

# ACPS STAFF NEWSLETTER

## October 31, 2023

### Message from Dr. Wells

It is October 31 and another Halloween is upon us. I hope you are ready for the trick or treaters that will be visiting your houses this evening. We have now completed ten weeks of school and we are well into the school year. I know we had to make some major adjustments with All In Virginia and the implementation of the Building Bridges to Success plan, but overall, it has been a great start to the school year. I continue to be impressed by your hard work and dedicated service in support of our students. I am extremely grateful for everything you have done to get us to this point and I am looking forward to seeing the great things that we will accomplish this school year.

We completed our community and staff/family tailgates Friday October 27, 2023. Overall, we feel the tailgates were a success and they gave our staff and families opportunities to interact with each other in a relaxed environment. We estimated that we had well over 400 community members, staff, and family members participate in the tailgates. I appreciate all of our staff and families who were able to participate and I plan to continue the tradition. I firmly believe that it is important for us to find ways to interact and spend time together in a relaxing environment. A special thank you to Mr. Joey Crawford, Mr. Robert Curd and the high school staff as well as Mrs. Brittany McNerney, Mr. Gary Roakes, and Dr. Tim Hoden for their assistance with the preparation and breakdown of the tailgates.

The Amherst County High School construction and renovation project will begin around November 6, 2023. Construction at the high school is expected to last 18-20 months and should be completed by the fall of 2025. This is an exciting time for our students and community. We are looking forward to the changes this project will bring to the high school and our community. In order to accommodate the construction, the back parking lot at the high school will be closed effective November 1, 2023. The high school administration has notified staff, parents and students of the changes to the parking and driving patterns at the high school. Please see the updated parking and routing diagrams in the newsletter below. During the construction process the entrances to the back of the high school, to include the gym, will be closed. Winter sports fans will be required to park in the front of the high school and will enter through the main entrance to get to the main gym. More details regarding entry to the building during construction will be shared as we get closer to the winter sports season.

We are in the beginning stages of developing the 2024-2030 Comprehensive Plan. We have formed committees consisting of staff, parents, and community members. We will also hold two community forums to get additional feedback. The first forum will be held in the ACHS cafeteria on November 28 from 6:00 – 8:15 PM while the second forum will be held in the MMS cafeteria on December 6 from 6:00-8:15 PM. We encourage staff to share your thoughts regarding the direction of ACPS over the next six years.

All schools in the division are participating in the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) project again this year. All schools have received their Brook Trout eggs from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Each school will raise the trout throughout the year and they will be released into a local stream this spring. I encourage you to stop by your TIC classroom and take a look at the trout as they move their stages of development.

I want to thank you for all you have done to support our students and community. Our #Show Up Amherst initiative is alive and well again this year and there have been several functions in the schools and community that our staff and families have supported. I ask that you continue to support our local businesses and #Show Up to events in the schools and county.

I continue to be impressed by the work of our staff and our students. Although there is always work that needs to be done, I am encouraged by what I am observing. I am confident that if we all continue to work together we will overcome any obstacle that we may face. I hope everyone has an enjoyable fall season and can spend time with family and friends during the Thanksgiving Holiday. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of assistance or if you have any concerns.

Sincerely,

*William*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

November 7-Teacher Planning Day

No School for Students

November 22-24-Thanksgiving Holiday

No School for Students or Staff

SWEET  
BRIAR  
COLLEGE

## NEWSLETTER

Sweet Briar College has begun publishing a monthly newsletter to include events at the college that are available to our community.

If you would like to sign up to receive the newsletter, please click the link below.

[Sweet Briar Newsletter~Sign-up](#)

Congratulations to AMS Science teacher, Mrs. Lisa Laub, who is the 2023 Middle School Donna Sterling Award winner. This award recognizes exemplary teachers that engage in continuous improvement and is designed to support a professional development plan for the improvement of science teaching. Mrs. Laub is an outstanding educational leader in ACPS and is so deserving of this honor.

