS

Calcium	46 mg
Potassium	458 mg
Sodium	69 mg
Copper	153 mcg
Iron	2 mg
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	97 mg
Selenium	4 mcg
Zinc	1 mg

VITAMINS

Vitamin A	34 mcg RAE
Vitamin B	60.2 mg
Vitamin B1	20 mcg
Vitamin C	76 mg
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Vitamin E	1 mg AT
Vitamin K	160 mcg
Folate	58 mcg DFE
Thiamin	0.2 mg
Riboflavin	0.2 mg
Niacin	2 mg
Choline	22 mg



INGREDIENTS

- > 2 cups Brussels sprouts (or broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, collards, or turnips)
- > 1/2 cup chicken broth, low-sodium
- > 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- > 1 teaspoon brown mustard (spicy)
- > 1/2 teaspoon thyme (dried)
- > 1/2 cup mushroom (sliced)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trim Brussels sprouts and cut in half. Steam until tender - about 6 to 10 minutes, or microwave on high for 3 to 4 minutes.
2. In a non-stick pot bring the broth to a boil.
3. Mix in the lemon juice, mustard, and thyme. Add the mushrooms.
4. Boil until the broth is reduced by half, about 5 to 8 minutes.
5. Add the Brussels sprouts (or other cooked vegetable).
6. Toss well to coat with the sauce.

Source: University of Connecticut, Family Nutrition Program, Senior Nutrition Awareness Project (SNAP) Newsletters



Spicy Snacks Are Harming Kids

Spicy snacks could be doing serious harm to your kid's digestive system, sometimes leading to gastritis or ulcers. In the pediatric emergency room doctors talk about the "hot spicy snacks sign" – when a child comes in with abdominal pain and has bright red dust on their fingers, it's probably the hot spicy snacks. Kids eat lots of other junk foods, but hot spicy snacks are products that brings kids to the ER. Why? Because with 39 grams of fat per serving, plus loads of artificial color and burning spices, it's no surprise they cause gastrointestinal upset and slimy red poop. Yet the kids keep eating them and just can't stop. What makes hot spicy snacks so addictive?

No one knows for sure, but the best medical hypothesis is that hot spicy snacks addiction is actually a kind of mild opiate addiction. Here's how: the red pepper kind of spice in hot spicy snacks causes a burning sensation in the gastrointestinal tract. Capsaicin is the natural chemical in peppers that makes them hot. Our body has capsaicin receptors that respond to pepper spice. In response to this burn, our bodies release natural opioids that are normal neurotransmitters called "endogenous opioids," or "endorphins." Mix in just the right combination of salt, sugar, and fat, and you have a snack engineered to taste good and then keep you feeling good. Until the opiates are gone. Then you need to eat more.

This habit-forming type of food is what David Kessler, MD, former FDA commissioner has termed, "hyperpalatable." These are foods that provide such a rewarding experience that

we keep coming back for more. Sugar, salt, and fat ingestion can also cause release of natural opiates, which is why so many people binge on ice cream, potato chips and other traditional junk foods. But hot spicy snacks add the burning sensation, which may maximize the opiate release.

Marketers spend billions attracting kids to junk food. But the lifelong cost to your children's health is high. As parents, advocate for your children and get hot spicy snacks and other similar snack foods out of the hands of children. Here's what you can do:

- Talk to your child's school, ask for hot spicy snacks and other similar hyperpalatable foods to be removed from the menu and/or vending machines.
- If your child's school expects parents to provide classroom snacks, work with the school nurse to develop a list of healthy school snacks.
- Advocate for limited marketing of junk food to kids. The Disney Channel recently stopped airing junk food ads. Write a letter to Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, or your child's favorite channel and ask them to stop marketing junk food.
- Stop buying it. Make a pledge that your house will be junk food-free.

Editor's note: Always consult with your child's medical provider or pediatrician for information about nutritional or diet restrictions.

