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**February is American Heart Month**

The professional health community recognizes February as **National Heart Month**. Its goal is to motivate Americans to adopt healthy lifestyles to prevent heart disease. Research suggests people are most successful at lifestyle change when working together! Here are three simple ways to be heart healthy with friends, family, and your community members:

1. **Be physically active together!** Find a neighbor to try a new exercise class with. Start a walking club with friends from church. Encourage family game time in the yard. By exercising with those you love, it won't even feel like hard work.
2. **Eat healthier together!** Make a weekly meal plan that includes heart healthy meals. Grocery shop as a family to promote healthier choices. Invite friends over for a nutritious potluck dinner! Sharing recipes with friends and family is an awesome way to try new meals!
3. **Manage stress and get more sleep!** Practice a stress reducing technique like yoga or meditation and share with a friend! Commit to going to bed every night at a decent hour and ask your family to hold you accountable. Sharing experiences and what works for you with others could help them take a step toward being heart healthy and happy!



**Upcoming Events**

**February 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Twilight Wish Happy Hour Benefit** @ The BackAlley at 11<sup>th</sup> Frame Bar and Grille from 5:30PM-8:30PM. For questions or to purchase tickets, contact Linda Thoma at 724-841-0980



**Cornerstone**

Spring 2020...more information to follow



# Health is Holistic: A Closer Look at Mental Health

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that

- 1 in 5 US adults experience a mental health condition in a given year
- Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States despite being preventable
- Less than half of the adults in the US get the mental health support they need

The stigma around mental health seems to quiet the conversation around it. However, mental illness is manageable and treatable. Here's [5 tips](#) to achieve balance in your health:

1. **Value yourself:** self-compassion can go a long way. Try to avoid self-criticism and remember to show yourself kindness. Also, make time for things you enjoy, whether it be a hobby like painting or gardening, or completing a daily crossword puzzle.
2. **Take care of your body:** be sure to eat nutritious meals, drink plenty of water, exercise daily, and get enough sleep. Health is holistic, and sometimes physical well-being can translate to mental well-being.
3. **Learn how to cope with stress:** stress is inevitable, but healthy coping skills will help to manage the stress in your life. Whether it's exercising, being in nature, or playing with your pet, having coping mechanisms to reduce stress will benefit your mental health.
4. **Avoid alcohol and other drugs:** sometimes people use drugs and alcohol to "self-medicate," but these substances will only aggravate other problems. Drink in moderation and only use medication recommended to you by a health professional.
5. **Ask for help when you need it:** asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Don't be afraid to reach out to friends, family, coworkers, or community members for support. Additionally, mental illness treatment proves to be effective. Look into your options; meeting with a counselor or psychiatrist could be the next step in improving your health



## Martin Luther King, Jr Day

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 honored American civil rights activist Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. MLK is known for leading non-violent protests to fight for the rights of all people, including African Americans, in the 1950s and 1960s. His first civil rights action was leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott. When Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man, King responded by organizing a boycott of the Montgomery bus system that lasted over a year. As a result, segregation of Montgomery buses was put to an end. Martin Luther King, Jr might be best known for his "I Have a Dream" speech given at the "March on Washington" in 1963. A year later, the Civil Rights Act was passed, ending segregation in public places and banning employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or nationality.

### Fast Facts

- Illinois was the first state to adopt this holiday in 1973
- It became a national holiday in 1983
- It is one of two national days of service, calling Americans to perform volunteer work in the minister's honor

4,700 volunteer hours in 2019 - we couldn't have done it without YOU!

A huge thank you to our 2019 volunteers. Community Health Center volunteers logged more than 4,700 volunteer hours last calendar year, providing invaluable service to our community.

Your time and work is so appreciated!

*thank you*