2023 MIDDLE SCHOOL  
SCIENCE TEACHER  
**DONNA STERLING  
AWARD WINNER**  
**LISA LAUB**  
AMHERST MIDDLE  
SCHOOL TEACHER

Awardees receive \$4000,  
presents at the next VAST PDI  
and will be published in  
the Science Educator or the  
Journal of Virginia Science  
Education.

*Congratulations!*

# Students of the Month

## September 2023



Skylar Hamilton-Amherst County High School

Adam Gowen-Amherst Middle School

Skylar Rosson-Monelison Middle School

Delilah Davis-Amelon Elementary School

Fynleigh Glover-Amherst Elementary School

Tiara Romo-Ascencio-Central Elementary School

Allison Shumate-Elon Elementary School

Kazlynne Witt-Madison Heights Elementary School

Aria Sprouse-Temperance Elementary School

This program is sponsored by the ACPS Education Foundation with generous funding support from Sonny Merryman!





# Disability Awareness Month

1/5 of all Americans have disabilities, including almost one million Virginians. In October, Disability History Awareness Month activities provide public awareness and an opportunity to create a culture of mutual respect and equal opportunities for all of our students. Check out our local disability resources by clicking the link below!

[Resources](#)

## OCTOBER IS DISABILITY HISTORY AWARENESS MONTH

Let's work  
together to  
create an  
inclusive and  
accessible  
society for all!



# UNITY DAY

OCT 18, 2023

WEAR AND SHARE  
ORANGE  
FOR

#UNITYEVERYDAY  
[PACER.ORG/UNITYDAY](https://pacer.org/unityday)

## Unity Day

We celebrated Unity Day on October 18. The day calls on all of us to unite in kindness, inclusion and courage in order to prevent bullying wherever it may occur. One of the most common options to celebrate the day is to wear the color orange.

This color symbolizes warmth and safety and has become associated with the day. Staff and students throughout the division wore orange in support!



## Groundbreaking Ceremony

On Friday, September 29, ACPS hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the addition and renovations that will take place at Amherst County High School. Dr. Wells hosted our School Board, members of the Board of Supervisors, members of the Amherst Town Council, the ACPS Education Foundation, Senator Peake, Delegate Walker, the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Authority, and local business and community leaders. ACPS is grateful for the Amherst County Board of Supervisors' financial support of this project. This event marked the beginning of a wonderful project that will benefit our students, staff, and community.



## Virginia Farm to School Week

October 2-6 was Virginia Farm to School Week! Our schools featured local produce and proteins during the week and will continue doing so throughout the school year. We will have local apples, grapes, broccoli, snack peppers, salad greens, zucchini and beef. Each school had different Farm to School activities and tastings. Ask your student what locally grown item they had from the cafeteria!

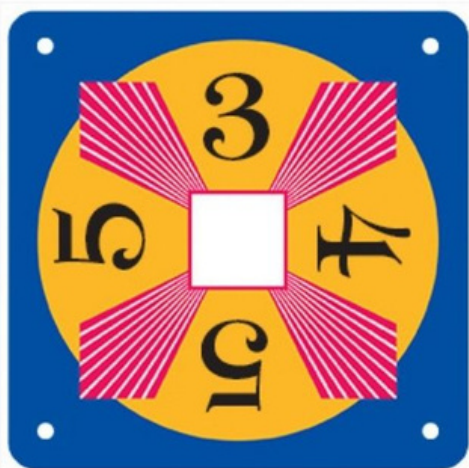


## Custodian Appreciation Day

Happy Custodian Appreciation Day! We are thankful that our custodians not only keep our buildings looking amazing and inviting, but they also care deeply about our students. They can be seen opening milks, zipping backpacks, giving high fives, and much more. They are an essential part of #TeamAmherst and we rely on them greatly to ensure our buildings are ready each day.







