

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM THE CCS WELLNESS TEAM

## PAUSE, REFLECT AND STAY SAFELY CONNECTED

As we find ourselves coming up on two years of adapting and reacting to life in the midst of a pandemic, it's more important than ever to take a few moments and reflect. This pandemic has affected everyone and has challenged us all to reconsider our understanding of safety and overcome tremendous loss in many ways; but we have also grown.

We have found creative ways to stay connected to loved ones living in other places, many picked up new hobbies or skills, and everyone reading this has not only supported themselves and their loved ones, but has also, undoubtedly, gone above and beyond to make sure Columbus City Schools students and staff have what they need to navigate this pandemic. Your energy and dedication have been remarkable and have not been unnoticed.

## WELLNESS PROGRAM UPDATES

### WELLNESS WINS PLATINUM LEVEL AWARD

The CCS Staff Wellness Initiative is proud to announce that we have won the Healthy Business Council of Ohio's Platinum Level Award for Healthiest Worksites, for the second year in a row! We are very proud of this accomplishment.



We strive to improve our CCS Staff Wellness Initiative year-over-year. We believe that working to enhance staff's health and wellbeing is some of the most important work that we do as a district and we could not accomplish it without the long-standing support of the Board of Education, Administration, OAPSE and CEA.

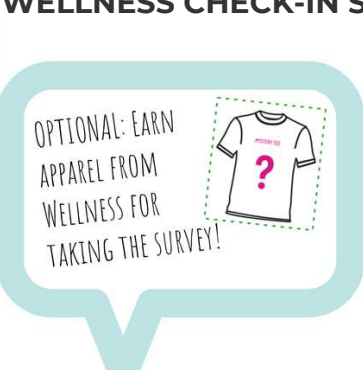
### SAFER WAYS TO CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and **protect your health**. Because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays, the best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible.



View [infographic](#) on helpful tips for celebrating safely this holiday season. Remember to check the CDC [website](#) for the most up-to-date guidance on COVID-19 safety.

### WELLNESS CHECK-IN SURVEY



Whether you're all about Wellness or just starting to learn, the Wellness Team wants to know about it. Hearing your honest feedback, ideas and insights will help us with our main goal - creating awesome wellness programming for you! All responses are kept anonymous and confidential.

Optional: Click on the link after you submit your response to include your contact information so we can send you an incentive from the Wellness Team.

Click on the link [here](#) to complete and submit the Wellness Check-in Survey

### VIRTUAL WELLNESS OFFERINGS

New year, new virtual class schedules! Check out the links below and take advantage of our upcoming programming:

**URBAN ZEN ONLINE** - You will be guided through gentle mindful movements, restorative postures, body awareness and breath observations to address the symptoms of everyday life. Learn helpful tips to help manage anxiety, exhaustion, insomnia and pain. **New schedule begins on Monday, January 3rd.**

**OHIOHEALTH VIRTUAL FITNESS CLASSES** - You have access to a variety of different classes including 10 minute movement breaks, Yoga, Bootcamp, Pilates, Cardio, Zumba and more! Unable to join the live fitness classes? No worries! Take advantage of the ON-DEMAND fitness class options. Check out the on-demand link and password on the OhioHealth fitness class schedule to get started. **New schedule begins on Monday, January 3rd.**

### FIGHT FLU AND EARN A \$25.00 GIFT CARD

Now more than ever, it is important to protect those around us. Flu vaccinations are the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against flu and its potentially serious complications. Learn about why you should get a flu shot this season [here](#).

**LAST CALL!** Receive your flu shot and earn a \$25.00 gift card from the CCS Wellness Initiative. You must receive your flu shot before or on 12/31/21 and submit a flu shot form to be eligible for the gift card incentive.

Click [here](#) to visit our wellness website for more information. \*gift cards are considered a form of compensation and are subject to employee payroll taxes.