Source: childrensmid.org



When 700 Medical Students Screen 14,000 Kids...

Kansas City is fortunate to have 700 Kansas City University (KCU) osteopathic medical students who provide annual health screenings to as many as 14,000 elementary school children in 39 schools in Kansas City and 11 schools in Joplin, Missouri, where KCU also has a campus.

Score 1 for Health, a highly successful health screening program founded in 1993, is the result of a chance meeting and brainstorm between Robert Ricci, DO, a physician, and retired Kansas City Chiefs football player, Deron Cherry. From small beginnings, they built a program that is now part of the Kansas City University medical program. Children in designated Score 1 schools qualify to receive services.

Under the direct supervision of KCU faculty, osteopathic medical students in partnership with community nursing, dental and allied health students provide a head-to-toe physical assessment. They screen height, weight, body mass index (BMI calculation), vision, dental and blood pressure, to name a few.

BIG BENEFITS

Follow-up is the key to success. Helping families connect to healthcare providers and community resources is one of the biggest benefits. Parents and school health officials are notified when a child has a health issue with weight, poor vision, dental health and asthma. Trained Score 1 nurses and community health workers return to each school as a follow up to ensure that children can receive the help they need.

EVERYONE WINS!

Score 1 for Health is often referred to as a “win-win” program, as it simultaneously supports the development of tomorrow’s physicians, nurses and allied health practitioners, while meeting the needs of under-resourced pediatric populations.



GOOD HEALTH HAPPENS

“Parents appreciate our follow-up and become comfortable sharing which barriers may prevent them from getting care for their children, such as language, transportation, lack of insurance or financial resources. Score 1 assists with finding the appropriate services.”

— Annette Campbell, RN, MPA,
Director, Score 1 for Health



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM, CONTACT ANNETTE CAMPBELL
ACAMPBELL@KCUMB.EDU | 816-654-7962 | WWW.KCUMB.EDU/SCORE1**



CHILDREN'S HEALTH MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT ALL CONNECT TO WELLNESS

The start of the school year is a perfect time to explore all aspects of wellness relating to our children. The health of the child encompasses mind, body and soul.

This issue of *Our Health Matters* is dedicated to the health of our children — from food to fitness, learning how to care about others, to mental and emotional health issues, school safety and even spirituality and faith.

JOVON RAY

A Mind That is Not Going to Waste

JoVon Ray is a 17-year-old senior at Raytown South High School. He is off to a great start and working hard to score a successful finish. History is his favorite subject because he enjoys learning about the past. After graduation, he has his sight on going to college on a scholarship and majoring in journalism. His older brother, DelVon attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, on a scholarship and received a Bachelor's in Business Administration. He received his Master's from Webster University in St. Louis, MO.

What activities are you involved in and how do you feel mentally and physically after participating?

I started off playing machine pitch baseball at 6 years old for the Boys and Girls Club. The positions I have played throughout the years are 2nd base, short stop, pitcher, and my favorite position is center field. I have been umpiring for three years for Sports America, KC Sports, and Midwest Sports Production. When I play sports, after a loss I think about the mistakes I made and how I could have done better. When we win I feel I did my best, so I'm happy. After a game, I'm tired and ready to go to sleep. Mom, Marisa shares: "before his games we pray and I give him words of encouragement to do his best. We discuss how to handle a game loss, talk about the mistakes and what they can do to improve for the next game."

