

# Youth News

July 2021

## 4 Ways to Keep Youth Engaged During Summer Break



**July is BIPOC Mental Health  
Awareness Month**



**Youth News** magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. *Youth News* provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring educational, inspirational and motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

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# 4 Ways to Keep Youth Engaged During Summer Break

Written By: Melanie Rush

Summer 2021 is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated in recent memory. Thanks to higher vaccination rates and the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions across the nation, families and children are eager to get out and bring back the fun. No matter what you decide to do, it's important to have a wide array of options for keeping your children engaged during their summer break.

"Here are four ways parents and guardians can keep their youth engaged during their summer break."

**1.Help them launch a business** or side hustle. Starting a business or side hustle during summer break can be a great opportunity for your child to learn career skills and earn extra cash. Some business ideas include music

tutoring, mowing lawns, and the classic lemonade stand. Be sure to check your local laws on starting businesses and child labor regulations before providing services.

**2. Take advantage of free summer camps** and programs. Now that many COVID restrictions have been lifted, summer enrichment programs are filling spots again. Begin your search for free summer programming with your local department of recreation, public library, community centers, and nonprofit organizations. Find programs in your area through your local newspapers or by searching "Free summer programs for children [enter your city]."

**3. Plan physical activities.** Although it may be tempting to relax indoors, it's important to stay physically active during summer break. Studies show [weight gain is higher during summer vacation](#) compared to the school year. To combat inactivity, arrange fun activities, such as family bike rides, household dance contests, and neighborhood scavenger hunts.

**4.Volunteer work.** Summer break can be a great time to teach your child the importance and benefits of volunteering. If your teen requires volunteer hours as part of their graduation requirements, the summer offers a rare break in their schedule to earn their hours. [Volunteer Match](#) is a great starting point for finding volunteer opportunities for children and families.



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# Youth News



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I am deeply honored to work with these amazing people from our youngest writers to our retirees, we are all committed to educating our communities about the vast need for people to become foster, adoptive parents and mentors. In this issue we're talking about Mental Health. Caring for others may help more than you know. Be there, Mental health matters and that's the reality!

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# The Road to Recovery- Job Hunting

Written By: Sam Cooper

Like many people, I've been unemployed during the pandemic. Unlike many people, it's because I quit my job as a staff writer for a local newspaper about a month before everything shut down.

I'm lucky to have parents who are able to and willing to support me during this time, but it has not been easy.

I'm not even sure how many jobs I've applied to in total. I took a break for a few months when things first started so it wasn't until this January that I really started the job search in full force. Every day, I sent out applications, wrote cover letter after cover letter, and scoured job sites with every possible variation of writer, editor, and journalist I could think of.

I got interviews, just no job offers.

As time went by, it became harder to find the motivation to apply. What was the point? Even with things picking up now, I'm finding it difficult to find a position. I've started looking at retail positions just so I could earn some money. It's not my ideal position - but it's better than nothing.

I figure I can get a part-time or even full-time staff position in retail then freelance on the side until a better option comes along. It's been hard for me but I can't imagine how hard the hunt has been for people who haven't had a support system.





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# Youth Spotlight

Written By: Tolu Talabi

Anaiyah, an 18-year-old recent high school graduate, is the author of *For black girls who search beyond iridescent waterfall*, a poetry collection. Her book is the true epitome of beauty, from the cover art to the writing the book holds. Anaiyah's book, inspired by *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*, by Ntozake Shange and by Tyler Perry's movie, *For Colored Girls*, details the struggles that black girls face in society. She uses her voice as a tool to encourage black girls and assure them that they are not alone; they are heard and seen.

The titles of the first six chapters follow the order of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo /purple) and the last chapter is gold. Chapter Red details stereotypes, rage, and relationships. Chapter Orange details domestic life. Chapter Yellow details insecurities and self-image. Chapter Green is about whitewashing and miseducation of black history. Chapter Blue is about mental health and the unfair health care system. Chapter Indigo is about spirituality. The final chapter, Gold, is about self-love. Anaiyah takes her readers on a journey; a journey to finding self-love despite the hurdles and bricks thrown at the black community.

