Afterschool Spotlight and Mental Health Awareness!
May 2019

**Spotlight**
Sarah Murphy, Lockport YMCA

Sarah began working in afterschool programs just a year ago. She came from a museum education background but loves the opportunity for fun, engaging education that out-of-school programming offers.

Sarah says she decided to pursue this career after her experience with the YMCA as a child. She told us, "Camp Weona provided me with the opportunity to discover myself. I wanted to give back and help children experience the same self-confidence and self-discovery that I was awarded."

Currently, Sarah works at the Lockport YMCA as the coordinator of before and afterschool programs and direct day camp programs. Sarah expanded on the summer camp programs they offer. She stated, "We explore, create, and love every minute of it. I go home each day loving what I do. I laugh and giggle just as much as our kids. I want to thank all of our family for sharing their joy and excitement with me. Being a part of the YMCA family isn't just at school or at the gym. We are part of a larger community." Sarah added, "Thank you for welcoming me to this community," as a message for the YMCA.

Sarah says the kids in their program are part of a community who share and grow together. Along with homework help, the kids get art enrichment, yoga, an hour of physical education daily, and character
building experiences. The youth and staff also work together on service projects to help the community grow.

When asked what her favorite part of her job is, Sarah replied, “I love what I do! I get to help kids improve academically, emotionally, and socially. Last week I had a kid run up to me so excited to show me their math test. He was so proud of his hard work and improvement. Each and every day I get to see excitement and joy; I get to play and learn. I get to watch kids gain self confidence and grow into amazing people they will become.”

**May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

*Raising awareness about mental health and eliminating the stigma is important.*

Approximately one in five adults in the United States, 43.8 million, or 18.5%, experiences a mental illness in a given year and approximately one in five youth aged 13–18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental health disorder at some point during their lifetime. For children aged 8–15, the estimate is 13%. Mental illness is not prejudiced; as mental health disorders affect men and women of all ages, races and social classes. Since 1949, the month of May has been observed as Mental Health Month in the United States and many national organizations such as NAMI, Mental Health America, and other affiliates spotlight Mental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and to stop the stigma associated with mental health disorders.

The theme for this year’s Mental Health Month is Fitness #4Mind4Body, meaning that health is an all-encompassing matter and we must take care of our minds just as much as we take care of our bodies. Mental health is important for our physical health and vice versa. A well-balanced diet, a healthy sleep schedule, exercise, gut health, and hydration all affect our mental health and our physical health equally. Studies have shown that individuals who have chronic medical illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure or autoimmune disorders have a higher likelihood of being diagnosed with a mental health disorder such as depression or anxiety. Our bodies and mind act as one unit and therefore it is important to care for both our emotional and mental states as well as our physical health.

**Changing your health by changing your habits**

This year’s campaign #4Mind4Body is encouraging individuals around the country to focus on the following healthy aspects of their daily lives in order to promote mental wellness:

- Maintain uninterrupted sleep for 8 hours each night.
• Avoid sugars, greasy foods, salts, processed foods and saturated fats.
• Consume more whole grains, greens, unprocessed foods, lean meats and unsaturated fats.
• Eat 2-3 well-balanced meals per day.
• Drink at least 3 liters of water per day.
• Consume natural probiotics such as yogurt, miso, sauerkraut, kefir, and kimchi.
• Engage in a physical for at least 30 minutes a day.
• Stay away from toxic thoughts, toxic people, and toxic conversations.
• Engage in positive thoughts and conversations.
• Practice mindfulness or meditation on a daily basis.
• Learn how to manage your stress.
• Stay present in your daily relationships.
• Avoid “screen time” and engage in more “in person time”.
• Visit your doctor for preventative health and cancer screenings.
• Take time for yourself every day.

Small changes have big impacts
For the month of May, Mental Health America and NAMI are challenging you to make small positive changes in your life that can benefit your mind and your body. Document these changes and feel free to share on social media. You may be surprised by how much positive impact one small change can have on your life.

Click here for the full article.
to hear from you - your insights and expertise. Your input will help develop strategies and resources to strengthen the youth work field. Register here!

5/20: Making Service Part of Your Afterschool Program Culture
This webinar will be approximately 30 minutes long and will feature at least one of the 96 tools from the Beyond the Bell Toolkit. The featured tool will be available for free download from the Beyond the Bell website following the webinar. Follow this link to register.