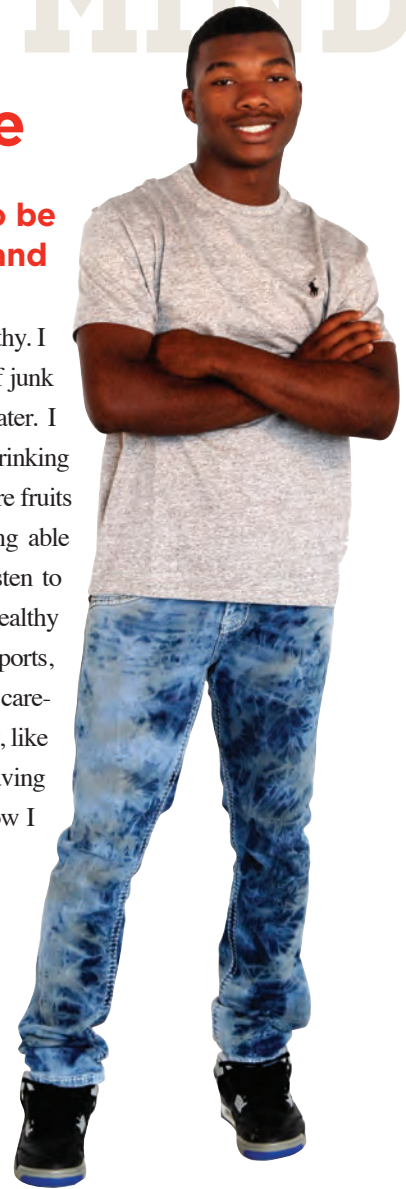
What does it mean to be healthy... mind, body and spirit?

Staying active is how I stay healthy. I don't eat the healthiest, I eat a lot of junk food and I don't drink enough water. I could do better in those areas by drinking more water and choosing to eat more fruits and vegetables. It also means being able to communicate my thoughts. I listen to music to clear my mind. Having a healthy body consists of not being hurt in sports, choosing a better diet, and being careful of the things I put into my body, like not using drugs nor alcohol. So, having a combination of those things is how I keep a healthy mind.

Marisa, what advice would you give to parents about helping their child stay safe, productive and balanced?

Open communication is the key from the very start. They have to feel comfortable about coming to you about anything. Educate them about life in all aspects. Ask them open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no response about their day, their friends, and the things that are on their minds. Tell them how important they are in your life; tell them often how beautiful and handsome they are and show unconditional love. Remind them to pay close attention to their surroundings, because there are way too many horrible things going on. Lastly, hold them accountable and correct them when they are wrong, or make poor choices.

JOVON, IN CLOSING: Mom comes to my games, listens to my thoughts, understands my feelings, gives me a lot of good advice, enrolled me in extra learning programs, and helps me with my homework. I'm so blessed to have a mom like her! •



Marisa (center) with sons, DelVon (left) and JoVon (right).

HEALTHY BODY

ALEXIS OLIVARES Off to a Great Start — Living an Active and Healthy Life

At age 11, Alexis is a sixth grader, who is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. She attends Foreign Language Academy. Alexis is very active. Her mother describes her as being high energy, very driven and always giving her all.

She loves playing soccer with the Sporting Missouri Valley Soccer Team and is constantly running, strategizing, and organizing her team. The family as a whole lead very active lifestyles. Father Ricky, is a soccer coach, mom Cristina, is a fitness instructor and brothers, Ivan and Carlos play soccer. Her grandmother, Sylvia also lives in the home.

How her family supports and encourage her:

We encourage Alexis to be herself. We stay busy taking her to games and drill team performances. Her dad spends extra time training her on speed and agility for soccer. Alexis loves the competitive aspect of soccer and wants to get a scholarship for college. She feels that sports helps rid her body of negative energy. She enjoys drill team, music and dancing to the rhythms of Cumbia, Salsa, Merengue, Samba and Folklorico.

Some girls her age are obsessed with their looks and body image, what conversations do you and Alexis have about nutrition and fitness and how is it shaping her actions and views?

I remember there was a minor case of shaming by a classmate regarding her eating “unhealthy foods” such as chips and drinks. Alexis prefers to not eat red meat so we have to be creative and make sure she gets enough protein and fiber. She eats a lot of chicken, beans, peanut butter, chia seeds and fruits. Her food interests are unique. She can afford to eat a few more calories due to the amount she burns on a daily basis. We never say the word skinny in our home. Fit is healthy. My kids love to show off muscle.

