Dear Families and Friends of Tri-Valley Opportunity Council:

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY

Since the last newsletter in April, we have seen more turbulent times in our world. We are still dealing with COVID-19 and the unrest of our nation with the protests over racism. We don’t know what our school year will look like yet. So many people have lost jobs and many worry how they will feed their families and pay the rent.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council is committed to serving our communities in these times: be it homelessness, energy assistance, SNAP, child-care, health insurance, transportation, Head Start, programs for Seniors or rental assistance. If you are struggling in these areas contact Tri-Valley at 1-800-820-7263.

Multi County Local Advisory Council on Children’s Mental Health

Our next meeting is Monday, July 13th at 6pm. Since we are still unable to have the meeting face-to-face, we will be meeting via our Microsoft Teams format. If you are interested in participating please contact Nancy at 1-800-820-7263 for more information.
10 TIPS FOR TEACHING AND TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE

An excerpt from the website www.embracerace.org.

At a time when racial conflict and racial insensitivity permeate everything from politics to playground, engaging our kids constructively on race is crucially important. It’s also easier said than done.

These tips are designed to help parents of all backgrounds talk to their children about race early and often by lifting up age-appropriate activities that can be incorporated easily into your daily life. We hope these tips provide some much needed support for families committed to building tolerance, racial equity, and a social culture where all kids and families thrive!

1. **START EARLY:** By 6 months of age babies are noticing racial differences, by age 4, children have begun to show signs of racial bias. Let your child know that it’s perfectly okay to notice skin color and talk about race. Start talking about what racial differences mean and don’t mean.

2. **ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD:** Encourage your child to ask questions, share observations and experiences, and be respectfully curious about race. Expose your child to different cultural opportunities—photographs, films, books, or cultural events, for example—and discuss the experiences afterwards. You don’t need to be an expert on race to talk with your child. Be honest about what you don’t know and work with your child to find accurate information.

3. **BE MINDFUL:** What kids hear from us is less importance than what they see us do. You are a role model to your child. What you say is important, but what you do—the diversity of your friendship circle, for example—is likely to have a bigger impact. If your child doesn’t attend a diverse school, consider enrolling them in after-school or weekend activities such as sports leagues that are diverse if you’re able. Choose books and toys that include persons of different races and ethnicities. Visit museums with exhibits about a range of cultures and religions.

4. **FACE YOUR OWN BIAS:** Let your child see you acknowledge and face your own biases. We’re less likely to pass on the biases we identify and work to overcome. Give your child an example of a bias, racial or otherwise, that you hold or have held. Share with your child things you do to confront and overcome that bias.

5. **KNOW AND LOVE WHO YOU ARE:** Talk about the histories and experiences of the racial, ethnic, and cultural groups you and your family identify with. Talk about their contributions and acknowledge the less flattering parts of those histories as well. Tell stories about the challenges your family (your child’s parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, others) has faced and overcome.

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6. RACIAL CULTURAL LITERACY: Develop racial cultural literacy by learning about and respecting others. Study and talk about the histories and experiences of groups we call African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and whites, among others. Be sure your child understands that every racial and ethnic group includes people who believe different things and behave in different ways. There is as much diversity within racial groups as across them.

7. BE HONEST: Be honest with your child, in age-appropriate ways, about bigotry and oppression. Children are amazing at noticing racial patterns (who lives in their neighborhood versus their friends’ neighborhoods, for example). Help them make sense of those patterns, and recognize that bigotry and oppression are sometimes a big part of those explanations. Be sure your child knows the struggle for racial fairness is still happening and that your family can take part in that struggle.

8. TELL STORIES: “Lift up the freedom fighters”: Tell stories of resistance and resilience. Every big story of racial oppression is also a story about people fighting back and “speaking truth to power.” Teach your child those parts of the story too. Include women, children and young adults among the “freedom fighters” in the stories you tell. A story about racial struggle in which all the heroes are men wrongly leaves many people out.

9. BE ACTIVE: Be active—don’t be a “bystander” on race. Help your child understand what it means to be, and how to be, a change agent. Whenever possible, connect the conversation you’re having to the change you and your child wants to see, and to ways to bring about that change.

10. PLAN FOR A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT: It’s okay to say, “I’m not sure” or “Let’s come back to that later, okay?” But then do come back to it. Make race talks with your child a routine. Race is a topic you should plan to revisit again and again in many different ways over time.
HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Tips from the World Health Organization (WHO)

Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawn, angry, agitated, or even bedwetting, etc.

Respond to your child’s reactions in a supportive way. Listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adult’s love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.

Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating them and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.

Continue to provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

Be SAFE from coronavirus infection
Be SMART & inform yourself about it
Be KIND & support one another
ALEC SMITH INSULIN AFFORDABILITY ACT

On April 15, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed into law the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act which creates the Minnesota Insulin Safety New Program.

The overall program allows eligible individuals to apply for an "urgent need" supply (30 days) of insulin with a valid prescription.