Finding love and solace in rap, she embeds rap, you can find elements of rap embedded within each poem Anaiyah writes. She often mimics songs of artists she enjoys such as: Kendrick Lamar, Tupac, Sza, Lauren Hill, and Left Eye. Not only does Anaiyah want her book to be a guide for black girls, she also aims to educate nonblacks so they can deeply understand black culture and the pain and difficulty the black community faces.



## Anaiyah



# What Parenting Means to Me

Written By: Ronald Neubauer

National Parents' Day is observed on the fourth Sunday of July every year. In 1994, Congress passed "The Parent's Day Resolution," unanimously. According to The Parent's Day website ([parentsday.com](http://parentsday.com)), "[o]n this day each year, Americans recognize outstanding parents, celebrate teamwork in raising children, and support the role of parental guidance in building a strong, stable society."

My wife and I celebrated our 38th wedding anniversary this May. We have two children. Our son, age 33, a historian, teaches Chinese history at a university in Taipei, Taiwan. Our daughter, age 30, a social worker, works with the Manhattan Felony Alternative to Incarceration Court in New York City. We could not be more proud.

Reflecting on our life together, my wife and I agreed that, for each of us, our most important, rewarding, and joyful experience is being parents -- is, not has been, because the parental role evolves but parents never stop being parents. "Parent" is not limited to biological parents. By "parent" I refer to anyone performing the parenting role.



Western political/moral philosophers have written that caring about the well-being of someone in the next generation is essential to individuals making good judgments and sound, moral decisions. Parents want to leave the world in a better place for their children -- for all children.



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# Impacts of Virtual Counseling During a Pandemic

Written by: Paula Margus

Lauren Levine, MSW, LCSW-C, Clinical Psychotherapist Eating Disorder & Anxiety Specialist, never imagined she'd be counseling clients 100% remotely during a pandemic. Before COVID-19, Lauren was seeing the majority of her clients in person at The Eating Disorder Center in Rockville, MD. Lauren's specialties include eating disorders, body image, relationship with food, and anxiety. When asked what impacts clients are experiencing during the pandemic, Lauren expressed there's been an increase in stress and anxiety; a decrease in mood, and feelings of having less control that can exacerbate eating disorder symptoms.

Lauren described compounding issues among her client base with this current and unforeseen situation for those with eating disorders. "It's difficult being home all of the time with not as much structure, constant access to food/kitchen, gyms being closed, and seeing ourselves on video daily. Many people also have more time and are on social media more which is filled with toxic diet culture and comparing ourselves to others." Since the pandemic, Lauren's requests for counseling have increased.



Although Lauren finds virtual counseling just as effective as in-person sessions, she noted "zoom fatigue" as a real concern. To be effective and avoid burnout, she makes self-care a priority by taking breaks from the computer, reading, and going for walks. At this time, she's not exactly certain when clients will return for in-person sessions.



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# Living My Life Like It's Golden!

Written By: Keisha Mitchell

Since the young age of 8, I've always enjoyed learning about the body and how to stay healthy. I would read books and watch videos just to gain information on this amazing topic. I have now begun teaching through the writing of my articles on how to maintain good health. I like to look at good health from a holistic standpoint. I know everybody wants that dream body, but we need to be sure that the mind, body, and spirit are all in good alignment for optimal health.

Recently finishing up a semester of nursing school, I realized it was time for me to realign my mind, body, and spirit. I can teach about it every day, but what's better than implementing it? Below are three ways I've been implementing my own teachings, all while being able to maintain my good health leading into the summertime.

1. Social media detox. This is by far one of the best ways to decrease all of the extra noise to tune in and see what it is that you really want.



2. One gallon of water daily. My motto for this one is "One gallon a day, keeps the doctors away." Because you'll be too busy running to the bathroom every five minutes.

Take a walk in the park and become one with nature can be the epitome of happiness! A genius once said, "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." -Albert Einstein



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# Mental Health Awareness

Written By: Lenna

Mental health is emotional or psychological well-being. This can affect how we think, learn, and act. It also can damage relationships with others, and influence what choices we make and how we as humans handle stress. In all of life from adolescence to adulthood, we can experience poor mental health. Many things contribute to mental health such as genes and brain chemistry, trauma such as abuse or other cruel life experiences, and a family history of mental health problems. A few warning signs of a mental illness can be eating or sleeping too much or too little, having little to no energy, having the feeling of hopelessness, high anxiety, using and or abusing drugs, bad memories, and inability to perform simple tasks. Having positive mental health allows people to find and realize their full potential, work productively, and do good in their community. Maintaining good mental health could include exercise, sleeping and eating properly, staying positive about life and past or future experiences, and connecting with others whether it is to make friends or to receive help if needed.