Your advice to parents about encouraging their child to be active?

Sports and recreational activities is a time commitment that is rewarding to your children’s development socially and physically. It also will help them build positive relationships with teammates, coaches and other families. It’s a way to keep children off the streets and out of way of bad influences. •



HEALTHY SPIRIT

OFFICER OLIVER

Extraordinary Spirit —

A huge smile and big hug is all his fans require.

Eight-year-old Oliver Davis is a second grader at Brookwood Elementary School, in Overland Park, Kansas. He is affectionately known as “Officer Oliver” and needless to say, is in a league of his own. I saw Officer Oliver on a national news story and was so impressed and determined to feature him in *Our Health Matters*.

He has also appeared on “The Steve Harvey Show” who, by the way, is paying for a year’s worth of roses for him to give to residents at nursing homes. It was easy selecting Oliver to convey the soul and SPIRIT aspect of our Children’s Health and Wellness — MIND, BODY and SPIRIT edition.

Oliver’s mom, Brandi, shares... “Oliver started helping the community when he was 5 years old. He believed he was a real police officer and his duty as a police officer was to help the community. He asked me if we could visit his great-grandmother’s nursing home to and pass out flowers. After we went the first time, he was hooked and asked if it was OK if he could give them a hug also? I told him yes and that this was his best idea yet.

Oliver has already staked his sights on becoming a policer officer. In fact, he dresses in his tailor-made police uniform and rides a small police motorcycle. The Davis household consists of his father, Steve, mom Brandi, and sisters, Addie and Eloise, all who are so supportive of him.

Brandi continues: When we go to nursing homes, he gives each resident a flower and a “police ticket” that reads, “STOP, You Have Received a Ticket for being Too Cute”. He signs his name and gives them a warm hug! He has passed out more than 10,000 flowers and hugs in the last year. Oliver is feeling the impact of his kindness. He tells me often, “Mom, I just feel so good after that.” I had one resident tell me they haven’t had a hug in five years and that his hug made their whole year. I will keep encouraging Oliver to help others because of the powerful impression it is making on him, also! He knows it is one act of kindness that can change someone’s day and perhaps life!

We asked Oliver: What do you enjoy most about visiting nursing homes?

“Making them happy, it makes me happy. I love making people smile. I look forward every week to meeting new people.” •



To see more photos about Oliver’s visits and a video, visit our website at kcourhealthmatters.com



Get the School Year Off to A Good Start

Make the adjustment easier with these tips.

By Jeanene Dunn, *OHM Staff*

Another summer break is in the books, and school is back in session. The routine, schedule and structure are back in place, along with homework and after-school activities.

Whether your child is just starting their academic career or moving on to the next grade level, a new school year can be exciting and stressful for them and for you.

Tim DeWeese, director of Johnson County Mental Health, offers advice and tips to help you and your child get back into the school year groove.

“As children are adjusting to new routines at school, families are often adjusting to new routines at home, too. Meal times are different, fall sports and activities are starting and parents are still trying to figure out childcare and transportation schedules. In the midst of this, it’s important for families to prioritize some quality time together where they can talk about the new routines. Meals together when possible is a good place to start. These times give parents the opportunity to check in on their kids and hear from them about what is going well and what is still challenging for their children in the new routine, then repeat the pattern of affirming feelings and offering words of encouragement.”

Tips for parents and adults as children transition back to school:

- Listening involves our ears AND eyes.
- Positive mindset and positive statements go a long way.
- Routine and schedules throughout the entire day provide structure for the whole family.
- Identify other safe adults your child can talk to. It really does take a village.
- Make informed and intentional decisions about the use of emerging technologies and develop norms, values, and training for responsible tech use.