Math 24 or 4 Numbers game is a great algebraic game for K-12 students. In each puzzle, a player is given 4 numbers between 1 and 13 and the player needs to make 24 with all 4 numbers and  $+$   $-$   $\times$  and  $/$ .

It's a great way to train your brain while having a little bit fun. Pass the phone around with your friends and see who is a stronger mathlete!

Practice Math 24 on  
our Apple Device



**SCAN ME**

Practice Math 24 on  
our Google Device



**SCAN ME**

### **Save the Dates for the Math 24 Competitions**

**Secondary Math 24 -Monday, November 13th,  
5:30-7:00 PM (Amherst Middle)**

**Elementary Math 24 -Monday, January 22nd,  
5:30-7:00 PM (Amelon Elementary)**





# Staff Appreciation Tailgate

On Friday, October 13, 2023, Dr. Wells hosted his first staff appreciation tailgate of the year!

Guests enjoyed a backyard BBQ at the outdoor classroom and time together before the big game. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us, we hope you had a great time.

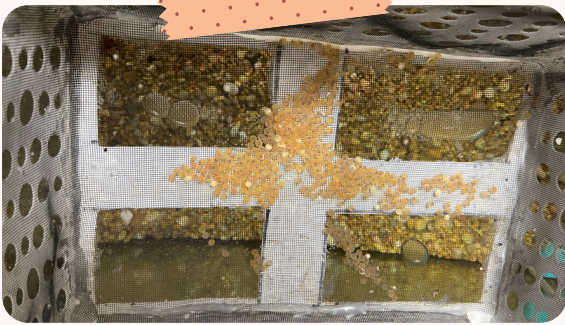
We appreciate all of our staff and are thankful they have chosen to be part of the ACPS family! #TeamAmherst #ShowUpAmherst





# TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

Amherst County Public Schools are gearing up with Trout in the Classroom 2024. Each school is involved in the program to populate the Pedlar River with trout each year. Since 2020, the program has raised and released over 800 trout fries. We are proud of the effort that our teachers and students put into helping the ecosystem of the James River thrive each year. In addition, the teachers and students enjoy the lesson presented by our Superintendent, Dr. Wells, on vertebrates and invertebrates and doing our part to keep the James River healthy.





*Amherst County Public Schools*

# COMMUNITY FORUMS

**NOVEMBER 28**

Amherst County High School  
139 Lancer Lane, Amherst  
Cafeteria

\*Please park at the front of the school\*

**DECEMBER 6**

Monelison Middle School  
257 Trojan Road, Madison Heights  
Cafeteria

**FORUMS 6:00–8:15 PM**

*All community stakeholders are invited to attend and provide their thoughts on the direction of the school division and the priorities of the next comprehensive plan*





October 24, 2023

**Subject: Construction Update New Traffic Pattern & Parking Begins November 1, 2023**

**To: Our Lancer Families**

As you are aware, ACHS will begin construction on our addition very soon. Although we are incredibly excited about this update, we understand that there will be some changes to our day-to-day operations. I will be sending regular updates regarding the construction and any changes that will need to be made to the operation of our school. This first update will provide you with information that you will need regarding transportation, parking, and drop-off/pick-up lines. Please pay special attention to the change in traffic pattern that will take place beginning Wednesday, November 1.

**FOR CAR-RIDERS AND STUDENT DRIVERS:**

1. In the morning, ALL car-rider traffic and Junior drivers will enter our school through Macadam Road (by the Briar Patch). You may recognize this road as the path you take when you exit from the bottom parking lot after football games. You will not be allowed to drive through Lancer Lane in the morning to drop off students, or to park in the Junior (bottom) parking lot. Parents who are dropping off students should continue up the far right side of the bottom lot and down Lancer Lane in order to drop students off at the CTE entrance closest to the end of Lancer Lane. Please see the attached picture labeled "Morning Drop-Off".