# July is BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month

Written By: Adria Kinney

In recent years, awareness about mental health has substantially increased. Self-care has become an entire industry, and conversations about topics that were once considered taboo such as anxiety and depression are routinely discussed in classrooms, on social media, in the workplace, and more. While this shift to a more transparent culture around mental illness and mental health is positive, members of the *Black, Indigenous, and People of Color* (BIPOC) community continue to experience unique mental health challenges ranging from lack of access to culturally competent providers to insufficient health insurance. To help draw attention to these issues and promote mental health in underrepresented communities.

July was established as BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month in 2008. This year, the theme of BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month is Strength in Communities. If you identify as BIPOC, what do you do to practice self-care and take care of your mental health? How does your community support



you? If you do not identify as BIPOC but would like to be an ally, what can you do to support mental health in BIPOC communities?

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# Healthy Vision Month

Written By: Sarah Holcomb

July is Healthy Vision Month, and I wanted to share some easy ways you can take care of your eyes. Did you know that most eye diseases have no symptoms and that women are more prone to eye conditions than men? Unhealthy eyes can lead to a range of conditions, from dry eyes to macular degeneration, and many can lead to partial or even permanent blindness. There are many preventative measures you can take to improve your overall vision health.

- Take frequent breaks from screen time – this can help to reduce eye strain and headaches. Try the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet ahead of you for 20 seconds.
- Practice healthy habits: exercise, eat your greens, and avoid smoking – diabetes and smoking are two common factors that can lead to vision conditions and diseases.



- Schedule routine eye exams - every one to two years to detect any issues early on and to start timely treatment.

For more eye health tips, check out the National Eye Institute at <https://www.nei.nih.gov/>

# All The Bright Places Film Review

Written By: Caia Reese

*All The Bright Places*, a movie adaptation of a New York Times Bestseller, tells the emotional love story between two teenagers who find each other during the darkest point in their lives and attempt to save each other from their mental battle. In the original book, the two main characters, Finch and Violet, were typical white teenagers that were almost out of high school. However, Jennifer Niven and Liz Hannah, the movie's screenwriters, manipulated this trivial detail to tell their story. In the movie, Finch was African American. This small change in casting birthed a huge discussion about mental health in the black community.

Movies that are about mental health often blame a black character's issues on "black trauma," where they experience hardships strictly because of racism or having a poor



background. While, as a black person myself, I do think people should be exposed to how racism affects us mentally, I also believe there's a serious lack of stories that allow people to simply see black boys and girls as growing teenagers, i.e. as teens who just so happen to struggle with their mental health.

When watching the story unfold, we see how depression can target a young person, no matter their race. Finch didn't have a big story to explain why he was a depressed black teen. He was simply human.

And who knows? Maybe when Niven and Hannah strolled into their pitching room that was the whole point all along.

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July 5	Monday	Workaholics Day
July 6	Tuesday	World Kissing Day
July 11	Sunday	Cheer Up the Loney Day
July 18	Sunday	Caviar Day
July 24	Saturday	Cousins Day
July 26	Monday	Uncle and Aunt Day
July 29	Thursday	Lasagna Day
July 30	Friday	National Cheesecake Day