### PD OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF

All classified staff are invited to an upcoming Virtual Lunch & Learn: Gratitude Can Change your Attitude, presented by OhioHealth, in partnership with the CCS Training and Development department. **Join us on Tuesday, January 4th from 12:00 - 12:30 PM via Zoom.**

Learn the science behind gratitude, how it can help us during times of challenge, experience a gratitude meditation and gain other tools and resources to start or enhance your gratitude practice.

Attend the session, take the evaluation survey at the end, and your name will be entered in a drawing to earn a special gift from the Wellness Team. Stay tuned for an announcement of additional Lunch & Learn dates.

Click [here](#) to view flyer with Zoom link information. For questions or concerns, contact [adapt@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:adapt@columbus.k12.oh.us).

## HEALTH RESOURCES

### YOUR UNITEDHEALTHCARE INSURANCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Columbus City Schools Insurance benefits renew every year on January 1. To get the most out of your health plan, log in or activate your [myuhc.com](#) account! Once your myuhc.com account is activated, you can use the same login credentials to get access to the UnitedHealthCare app. This allows for on-the-go access to your health plan. Instead of waiting for your new 2022 health plan ID card to arrive in the mail, you will be able to view and share it virtually.



Click [here](#) for more information on accessing the UnitedHealthcare app.

### STAY ACTIVE WITH REAL APPEAL

The holidays are here and it can feel challenging to maintain a steady routine while we celebrate with family and friends. Real Appeal is a health coaching weight management program that focuses on understanding our own behavior when it comes to health and wellness. If you have health insurance through the district, you and your dependents 18+ are eligible to participate in Real Appeal.



Visit [columbuscityschools.realappeal.com](http://columbuscityschools.realappeal.com) to get started today!

## EMOTIONAL WELLBEING RESOURCES

### COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS' NEW EAP

## HealthAdvocate™

As we continue to move into the most festive time of the year, it can also be a stressful time of year for many of us. The holidays can be challenging for people experiencing financial difficulties, especially right now. We're often stretching ourselves too thin with either time or money, which leads to more stress down the road. It's easy to feel like you're not doing enough or buying enough to keep up with your friends and family. But it's important to find the balance that works for you.

It's a good time to remind ourselves to spend wisely, set your own priorities, schedule time for yourself and take care of yourself. Health Advocate has some great resources on their blog, two noted below to do just that.

- [Keeping the holidays simple this season](#)
- [Plan ahead to avoid a holiday spending hangover](#)

Call Health Advocate at 866-799-2728 or visit their website at [healthadvocate.com/columbuscityschools](http://healthadvocate.com/columbuscityschools)

### MORE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING RESOURCES

During these challenging times, we need to find ways to stay grounded. Remember to take time for yourself and make your emotional health a priority. Check out helpful resources below:

- **Talkspace:** [Online therapy app](#) covered under your UHC behavioral health benefits
- **Sanvello:** On demand help with [stress, anxiety and depression](#) covered under UHC behavioral health benefits
- **UHC Support Line:** A 24/7 emotional support line from UnitedHealthcare, staffed by trained mental health professionals, for anyone at 1-866-342-6892.
- **Headspace:** [Meditation and sleep app](#) that offers free accounts for educators

## STAFF WELLNESS SPOTLIGHTS

### ELIZABETH BLOSSER, Spanish Teacher at Marion-Franklin High School



As a single/solo mom of 2 boys, I have really struggled to maintain balance in my life throughout the pandemic last year. I lost my former private school teaching job due to COVID-19 downsizing & was incredibly grateful Marion Franklin High School welcomed me to Columbus City Schools. Although I'm a veteran teacher of 21 yrs, nothing prepared me for the ever-changing shifts in education.

Teaching virtually last school year let me slow down a little & be a stay-at-home mom for the first time, but even that had its challenges. I was teaching and at the same time "was going to tech teaching school" to learn how to teach online and keep up with the latest techniques in virtual education. The lines of work & home life were always blurred.