The single most important and effective thing to do:

“Give words of encouragement, let kids know that they can do new and challenging things. Listen to what they are expressing as their fears or concerns, affirm those emotions, and then help them feel prepared to face those fears in positive ways.” •



Protecting Our Children's Mental and Emotional Health

Family and community support are key factors.

Our ultimate aim should be to promote student well-being, prevent the development and/or worsening of mental health problems, and improve the effectiveness of education. This is dependent on our ability to connect young people and their families to the most appropriate level of supportive care, resulting in children realizing their potential. Research tells us that early intervention can positively change the mental health trajectories for children at risk of mental illness.

Before we talk about what can be done to best address the mental health issues within our community, we must first understand our role in the problem and the impact it's having on our children. We need to understand the issues impacting our kids and their health. As adults, we ignite young people's drive for success, but perhaps through all the encouragement to be the best, we don't teach them how to deal with the failure that they inevitably will encounter in life.

Protective factors are also the same in all corners of the world. High self-esteem, social connectedness, problem-solving skills, supportive family and friends are all examples of factors that buffer against suicide and suicidal behaviors.

- Loneliness is the subjective feeling of having inadequate social connections.
- Technology has created flexibility, but often reduces the opportunity for in-person interaction and relationships.
- The challenge is for us to address the diseases of despair by building authentic human relationships.
- Building connections that are the foundation of a strong and healthy community.

When kids are transitioning into a new routine or a new school, they can really benefit from getting an appropriate amount of sleep and eating healthy foods. Taking care of their physical health helps them respond to the emotional stress change usually brings.” •

Visit <https://www.jocogov.org/dept/mental-health/home> to learn more about Johnson County Mental Health and the agency's programs and services.



By Tim DeWeese
Director, Johnson County
Mental Health

When kids are transitioning into a new routine or a new school, they can really benefit from getting an appropriate amount of sleep and eating healthy foods.

The former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy say “There is good reason to be concerned about social connection in our current world. Loneliness is a growing health epidemic. We live in the most technologically connected age in the history of civilization, yet rates of loneliness have doubled since the 1980s.”



6 RULES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY

Parents need to know the school's safety policies are and discuss them with their child.

Back-to-school doesn't have to mean back-to-worrying. Though safety inside your child's school is ultimately the responsibility of the principal and school staff, parents can take a few basic steps to ensure a safe school experience, too.

Here are some recommendations of the National Association of Elementary School Principals:

1

Learn the school's emergency procedures. Emergency plans and phone numbers are usually included in school handbooks, online or posted in classrooms. Taking a few extra minutes to familiarize yourself and your child with emergency information can give them the confidence needed to act quickly in an emergency situation.

2

Know travel routes to and from the school. Make sure you and your child know both primary and alternate routes. In an emergency, roads can be blocked and it's important to have a backup plan.

3

Know and follow school security and safety measures. These might include signing in when visiting the school, being escorted when walking through the building, or wearing a visitor pass. Following these procedures also sets a great example for your kids.

4

Talk with your child about safety. Be specific. Talk about instinct and paying attention to funny feelings of fear. Explain what to do if they don't feel safe (find a teacher, call 911, etc.). Make sure they know how to contact you or a trusted neighbor who is likely to be at home.

5

Inform school staff about health and emotional concerns. Whether your child has a food allergy, a physical disability, or has been subjected to bullying, make sure to keep your child's teachers and principal in the loop.

6

Get involved. Talk with the principal about what you can do to increase school safety, such as organizing parents to form a neighborhood watch before and after school. Sometimes parent groups are highly successful in making improvements in traffic safety during drop off and pick up times.

Being proactive goes a long way towards your peace of mind.

Source: Scholastic, www.scholastic.com

QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR THE ONES YOU LOVE

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE?

Find out if you qualify for MO HealthNet, a government Medicaid insurance for low-income adults and children from birth to age 18. MO HealthNet may pay for your child's medical, dental, eye care and medicine.

