



DJJ FORUM

Where DJJ employees gather to stay informed and celebrate our victories

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

April 28, 2021

Spring Is In The Air Edition

With Spring, We Welcome Wellness

With the pandemic still among us, the arrival of the spring season helps remind us to pay special attention to our well-being. Spring is often viewed as a time of renewal and this is definitely a time to focus on renewal, a newel of mind, body and spirit. I so appreciate all that you do for the youth and families that we touch but please know that first and foremost, I care about you and want you to make sure that you take care of yourselves as we take care of everyone else. As such, this special issue of *The Forum* is designed to give you a few tidbits about self-care as we celebrate the beauty of spring.

– Valerie Boykin, Director
Department of Juvenile Justice

Stress Less!

(The following is from CommonHealth of Virginia.)

The American Psychological Association reports that 7 out of 10 employees feel significant stress because of work. There are ways to cope with and change the stress levels you experience.

Track the stressors. Keep a journal for a week or two to see which situations create stress for you and how you respond to them. Then review it and look for patterns in your stressors and reactions.

Develop healthy reactions. Make healthy choices when you feel the stress levels increasing rather than using food or alcohol to cope. Take some time for the things that you enjoy.

Sleep is beneficial to stress management. Get your ZZZs!

Create boundaries to decrease the work-life conflict. Setting up a time and place for everything can help make managing competing priorities easier.

Get support. Asking for help may be hard, but the support can make a world of difference.

Visit the Department of Human Resource Management [website](#) for more tools to support your specific needs.



*CSU 9–King William Staff
Takes Cue From Ancient
Civilizations To Brew Tea Long
Known to Promote Good Health*

(See story, page 3)



Care For You While Caring For Others

A Message From Human Resources
Director Leigh Archer

It would be an understatement to say that this has been a difficult year for many of us. Our Listening Sessions indicate that, while many of us are feeling better than we were 12 months ago, some of us are still struggling.

We certainly live in unprecedented times. Our world continues to battle the Covid-19 pandemic while our nation struggles with racial tensions. Some of us have dealt with sickness or grief. Some of us have become homeschool teachers this year, while still having to balance our careers. We are having difficult conversations with family and friends, sometimes having a hard time finding that “common ground” that once seemed so easy. We are trying to make sense of our divided nation. Many of us probably have more on our plates than we ever have while having to struggle with our own difficult feelings, all while trying to do the work here at DJJ. And let’s face it: Our jobs were hard to begin with.

Yes, some of us are still struggling.

Here at DJJ, we are in a “caring” profession. Our job is to take care of the youth who come into our system, their families, and the communities that we serve. It is so easy to give so much of ourselves to others that we often forget to take care of ourselves. In these difficult times, it is more important than ever that

you set aside time to take care of yourselves and your families.

Make sure that you are taking advantage of these beautiful spring days. If possible, take your work outside and enjoy some fresh air. Take walks. Some managers have even reported that they will schedule “walking meetings.” While the pandemic has made travel difficult, I encourage you to use your leave for shorter trips or even “staycations,” just so you can take a “mental health” break from your work or from the other stressors in your life. Take some time to enjoy whatever activities make you happy and relaxed. Finally, we all know that diet, exercise, and strong support networks are essential to self-care, so please make sure you are making those part of your daily routines.

Also, please know that here at DJJ, we are concerned about how you have been doing throughout this time and continue to look for ways to help. We will continue to hold Listening Sessions so we can learn more about how you’re feeling and how we can better meet your needs. We will also be starting a Wellness Initiative with input from DJJ staff so we can look for ways to address the wellness needs of DJJ staff beyond what the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is able to offer (EAP’s phone number is 855-223-9277). We look forward to happier days ahead for all of us!