I tried my best to maintain balance by laughing with my younger son, going on lots of walks & snuggles with our dog Rascalito, joining Weight Watchers (I lost 40lbs. this year & counting) and working out at our gym. I garden as a hobby which gives me much tranquility & gives me fresh vegetables to keep me healthy. Oh, and I also went Salsa dancing when I had enough energy- I'm a Spanish teacher.

### YVONNE ROBERSON, 8th Grade Reading Teacher at Mifflin Middle School

**The CCS Staff Wellness Initiative is excited to announce that, in collaboration with the Youth Yoga Project, we are the recipient of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Grant. The grant supports the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) + Mindfulness Institute for 51 educators representing 37 CCS schools over the 2021-2022 school year. As part of the SEL + Mindfulness Institute, staff attend virtual classes to learn mindfulness strategies and to implement mindfulness lessons to students throughout the school year. We want to recognize Yvonne Roberson, a SEL + Mindfulness Institute participant and highlight her work here. Keep up the great work, Yvonne!**



"I have always enjoyed yoga, and mindful movement. Being more over the pandemic school closure really forced me to confront my anxiety, fears and depression regarding the pandemic, school closure and virtual teaching. I began doing yoga, meditation and breathing practices daily as a way to cope with the stress I was feeling.

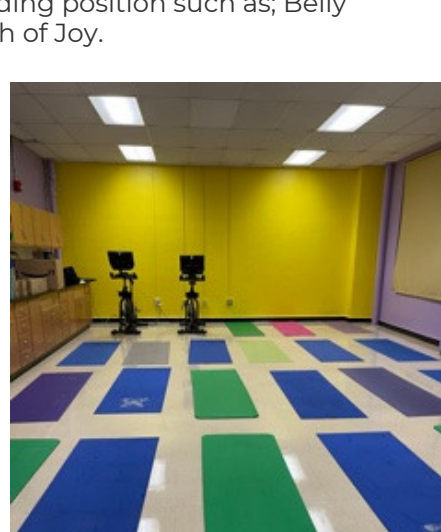
I received an email from the Youth Yoga Project regarding their virtual immersion summer training program July 28, 2020 to teach Yoga and Mindfulness to school-aged children. I knew the power of yoga and breathing and knew my students would need help self-regulating themselves after being at home for several months during the pandemic school closure.

After I completed The Youth Yoga Project Program, I was equipped with so many tools I could use with my students to help regulate their feelings, emotions and calm them down. The students were skeptical at first, but quickly noticed the way their bodies felt after each yoga and breathing session. The Youth Yoga Project Program equips staff members with breathing tools and mindfulness techniques they can use while students are seated or in a standing position such as; Belly Breathing, Humming Breath or Breath of Joy.

The Youth Yoga Project Program is designed for educators and very flexible for staff to attend. They provide you with training materials and on-going support and are available to support you through-out your entire mindfulness journey.

Because of Julia and Lauren from Youth Yoga Project, I was inspired to become a 200 hour registered Yoga Instructor and Social Emotional Learning Facilitator. Currently, my students love to do yoga, have a brand new yoga studio/wellness room in and are so excited on "Yoga-days"!

Simple yoga breathing is a powerful tool in managing our emotions, energy levels, feelings and thoughts. "Controlled, conscious breathing can decrease anxiety, help to manage pain and discomfort, aid in the balancing of unpleasant thoughts and emotions, and even help fight inflammation that can lead to disease. And breathwork is easy, free and accessible to anyone — especially our youngest yogis."



**Do you have a wellness success story?** We want to hear about it. Tell us about your wellness journey and be featured in our Staff Wellness Spotlight. Please send your story to [syerramilli@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:syerramilli@columbus.k12.oh.us)



For questions or concerns, contact [syerramilli@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:syerramilli@columbus.k12.oh.us)