GETTING STARTED IS EASY!

At Rodgers Health we believe every child deserves quality health care. To find out if you qualify for MO HealthNet call our Patient Care Coordinator at 816-889-4615.



Downtown Campus
825 Euclid Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64124

Cabot Westside Medical & Dental
2121 Summit Street
Kansas City, MO 64108

Clay County Family Medicine & Dental
800 Haines Drive
Liberty, MO 64068



IMPORTANT HEALTH REMINDERS

- Your child will need shots from birth to age 18 to avoid serious diseases. We will help you remember when it is time for your child's immunizations.
- Good dental health begins early. Schedule a dental appointment for your child no later than 6 months after the first tooth appears.
- Eating healthy food is important to your child's growth and health. Ask us about our WIC food voucher program which may be provided if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or have a child under 5 years old.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!

816.474.4920



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Kansas City, MO 64118

PARENTS—Add Measles Vaccination to Your TO DO List

Three important facts to know about measles.



By Tenille L. Lawson
PharmD, BCPS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 1,203 measles cases nationwide as of August 15, 2019. This number of cases is the highest report since 2000—the year measles was declared eliminated in the United States. Although reports are highest in New York, California, and Washington, a case in Jefferson County, Missouri, reported in March 2019, made Missouri the 13th state to confirm exposure. The CDC confirms the U.S. has seen more cases of measles in the first five months of 2019 than in any full year since 1992.

Young children are especially vulnerable to the spread of measles. Here are three significant facts every parent should know about this highly contagious infection.

Fact #1: Measles is not a harmless childhood illness.

Since measles was eliminated from this country almost 20 years ago, many parents today are unaware of the serious complications children may experience from the disease. According to the CDC, it causes about one out of every ten children to suffer from ear infections that lead to permanent

hearing loss. Hospitalizations to treat pneumonia, convulsions, and encephalitis (brain swelling) associated with some cases of measles can lead to fatal outcomes in young children.

Fact #2: There is no cure.

Measles is a virus that begins in the respiratory system before infecting other areas of the body; therefore, symptoms may not appear until 7 to 14 days after exposure. Initially, fevers can spike up to 105°F, followed by a cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (pink eye), and mouth sores. Three to five days later, a rash appears that gradually covers the entire body. According to The March of Dimes, there is no cure or specific treatment for children with measles. Parents should alleviate symptoms with pain relievers, plenty of water and rest. Children may not recover from the illness for several weeks after infection.

Fact #3: Safe and effective vaccines are the best protection for children.

Unfortunately, up to 90% of unvaccinated people will become infected if exposed to measles according to the CDC. Measles spreads quickly through the air, with a cough or sneeze, to those who may be unaware of the transmission. Children who are vaccinated appropriately, however, have long-lasting protection against all types of measles. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports providing children who are 12 to 15 months an initial dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine followed by a final dose at 4 to 6 years old. Visit [cdc.gov/measles](https://www.cdc.gov/measles) to learn more about ways to protect your child from measles in your area. •





DIVERSITY HELPS US GROW

DIVERSITY IS A WHOLE THAT IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS. IN AN EVER-EVOLVING WORLD, WE MUST EMBRACE DIFFERENT VIEWS APART FROM OUR OWN — AND ENJOY THE FRESH PERSPECTIVES FROM OTHERS — IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO GROW CULTURALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY.

GLOBAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS MONTH

October brings Global Diversity Awareness Month to remind us of the positive impact a diverse workforce can have on a society.

As our communities become a place where cultures and customs come together, we find ourselves uncertain about what is appropriate. There's opportunity to learn from one another and understand whether a question or behavior is taboo. When we ask questions and are open to learning, the path to two cultures becoming enlightened is likely and rewarding.

Incorporate Diversity in the Workplace

TELL STORIES. Offer the opportunity for new employees to share stories from their culture. While legends and folklore often seem similar across cultures, their differences and how they are told can be colorful and even enlightening to learn.