**FOR SENIOR STUDENT DRIVERS:**

2. Seniors (with a Senior lot parking pass) will enter in the morning on Lancer Lane and will enter the Senior (upper) parking lot at the FIRST gate. This is a change from the current gate that they are currently using. The second gate will be closed and Lancer Lane coming into the school will be blocked after the first gate. We will have a parking attendant checking Senior passes in the morning to allow students into the lot and therefore it is incredibly important for those seniors to display their parking pass as they enter Lancer Lane. Please see the attached picture labeled "Senior Parking".

**FOR JUNIOR/SENIOR STUDENT DRIVERS IN THE BOTTOM LOT**

3. In the Junior lot ONLY, parking passes will no longer match a specific spot. This is to accommodate our construction worker parking, staff parking, and afternoon car-rider parking. Students with parking passes for the bottom parking lot will have 6-7 rows of parking reserved where it will be first come, first served. Students should NOT park in areas that are designated for staff, construction workers, or afternoon car riders. Please see the attached picture labeled "Junior and Staff Parking".

*(continued on page 2)*





**FOR ALL STUDENTS:**

4. When students walk into the building from the bottom parking lot, they should take the normal path through the stadium walkway and into the Senior parking lot. At this point, they will walk to the first gate, closest to the Lancer Lane entrance. There, they will cross Lancer Lane, where our parking attendant will be, and will enter the building through our CTE entrances. Seniors will also enter through the CTE entrances as well. Please see the attached picture labeled "Student Entry From Bottom Lot".

**FOR ALL STUDENTS:**

5. In the afternoon, students will exit the building through the CTE entrances/exits in order to get to the bottom parking lot. They will take the same path to the bottom lot that they took to enter the building. (Exit the CTE wing, walk through the Senior lot, and down the stadium ramp to the bottom lot).

**FOR ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF CAR RIDERS:**

6. In the afternoon, parents who pick up car riders will park at the bottom of the parking lot (see attached picture labeled "Junior and Staff Parking"). These parents should wait there until their student has reached the vehicle. At no time should cars be parked on Lancer Lane while waiting on car riders. This will stop traffic exiting our school and will cause a delay in our process. When exiting, parents should take the exit at the top of the bottom of the lot closest to the baseball field (far right on the attached picture labeled "Junior and Staff Parking"). At no time should any cars be exiting the bottom lot on the left side (closest to the stadium). This is where our students will be entering the parking lot and this would cause a safety issue.

**FOR ALL:**

7. The gate at the bottom of the Junior lot should only be used for ENTERING and not EXITING. This will allow traffic to flow much better.

**FOR ALL:**

8. None of the exterior entrances/exits on the back of the building will be accessible at any time during construction. This includes the normal car rider entrance/exit as well as the gym entrance/exits. In addition, the back parking lot (by the gym) will not be accessible at all during construction.

ACHS Administration will be speaking with all of our Junior and Senior History and Government classes this week to inform the student drivers of the changes to our process. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to me at 434-946-2898. **Again, this new traffic pattern and parking will begin on Wednesday, November 1.**