Three days of high-quality sessions presented by some of the top SEL thought-leaders in the nation, keynote presentations, an immersive skill-building session, workshops, and of course networking with colleagues. Leave inspired and equipped to take social and emotional learning to the next level in your school or organization! Click here to register.

5/21: The Bigger Picture: Domestic Violence and Childhood Trauma
Adverse childhood experiences harm a child's ability to grow, thrive, and learn. Rather than treating the symptoms, how can we get to the root causes of childhood toxic stress? In this interactive conversation, host Shawn Petty and special guest Dr. Colleen Lelli will put the spotlight on domestic violence. How can we spread awareness? How can we prevent domestic violence? How can we support children whose home life has been affected? Click here for more information and how to register.

6/1: Smart Coos' National Bilingual Bee & Biliteracy Competition, Brooklyn, NY
Register for Smart Coos' First Annual National Bilingual Bee & Biliteracy Competition! This event aims to bring 250+ bilingual student participants, ages 6-15, together. The competition will assess children's proficiency in English along with one of these languages: Mandarin Chinese, French, Spanish, or Haitian Creole. If there are students who would like to participate or educators who would like to volunteer/judge, please email Mirta at mirta@smartcoos.com

6/9: STEM Teacher Expo, Teachers College, New York, NY
STEMteachersNYC's Annual STEM Teacher Expo, a teacher-led forum exploring the future of STEM Education in NYC and beyond. Drawing from their member network, the event will include live demos and displays, an interactive unconference, and presentations from teachers and practitioners working in the field today. Click here to register.

6/12 & 6/19: Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series
This two part train-the-trainer webinar experience provides participants with a copy of the Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series, a three-part digital training tool that includes recorded videos that cover topics including, "Examining Our Own Risk and Protective Factors," "What Resilience Means to Me," and "Introduction to the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey - 23 Questions That Can Change the Way You Look at Life." Trainers and coaches will learn to use this innovative, digital tool to promote adult wellness in a variety of settings, including staff meetings, in-service trainings and parent workshops. Join Nefertiti and learn how you can create an overall culture of resilience. Register here. (Registration closes June 5).

6/30: School-Age Care Credential Informational Meeting, Poughkeepsie, NY
The New York State School-Age Care Credential has been developed to promote quality services to children and families by providing specific standards, training, and evaluation of school-age staff members and providers based on their ability to meet the unique needs of this age group. It is an opportunity for adults working with school-age children to gain professional recognition for demonstrating competence in their on-the-job skills. Come to an informational meeting on Tuesday, July 30 from 5:00 - 6:00 pm to learn about the credential and the credential process as well as meet the instructor/advisor, Arlene Rider. For more information or to enroll contact Darla Fulmer at (845) 473-4141 ext. 216 or dfulmer@childcaredutchess.org.

7/1-8/9: STEM Summer Institute 2019, Teachers College, New York, NY
The STEMteachersNYC STEM Institute brings together educators from around the country for innovative, hands-on, and teacher-led professional development in STEM. Choose from over a dozen workshops in biology, physics, chemistry, computer science, elementary STEM, and more. Work side by side with active classroom teachers and revolutionize the way you teach science using a student-centered active learning approach, shown to increase classroom engagement and understanding of key science concepts. Click here to register and learn more.

8/4-8/10: Mindfulness Training for Educators, Lake Placid, NY
This weeklong program set in the idyllic environment of a lakeside retreat in the Adirondacks explores teaching for the 21st century. Participants will learn mindfulness practices, meditation, the neuroscience of learning, the nature of mind, and how to cultivate their inner resources. Each day will include experiential learning, as well as a cognitive element – and afternoons will be free to enjoy the many outdoor activities available to us, or to simply relax and read a book. Learn how mindfulness might benefit you in your role as an educator, and re-connect with the ideals that brought you into this field from the start! Click here for more information and how to register.

11/8: Regional Network Symposium, Rochester, NY
SAVE THE DATE! Our Regional Network Symposium will be November 8 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Rochester! Look out for more information here and on our website.

11/9: Rochester Training Institute, Rochester, NY
SAVE THE DATE! Our Training Institute will be November 9 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Rochester! Look out for more information here and on our website.

Our 2020 Annual Conference will be in Troy for 2020! Save the date now! Look for more information here and on our website as we get closer to the date!

Follow Us!