Plant, Harvest, Brew: Tea Time At CSU 9



Speedwell, gypsyweed, Paul's betony or *Veronica officinalis* – whatever you call it, CSU 9 Community Connection Program Specialist Kimberly White just knows that when mixed with several other naturally grown herbs, it makes a delicious tea that she recently shared with colleagues to celebrate the arrival of spring.

White, who reports that she comes from a family with a long history of plant lovers and gardeners, only recently discovered the joys of herbalism when she started taking classes in the subject about a year and a half ago. “Many of our ancestors regarded plant life as sacred medicine,” White says as she prepares a pot of tea. “It’s what they used to heal ailments instead of drugs, which they rarely had available.”

White grows more than 40 herbs in her own garden and is

“There are scientific studies being done on mint’s ability to help brain function. I say we can all use that!”

–*Kimberly White*





It's a labor of love for Kimberly White, who says she comes from a long line of plant lovers and gardeners. Clockwise from upper left: Dried gypsyweed ready for brewing; orange rind, gypsyweed and ginger all get put into the pot.

constantly searching for more. She harvests them and uses them, both fresh and dried, not only in teas but in medicinal tinctures and salves.

Her favorite tea so far she calls a “mint medley,” brewed from a combination of peppermint, spearmint and sweet mint along with naturally grown stevia. “It makes an

amazing tea for digestion after dinner or really any meal. There are also scientific studies being done on mint’s ability to help brain function. I say we can all use that!”

White is exploring the possibility of creating an herb garden at the King William field office as a community service project.



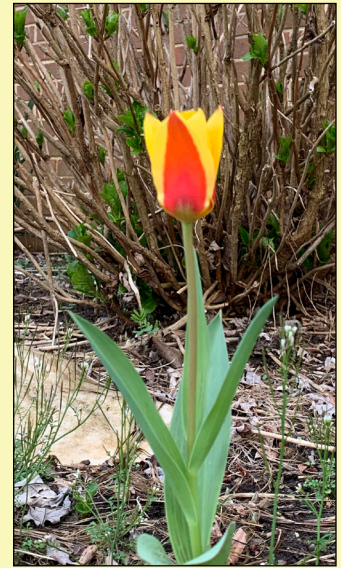
Enjoying freshly brewed herbal tea are CSU 9-King William staff members, from left: Veda Frazier, Program Manager, Community Connection Program (CCP); Tyrone Jackson, after-hours intake program manager; Kimberly White, CCP Specialist; Karen Dobson, Office Services Specialist; Wendy Viola, Juvenile Caseworker, CCP.



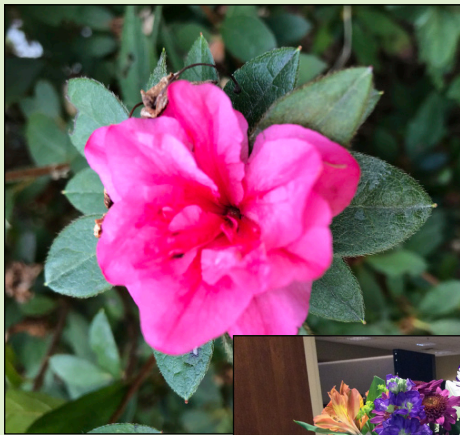
*Birdhouse
Carolyn Minix, Director, CSU 23-Salem*



*Wythe County Purple
Barry Anders
Probation Officer
CSU 27-Wytheville*



*Tulip In Bloom
Meghan Hamm
Art Instructor
Yvonne B. Miller HS*



*Top: First Azalea Sighting
Kimberly McCollum, Probation Officer, CSU 4-Norfolk*

*Bottom: Desktop Blooms
Michele Banalett, Probation Officer, CSU 12-Chesterfield*



*Office Bouquet
Tiffany Martin
Probation Officer
CSU 21-Martinsville*

A Virginia Spring Drive

by Diane Leiter, Family Engagement Coordinator

Hopewell Riverwalk



Williamsburg Daffodil



Petersburg Beauty



Poquoson Boat Garden