Thank you,

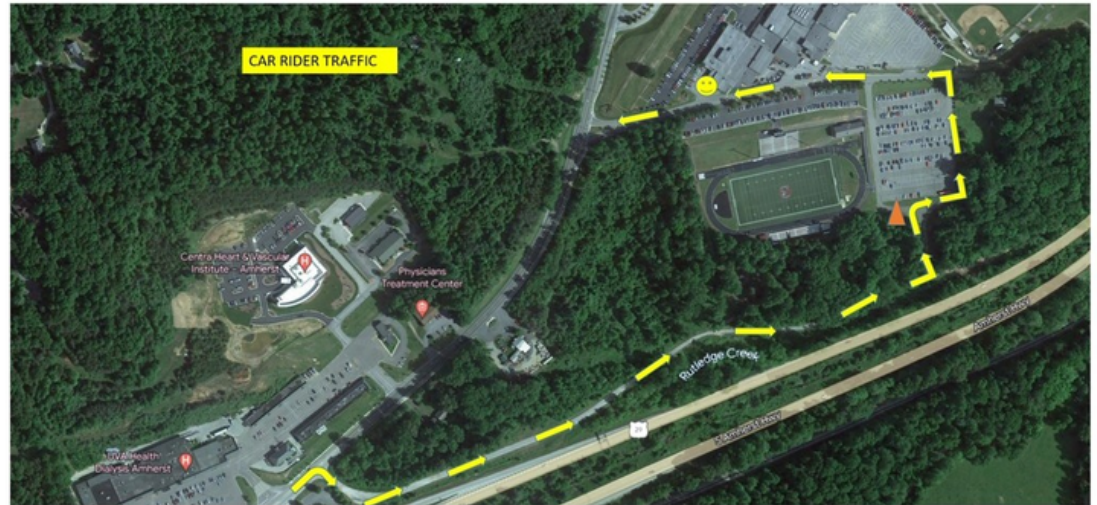
Joey Crawford  
Principal, Amherst County High School



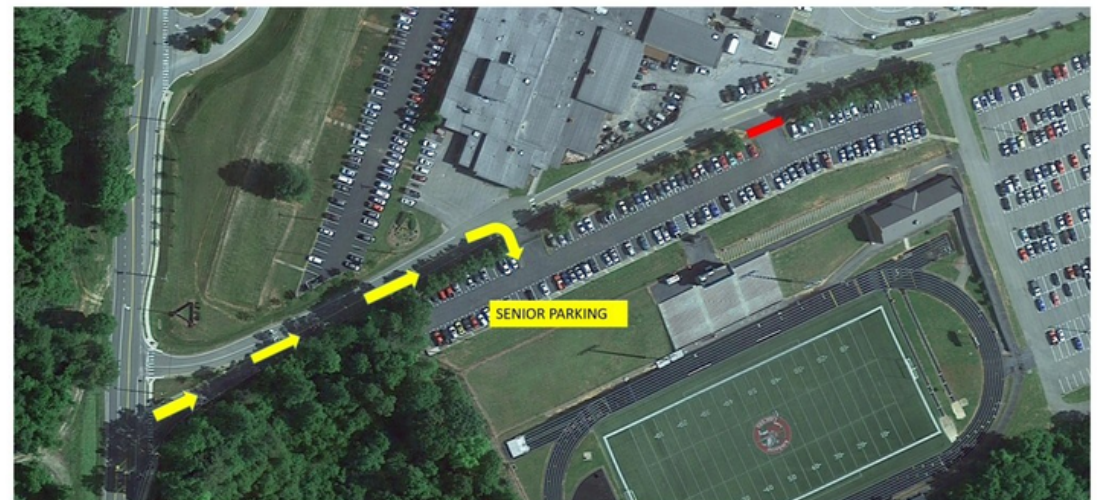
## Junior & Staff Parking



## Morning Drop-off



## Senior Parking



## Student Entry From Bottom Lot







# Understanding prediabetes and diabetes risk factors

Many Americans with diabetes have not yet been diagnosed and are not aware of the health risks. We are here to support and empower you to be your healthiest self. Diabetes is a condition where the body can't make insulin, or does not use it well. Insulin is a hormone that helps our bodies use the energy from the glucose in the food we eat. Without it, glucose levels in the blood stream can become too high.

Over time, this can cause damage to body tissue and organs.<sup>1</sup> There are three main types of diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

**Type 1 diabetes** can affect anyone, but most **Gestational diabetes (GDM)** is a form of often it develops in children or young adults. diabetes that appears during pregnancy. While People with this type of diabetes produce very GDM usually goes away after pregnancy, it can little insulin, or none at all. There is no way to put women and their babies at higher risk for prevent or cure type 1 diabetes. type 2 diabetes.