HOST A POTLUCK. Food always brings people together. When the foods of different nations come together, what could be better? Encourage employees to bring their most authentic recipes to share and the histories behind them, too. Take the taste testing a step further and have

a contest. Blindfold competitors and see if they can name the country of origin for each dish. Circulate results internally. The winner earns bragging rights!

MAKE IT VISUAL. Put a map up in your office. Place a pin for each member of your team to represent the nationality. Some corporate companies may touch on countries all over the map, while others may barely reach a few countries. Have departments select a culture and place items that relate to them on display. The point is see how each member of your team can more effectively contribute to your company because of his or her experience. By visually understanding the impact your teams' diversity has, the more your company will thrive.

How Will You Celebrate?

Use **#GlobalDiversityAwarenessMonth** to post on social media. There are over 1,500 national days. Don't miss a single one.

SOURCE: Nationaltoday.com

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Health & Wellness Website in Kansas City,
Missouri

Our Health Matters readers recently responded to the following question on Facebook:

In a current environment that can seem negative every day, our children absorb that negative energy from the adults around them. How do we counter the seemingly endless chaos in healthy and productive ways for our children?

Here are the responses we received.

“Turn the television off, discuss the music they listen to (lyrics have power).”

— Bettye, parent

“Children mirror adults, period. The best way to help children to be in a positive space is for adults to deal with their personal stuff and not pass it on to the children. Prayer, therapy, or whatever they need to do. You cannot teach or require something that you do not practice or are not willing to practice.”

— Adria, parent

“One thing I do is start the morning with, “Good Morning”, it’s amazing how far small gestures of kindness go with kids. We just never know what’s happening at home. I agree with turn the TV, games, cells, music, etc., off. We’ve got to show them how to communicate. Get these parents involved.”

— Vera, parent

“Teach kids yoga, meditation and most of all, the concept of emotional literacy, which is helping

them express their feelings in a safe environment. This is best when parents are modeling this themselves, which means parents must have skills of emotional regulation themselves, as well as decent problem-solving and positive behavioral management techniques.”

— Nancy, healthcare professional and parent

“Read to and with children — reading teaches empathy and this world needs so much empathy. Let kids be kids — limit devices and expand experiences.”

— Sara, school librarian and educator

“Speak to children as if you were speaking to an adult. Trust and respect go a long way. Use big words. They are smarter than you think and will glom on to vocabulary. Actively encourage critical thinking by posing open-ended questions. Encourage debate and discussion. Who knows, they might even change your mind.”

— Guy, parent

GREATER KANSAS CITY COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

There are a variety of help lines and online resources to navigate families to valuable community resources in the Greater Kansas City Area. Efforts are underway to enhance these resources as well as integrate resource directories and navigation tools to better serve families in the region.

United Way 2-1-1 from United Way of Greater Kansas City

Call 2-1-1 or 1-866-320-5764 or online at <https://www.unitedwaygkc.org/get-help>

This free service provides access to thousands of resources. Call 2-1-1 and you'll reach a trained, caring professional seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Or access a searchable database at the link above.

First Call 24/7 Crisis Call Line for Substance Use Disorders and Resources Guide

Call 816-361-5900 or online at <https://www.firstcallkc.org/resources>

First Call provides clinical, educational and prevention services to individuals and families in Greater Kansas City impacted by substance use disorders. Call the crisis line or search for general supportive resources at the link above.

Johnson County, Kansas - My Resource Connection (MyRC)

Online at <https://ims.jocogov.org/rc/default.aspx>

MyRC connects individuals needing assistance with local community resources that can help meet their needs.

Wyandotte County, Kansas - Project Eagle -

Connections from the University of Kansas Medical Center

Call 913-321-9999 or email connections@kumc.edu or find additional information at <http://projecteagle.org/connections.html>

Connections is a free service for pregnant women or families in Wyandotte County who have a child under age five and need access to local community resources.