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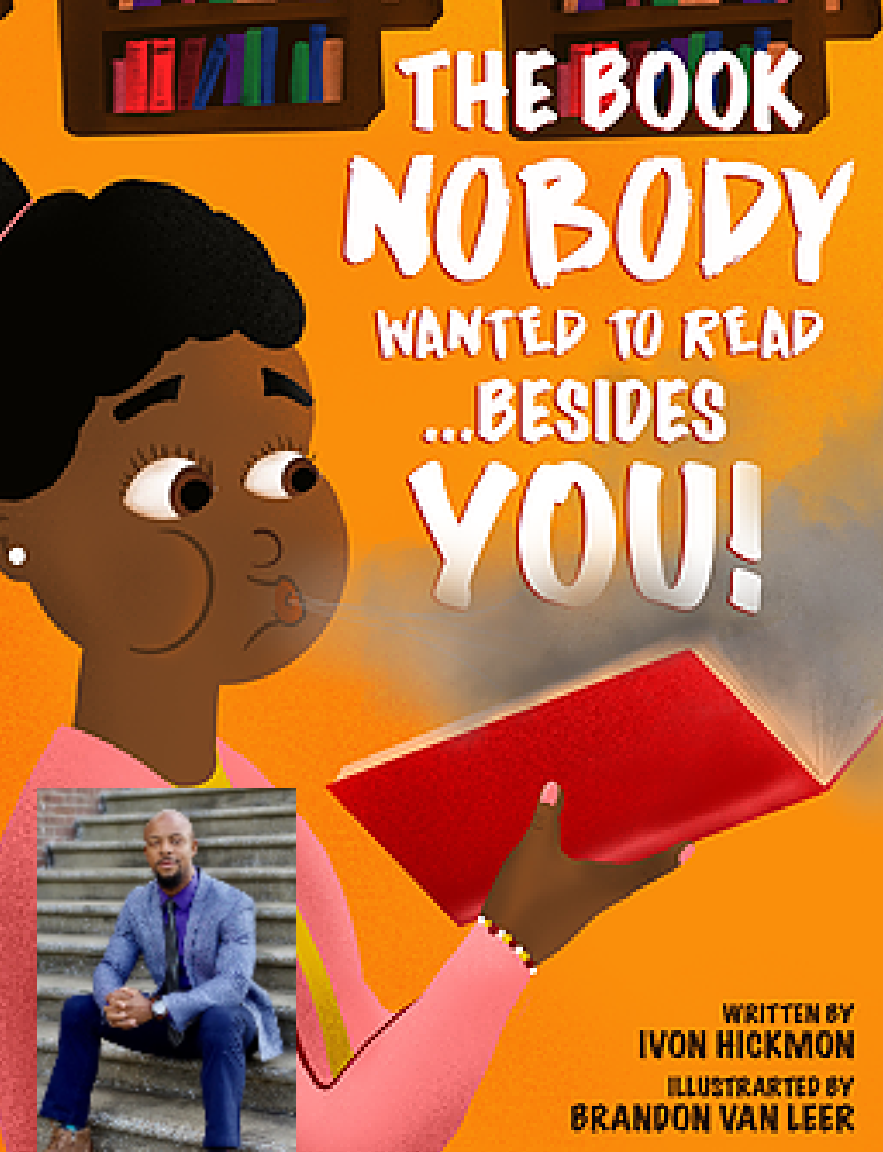
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## The Book Nobody wanted to Read Besides You!

This beautiful story captures the need for inclusivity and emotional intelligence. Readers are introduced to the protagonist, as she shows empathy and compassion towards our book character. By definition, inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group. Inclusion must be taught and fought for. Equipping children is essential for this life's journey. Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. This dynamic story teaches your children a proven, practical tactic to develop emotional intelligence skills. After reading this story, children will be empowered to love and embrace themselves fully and gain awareness of their emotional state.

**About the Author:** The youngest son out of three boys to military parents, Ivon found his dreams of playing among the NFL greats were closer than he'd ever imagine. Ivon's football career journeyed from "last man" on the roster to earning his football scholarship with honors and being selected as team captain and MVP.

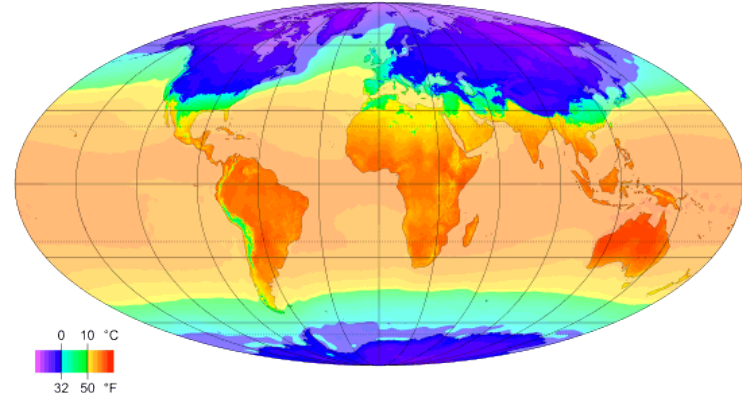
A true "girl dad," Ivon spends hours visiting both his daughters' schools, cultivating children through the power of reading. These visits propelled Ivon to release his debut children's book, *The Book Nobody Wanted to Read...Besides You*, a fun and silly book that introduces children to emotional intelligence and inclusion.