**Type 2 diabetes** is the most common type. People with type 2 diabetes either make too little insulin, or their bodies aren't able to use it as they should.

## How Family Members Can Help with Diabetes Management - Blog Article





Visit the American Diabetes Association website at [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org) for tips and resources in your community, like a local support group.

## Prediabetes risk factors for type 2 diabetes

If you have prediabetes, it means your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal — but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

While it is not clear why some people develop prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, and others don't, these risk factors can increase the risk of prediabetes, including:<sup>2</sup>

- Being overweight or inactive.
- Being 45 or older.
- Having a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Having had diabetes during pregnancy.
- Being Black, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander American.

## Symptoms of diabetes

If you have any of the following diabetes symptoms, see your doctor about having your blood sugar tested:

Urinate a lot, often at night.

Have numb or tingling hands or feet.

Are very thirsty.

Feel very tired.

Lose weight without trying.

Have very dry skin.

Are very hungry.

Have sores that heal slowly.

Have blurry vision.

Have more infections than usual.

## Preventing type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a serious, chronic health condition that can lead to other serious health issues, such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure. If you can prevent or even delay type 2 diabetes, you can lower your risk for all those other conditions.<sup>4</sup>

You can usually prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with achievable lifestyle changes:<sup>4,5,6</sup>

- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Quit smoking.

Having regular doctor appointments can also help you prevent, diagnose, or manage type 2 diabetes. To find a doctor, please visit **[anthem.com](https://anthem.com)** or call us at the number on the back of your member ID card.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [About Diabetes](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html) (accessed July 18, 2022); [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html).

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Diabetes Risk Factors](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/risk-factors.html) (accessed July 18, 2022); [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/risk-factors.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/risk-factors.html).

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Diabetes Symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/symptoms.html) (accessed July 18, 2022); [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/symptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/symptoms.html).

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Lifestyle Change Program Details](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lcp-details.html) (accessed July 18, 2022); [cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lcp-details.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lcp-details.html).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Tips From Former Smokers: Smoking and Diabetes](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html) (accessed July 18, 2022); [cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html).

<sup>6</sup> National Library of Medicine: [International Diabetes Federation: a consensus on Type 2 diabetes prevention](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31111111/) (accessed July 18, 2022); [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31111111/).

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## Communicating your emotions in a healthy way

Being able to express your emotions is important to your health and well-being. The stronger your feelings, the better it is to be able to express them. Pent-up, negative emotions can cause stress, anxiety, depression, and physical problems such as headaches and high blood pressure. That's why learning how to communicate your feelings can go a long way in improving your health.



### How to talk about your feelings

Here are tips that can help you express your emotions effectively and protect your mental health:

- } **Take time to collect your thoughts first.** Try to sort out your feelings if you are upset. Talking about them with another person may help you understand why you have strong feelings.
- } **Choose a “safe” audience** or a trusted confidante if you simply need someone to hear how you're feeling.
- } **Take responsibility for how you react.** Other people have no control over your reactions even if they can control the situations.
- } **Practice two-way communication when trying to resolve an issue.** If you're upset and trying to communicate with the other person how you feel, try to understand their perspective, too.
- } **Speak with a counselor or mental health professional** for guidance, if needed. There are times when professional help is your best resource.







## Choose your words with care

When you're sharing your feelings, do it with care because your words also affect others. Here are examples of what to avoid:

- } Focusing on who's to blame
- } Forcing a person to listen or share their feelings with you
- } Talking about the same issues repeatedly
- } Expecting others to take your side or react like you

Talking about your feelings effectively can give you relief and help you build better relationships — both of which are good for your emotional and mental well-being. To learn more about mental health, visit [cdc.gov/mentalhealth](https://cdc.gov/mentalhealth).



Source:  
Beacon Health Options website: **Communication** (accessed March 2021): [achievementsolutions.net](https://achievementsolutions.net).