Link for Care from the University of Kansas

Medical Center's Landon Center on Aging

Online at <https://www.linkforcare.org/>

A free online resource to search a variety of services, especially for seniors.

KC Health Resource Guide from Mid-America Regional Council

Available to search and download at <http://www.kchealthresource.org/print.aspx>

Guide to safety net health resources in Greater Kansas City.

Community Resource Guide from Mother & Child Health Coalition

Available to download at <https://mchc.net/resources/>

A guide organized by county and by service to help women of childbearing age and families to locate services which could help them in meeting their needs.

Money Smart KC from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

Online at <http://www.moneysmartkc.org/>

Information and links to help individuals become Money Smart, including resources for parents.



Stop
Bullying

HOW TO PREVENT

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior, they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time.

Parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy.

Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.



- Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.

Help Kids Understand Bullying

Kids who know what bullying is can better identify it. They can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others. Kids need to know ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.

- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Encourage the child to report bullying if it happens.
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- Urge them to help kids who are bullied by showing kindness or getting help.

Keep the Lines of Communication Open

Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help on tough decisions. Sometimes spending 15 minutes a day talking can reassure kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem. Start conversations about daily life and feelings with questions like these:

- What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
- What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
- What is it like to ride the school bus?
- What are you good at? What would do you like best about yourself?

Talking about bullying directly is an important step in understanding how the issue might be affecting kids. Assure kids that they are not alone in addressing any problems that arise.

Start conversations about bullying with questions like these:

- Describe what kids who bully are like. Why do you think people bully?
- Have you or your friends left other kids out on purpose? Do you think that was bullying? Why or why not?
- Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?
- Have you ever tried to help someone who is being bullied? What happened? What would you do if it happens again?

There are simple ways that parents and caregivers can keep up-to-date with kids' lives.

- Read class newsletters and school flyers. Talk about them at home.
- Check the school website
- Go to school events
- Greet the bus driver
- Meet teachers and counselors at "Back to School" night or reach out by email
- Share phone numbers with other kids' parents

Source: Stopbullying.gov



1st Annual Village Symposium on Maternal Infant Health

Featuring author, Dr. Dana-Ain Davis
will join us to speak on her new book,
“Reproductive Injustice, Racism,
Pregnancy and Premature Birth”

Dr. Davis provides perspective on the
role that medical racism plays in the
lives of Black women who give birth to
premature and low-birth weight infants.

Thursday, Sept. 26, 2019

7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Soiree’ Steak & Oyster House

1512 E. 18th Street KCMO 64108

Donation \$50.

Enjoy a delicious New Orleans-inspired
breakfast buffet by Chef Anita.



Mistress of Ceremony
Qiana Thomason, MSW, LCSW

Vice President, Community Health,
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City

For ticket information or for sponsorship, email your request to terri@uzazivillage.org.
Funds raised will support Uzazi Village’s Ida Mae Patterson Center for Maternal Infant Wellness.



WHAT'S NEXT NOV/DEC 2019 KIND AND RESILIENT

The qualities of being friendly, generous and considerate reflect the meaning of kindness. Being kind often requires courage, resilience and strength. Kindness is an interpersonal skill. There are many ways to be kind and many opportunities to practice it. Kindness benefits good health and strengthens the community. *Our Health Matters™* shares ways in which we can adopt and spread kindness at home, school, at work and throughout the community. Also adopting a healthier lifestyle requires resilience, too! We share diabetes prevention insights to jumpstart a new attitude and better health as we close out the year.

NEED A DESTINATION FOR YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE MARKETING MESSAGE?

Contact the team at *Our Health Matters*. For nearly 15 years, we've helped business leaders reach the right people at the right time and all at the right price. Let us introduce you. To reserve your space, call 816.361.6400 or email your request to info@kcourhealthmatters.com

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