# Green Teens Climate Change Awareness

Written By: Christa Cooke

Gen Z, the cohort aged between 6-24, has every reason to be concerned about climate change. In the decades to come they will watch as the sea level rises to swallow up coastal towns, glaciers are melted and lost, increasingly severe wildfires and hurricanes wreak devastation, and droughts worsen. Despite their youth and lack of resources, teens have already taken center stage in the international discussion on climate change with mass strikes and protests. Greta Thunberg is the most well-known Gen-Z figurehead addressing this issue, but on online platforms like Instagram and TikTok, climate change influencers are amassing huge view counts. As the first social media natives, Gen-Z is well equipped to utilize mass communication to raise awareness. While platforms like TikTok distribute quick videos that only last for a handful of seconds, the effect in raising awareness can still be tremendous. Much like Twitter TikTok style activism functions more as a way to quickly push focused statements rather than fully



explore topics at length. While there is still great need for detailed education around this issue, quick facts and calls to action are also helpful in the fight to create change. Small, often humorous or creative, daily TikTok reminders of the climate reality serve to keep the topic fresh in the minds of users, as well as create a shared sense of understanding among teens that they have a fight ahead of them, but that they are in this fight together.

# Message from the *Editor-in-Chief*

This month I began working 3 jobs (2 full-time positions and 1 part-time) all serving child welfare/foster care system reform. Taking on an additional position as an Acting Supervisor in another division within my Department, alongside running my own Ombuds office seemed like a handful but I'm fortunate enough to have found my calling. Leveraging lived experience and elevating youth voices within the child welfare/foster care system has truly been my calling.

When you say yes, make sure your "yes" aligns with every fiber of your being. It won't feel like work. This relates to fostering, mentoring, volunteer, or paid work.

It is messages like this that make me feel like I'm moving the needle towards systems change.

"Loney in my journey as a Social Work Child Welfare Professional career I have only come across a few Social Workers like you who have known struggle, loss, defeat and have battled their way out from the depths of suffering and turned their lived experience into compassion, empathy, gentlest and a genuine loving concern for humanity and the clinical skills to make lasting systems change. Thank you for always being there for our RB21 youth in Washington County. Maryland"

I am so fortunate to find success in my passion. May you find yours.

*THE THINGS YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT ARE  
NOT RANDOM...THEY ARE YOUR CALLING.*

-Fabienne Fredrickson-

**About the Editor-in-Chief:** Ms. Loney Nguyen pronounced (Lonnie) is a licensed clinical social worker, professional model, and servant leader. Loney is the Director of Programs for WHALER's Creation and serves as Editor in Chief of Youth News magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation and Maryland's appointed Foster Youth Ombuds. An expert in youth engagement, she has over 13 years of lived and professional child welfare experience in Maryland, and 7 years supervisory experience in the District of Columbia. An international pageant Queen, she was crowned Miss Baltimore United States, 2019 and Miss Vietnam DC, 2014 respectively. When she is not competing in pageants, she volunteers her time as a local/national pageant judge, coach, and teaches life skills & etiquette classes to encourage a positive self image that ignites the Royal Queen/King in youth and adults.





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Dear Lillie, my husband, just spent the very last of our savings on cryptocurrency. He has been hearing this fact from me for about two years. I just found out that he has spent over \$11,000 on this “air money”. I am so mad I am ready to leave him. What should I do? - Mad Money!