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# Understanding the facts about depression and finding support

More than one in every 20 adults in the U.S. suffers from depression each year.<sup>1</sup> Feelings of ongoing sadness and a loss of interest in the things you once enjoyed are potential symptoms of depression. Unlike normal sadness or grief, depression won't go away on its own. Without help it can have a serious impact on your overall health. The good news is there is a lot of help and support for people suffering with depression.



## What are some causes of depression?<sup>2</sup>

Stress and depression often go together. Facing life challenges like losing a job, money problems, the end of a relationship, or the loss of a loved one can all trigger depression. Even positive changes in your life – like a new baby or work promotion – can cause stress that could lead to depression. If you have a close family member with depression, it might increase your risk. Depression can sometimes be a symptom of another illness, so it's important you talk to your doctor to rule out any other health issues.



## How do I know if I'm depressed?

Although depression may occur only once during your life, you could be depressed if you experience all or some of these feelings nearly every day.<sup>3</sup>

- ☐ Sadness, anxiety, emptiness, or hopelessness
- ☐ Trouble sleeping, waking too early, or oversleeping
- ☐ Anxiety, frustration, restlessness, or irritability
- ☐ Eating too much or not wanting to eat at all
- ☐ Loss of interest in favorite activities
- ☐ Unexplained health concerns like headaches, , or stomach issues, or chronic pain
- ☐ Problems concentrating, remembering making decisions
- ☐ Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide





If you or someone needs help now, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **988** or **800-273-8255 (TALK)** or call **911** right away.<sup>4</sup>



## What are some ways I can begin to overcome depression?

It's okay to ask for help. Reach out to a trusted friend or a family member and ask for support. While depression may make you feel like isolating from others, being with friends and loved ones can actually help you feel better. Also, remember that depression is not something you can just “get over,” so it's important to talk to your doctor and get professional help if you need it.

Be patient with yourself and set realistic goals. Break big tasks into smaller ones so you'll feel less overwhelmed. If you have any big decisions to make, first talk about them with the people who know you well and can help you think clearly. Remember to take it one day at a time and realize that with time and treatment, you can feel like yourself again.



## How can I help someone with depression?

You can start by helping them seek treatment. A friend or loved one who is depressed often feels too overwhelmed to ask for help. And remember to be patient — those struggling with depression are not trying to get attention — they are in real pain. Your support can have a positive effect on their road to feeling better. Here are some other ways you can help:

- ▢ Offer your support and listen carefully to your friend or loved one.
- ▢ Schedule appointments for them or remind them to take their medication on time.
- ▢ Try to get them interested in the activities they used to enjoy.

Visit [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) for more ways to get healthy — and stay healthy.

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, Major Depression Among Adults (accessed December 2016): <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/major-depression-among-adults.shtml>  
<sup>2</sup> WebMD, Common Causes of Depression (accessed December 2016): <http://www.webmd.com/depression/common-causes>  
<sup>3</sup> Center for Disease Control, Mental Illness: Depression (accessed December 2016): <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics/mental-illness/depression.htm>  
<sup>4</sup> Mayo Clinic, Depression: Supporting a family member or friend (accessed December 2016): <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression/art-20045943>

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# GRANDPARENTS/KINSHIP SUPPORT GROUP

(For grandparents and family members raising other family members)

***November 27, 2023***

**6pm to 7:30 pm**



**Madison Heights Library Community Room**  
**200 River James Shopping Center**  
***(Next to Lowe's)***

Please RSVP by November 26, 2023 to Wanda PerDieu at

[wandaperdieu@gmail.com](mailto:wandaperdieu@gmail.com)

or via text or phone call at 434-473-2141



Randolph College and Amherst County Public  
Schools proudly announce the

# Direct Admission Agreement

In partnership with ACPS,  
Randolph is offering any senior  
who meets the following  
qualifications direct admission  
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