These individuals can also apply for the Continuing Need Insulin Safety Net Program which provides up to 12 months of insulin. The program begins July 1, 2020.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council in partnership with Mnsure and our Mnsure navigators will be able to assist individual for this program.

The navigators will be specifically trained to assist you.

Please call Nancy at 1-800-820-7263 or Mitch at 1-800-584-7020 for more information and/or to complete an application.

Websites for your family

A lot of resources and information is available for children and families on the internet. You need to be very careful about information you find and very cautious about websites, but there are many quality sites out there. Here are a few sites you can look at:

- www.pacer.org – resource and information center for families and youth with disabilities, bullying resources
- www.nami.org – a mental health advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families
- www.macmh.org – training and resources for children and families promoting positive mental health
- www.samhsa.gov – resources and information regarding substance abuse, mental health and services for children and families
- www.health.state.mn.us/mcshn – a website for Minnesota children with special health needs and their families
- www.fape.org – information about IDEA, special education and disability issues
- www.parenttoolkit.com
- www.parentsknow.state.mn.us – resources and information for parents
- www.how-to-stop-bullying.com – resources and activities on preventing bullying and how to handle bullying
TIPS ON HOW TO MENTALLY STRENGTHEN FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

By Dr. Debroah Gilboa — www.askdrg.org

I sincerely hope you and your family are well, and are managing the current reality and uncertainty without total upheaval at home or in your work. We are all trying to find our ways in this time of uncertainty.

In times like this, it’s important to talk about how we feel and realize that you aren’t alone in feeling afraid, uncertain or isolated. There are so many of us feeling these things but not a lot of people talking about them. How many times have you found yourself saying “OK” or “fine”, when someone asks how you are doing, when in fact, you feel exactly the opposite.

Right now, it’s important to shore up your foundation and mentally strengthen yourself, because changes are going to last a while.

Here are a few tips that may help you get through the anxiety and isolation you may be feeling:

- **Reach out to friends and family.** Set up a Facetime happy hour or a Zoom virtual dinner with friends. We had our first virtual Shabbat dinner last week and just seeing our families faces was enough to brighten a tough day. This is especially if you are feeling sad, depressed, or isolated. Chances are they are feeling some of those same feelings.

- **Find something to keep your mind and hand busy!** Now is the time to do something you WANT to do. Do you have a stack of books sitting unread or a queue of Netflix shows to watch. It doesn’t have to be learning a new language or fixing the world’s economy (though if you’re of a mind to do that, that would be great!). Find something that brings you joy and carve out a portion of your day to do it.

- **Exercise.** Keep your body healthy and moving is important. There are plenty of YouTube fitness and yoga videos that require little to no equipment or the YMCA is offering free virtual classes.

- **Find gratitude.** Finding things that you are grateful for in this time is a way to get your mind off of negative thoughts. Try writing down a few things each day that you are grateful for and revisiting them throughout the day when you are feeling anxious or sad.

- **Express gratitude.** It’s a great time to express gratitude to all the people who are keeping communities going. You never know how much that small gesture means to those who are working tirelessly to keep life moving and serve others.
USE YOUR EBT CARD TO BUY GROCERIES ONLINE

♦ Order SNAP eligible items from your choice of online retailers (currently Amazon or Walmart)

♦ Get free delivery: meet the minimum order amount at Amazon or curbside pickup at Walmart

♦ Use EBT for food purchases only, not for delivery costs. Cash benefits cannot be used online.

Order online:

Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/snap-ebt/
1. create an account and add your EBT card
2. Shop for eligible food items
3. Enter EBT pin to pay

Walmart: https://grocery.walmart.com/
1. Create an account
2. Choose your store for free pickup and reserve a time slot or choose delivery
3. Shop for eligible food items
4. Enter EBT pin to pay
TODAY, I AM THANKFUL FOR:

( #thankfulnesschallenge #sourcesofstrength)

FAMILY, FRIENDS, MENTORS, MY PETS, BASKETBALL, SUNSHINE, THE RIVER, SNOW, NATURE, MY HEALTH, BOOKS, LAUGHTER, WEEKENDS, DOCTORS, MY HOME, BOOKS, SLEEP, TEACHERS, BABIES, MY SAFETY, TIME, LOVE, KINDNESS, CAMPFIRES, DESSERT, FREEDOM, RAINBOWS, MUSIC, SUNRISES, FUN, SUNSETS, MOUNTAINS, THE BEACH, MY ELDERS, MOVIES, MY SIBLINGS, MEDICINE, THE INTERNET, EYESIGHT, HEARING, MY COUNSELORS, TASTES, COLORS, MY HEART, THE STARS, MY PHONE, MY CULTURE, MY JOB, LIFE, HOPE, FLOWERS, HUGS, FRIDAYS, SPIRITUALITY, DANCING, GOGGLE, FOOD, CREATION, BANDAIDS, BOATS, COFFEE, TREES, TOOTHBRUSHES, NETFLIX, VACATIONS, PEACE, RAIN, FARMERS, SECOND

Give Thanks!