Dear Mad Money, Wow, I am not too sure about this cryptocurrency...but it was an investment. What will you do if his \$11,000 turns into \$11 million? Don't be so quick to leave . Do your research, it may not be a bad thing. Hang in there. Wishing your Mad Money turns into happy money, Lillie

Dear Lillie, I attended my daughter's wedding a few weeks ago and it was one of the most beautiful weddings I've ever seen. The wedding party looked amazing, the minister's words were heartfelt and the food was amazing. My only problem is my daughter, the bride is 40 years younger than her husband, and her husband is unemployed. She has an executive position with a major company. I tried to stop the wedding with everything I had in me, but my daughter went on with the wedding. **Concerned Mom**

Dear Concerned Mom, That is a lot for any mother to handle. You said her “father-grandfather” figure fiance is not working. Well, I hope that means he is financially independent. Just because he is not working does not mean he does not have lots of money . In spite of you trying to stop this wedding, your daughter still got married to him. Let's wish them the best and hope she made a wise choice for a husband. If he makes her happy, be happy for her. **Keep smiling**

# "Ask Lillie"



If you are in need of some good sound advice from a straight talker, send your questions to "Ask Lillie" your answer may be published

**Submit your question to:  
admin@whalers-creation.us**

The views and opinions expressed in "Ask Lillie" are the sole views and opinion of Lillie, and may not reflect the view and or opinion of Youth News, staff, volunteers, interns, donors or contributors.





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# The Mindful Corner

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling.

**Mindful Reflection: Share your rose, thorn, and bud**

 <b>Rose</b> A highlight, a success, or something positive that happened	 <b>Thorn</b> A challenge you experienced, or something you can use more support with.	 <b>Bud</b> New ideas or something you're looking forward to knowing or understanding more.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was a highlight today?</li><li>• How have you been successful?</li><li>• What are you most proud of?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was most stressful?</li><li>• Identify causes of difficulty.</li><li>• What made it hard to be successful?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are you looking forward to?</li><li>• Describe opportunities for learning that excite you.</li><li>• What needs growth and nurturing?</li></ul>

 **Mindful Schools**

Mindful Schools is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Join us at [mindfulschools.org](http://mindfulschools.org).

Take a mindful minute



**Breath-in**

**Breath-out**

**Relax**



Meet our  
**TEAM**

## GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM

### Youth Under 21



**Liam**, a photographer / host of 60 Second Sports Talk on KFAM Youth Radio. He is a recent high school graduate with dreams of becoming a professional sports anchor or sports attorney.

# Foster



**Lenna** is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience.

# Adopt



**Tolu** is an African writer, who uses her voice to advocate for change. She writes articles, poetry and screenplays alongside finishing her first novel to be published Spring 2022. When she is not writing, she loves fashion and cloud watching.



Jordan, enjoys running, sports, and writing. As of now, she is not sure what career path she wants to pursue, but writing and academic maybe apart of her future.

# Mentor



# Meet our TEAM

## GET TO K NOW OUR TEAM

### Contributing Writers over 21



Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, “What you speak is what you seek.” As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.



Paula Margus, is a Quality Program Specialist, is always looking for opportunities to make improvements. She applies this to her personal life as well and enjoys helping others to improve their lives. She is very involved in her community and is passionate about youth advocacy, social justice and equality; animal rescue/adoption and health self-advocacy. Paula is a long-time resident of VA.



Sarah Holcomb is a Human Resources professional and a graduate student studying organizational psychology. With a passion for personal development, she lives by the mantra “I never dreamed of success, I worked for it” (Estee Lauder). In her spare time, she enjoys staying active and riding her electric scooter around Washington, D.C., which she calls home.



Samantha Cooper is a 20-something writer living in the DMV area. She runs a blog, “Scoop’s Animation Corner” where she reviews animated movies and TV shows. She is also the co-runner of the YouTube channel, “Chamber of Spoilers.”



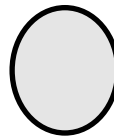
Ronald Neubauer retired in February of 2018 after being an attorney in the Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps for 21 years and then a Defense Department civilian for 20 years. He specialized in international law and was privileged to work in 38 countries. In addition to volunteering as an editor and writer for WHALER’s Creation, he also volunteers with Inova Fairfax Hospital and Compassus Hospice and Palliative Care. His hobbies include playing guitar, sailing, and reading.



Adria Kinney loves reading and writing and is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for underserved youth. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology, a Master’s degree in International Education, and resides in Washington, D.C. where she works as Program Officer for FHI 360.



Christa Cooke is a software engineer with a keen interest in technology, LGBTQ+ issues, politics, and the intersections between the three. She is an aspiring writer and avid sci-fi and fantasy reader, with a dream of one day publishing a novel of her own. Christa has spent much of her twenties traveling; she’s now chosen to make Washington D.C. her home, close to her chosen family.



Coming Soon



# KFAM

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## Youth Radio

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