

The Declarations Quarterly

Spring 2024 | Edition 34

Springtime Word Search

O I D Y J P P G H S U M R L Q L S F J R
 H Z P C N O S Z H M H E Z J O X P K U O
 V B Y K M N B J E O T O T E A U R V N L
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 Y H F R T K M L C G T X H P M D U N C A

Allergies	Blooming	April
Blossoms	Bunny	Break
Easter	Flowers	Equinox
Garden	March	June
May	Season	Maypole
Showers	Spring	Showers
Springtime		Warming

Spring Word Search

Alexandra Schueler, QA Assistant

Above is a word search for our spring 2024 newsletter!
 Check your answers against the key on page 17!



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Changing Emotions During the Changing Seasons

Alexandra Schueler, QA Assistant



Many regard springtime as a happy season marked by new growth, mild weather, and longer days. While all of this may be true, research has also shown that rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide tend to spike during the spring. In fact, suicide rates peak during the months of April, May, and June and researchers have determined that suicide rates are three times higher during these months than in December, which tends to have the lowest suicide rates. Studies have shown that contributing factors to increased depression and anxiety are seasonal allergies, springtime flare-ups of autoimmune diseases, changes in routine, and changes in weather. Individuals living with seasonal allergies and autoimmune diseases can experience inflammation during the spring months, causing their immune systems to work tirelessly to manage the ongoing symptoms. As a result, individuals can be left feeling exhausted and may have limited energy for other areas of their lives, causing increased depressive and anxiety-related symptoms.

Similarly, changes in one's routine can create feelings of anxiety. Researchers have opined that the springtime is also a time of big life changes, such as weddings, graduations, and purchasing homes. These major life changes can create feelings of anxiety, but they can also increase feeling of depression. Although many of these changes are a reason to celebrate, individuals are simultaneously mourning the transition from one phase of life to another (i.e., leaving school, leaving home, etc.). Finally, hormonal changes during the spring, particularly changes in melatonin, can impact our mental health, as well. Melatonin is responsible for regulating our sleep patterns. Disruptions in this area can result in exhaustion, which has been a proven factor to negatively impact our mental health.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety can manifest differently in different people. Here are some signs to look out for in yourself, as well as in others:

1. Low mood, which can include persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness
2. Less or no interest in usual activities
3. Less or no motivation for daily activities
4. Changes in energy, including lethargy or restlessness
5. Insomnia or other sleeping difficulties
6. Trouble with concentrating or remembering information
7. Appetite or weight loss
8. Unusual agitation or irritability
9. Feelings of anger or aggression
10. Thoughts of death, dying, or suicide

So what can we do to combat these triggers and promote positive mental health practices? Luckily, there are some actions we can take to prevent or minimize increases in depression and anxiety.

1. **Establish a routine:** Having consistent activity throughout the week can give you something to look forward to. Dedicating time to self-care and socialization will ensure that you are prioritizing your mental health needs.
2. **Focus on Sleep:** For many, this may be a bigger struggle than it may initially seem; however, ensuring you get the right amount of sleep will help you to feel better throughout the day. Establish a sleep routine that you remain consistent with. You can try setting an alarm to remind you to go to bed, just as you set an alarm to wake you up.
3. **Make Time for Physical Activity:** Exercise has been proven to relieve stress and ease symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as lead to improved sleep. Sometimes finding the time in a busy schedule to exercise can be difficult, but if you establish a routine that includes at least 30 minutes per day, you may see an improvement in your mental health.

4. **Stay Cool:** The heat can contribute to depressive symptoms in that it can make you feel uncomfortable and result in a negative mood. It's important to stay hydrated, wear weather-appropriate clothing, and utilize fans/air conditioning, when necessary.

5. **Meditation/Journaling:** Both meditation and journaling can help you identify and accept difficult or unwanted emotions, as well as identify patterns and triggers. Art therapy has also shown to improve your mood and track changes in your mental health, regardless of your artistic ability!

6. **Ask for Help:** If you are struggling or know that you may be sensitive to some of the above triggers, don't be scared to reach out to your natural supports! You can also participate in therapy or more intensive treatment options if you find it difficult to manage your symptoms. Remember that you are never alone!

If you or someone you know is struggling with depression, anxiety, or having thoughts of suicide, you can get free, confidential, 24/7 support. You can **text the Crisis Text Line** by texting **"HOME"** to **741-741** or you can **call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **800-273-8255**.

Sources: <https://www.healthline.com/health/spring-depression>
<https://www.charliehealth.com/post/spring-season-and-mental-health>
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/2019/05/suicide-rates-spike-in-spring-not-winter>
 Photo by Pixabay from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/shallow-focus-photography-of-bird-414181/>

Renewing Our Commitment to Health & Vitality

Lisa Schneider, RN



As we welcome the vibrant colors and spirit of spring, it's the perfect time to renew our commitment to health and vitality. Amidst our busy schedules and demanding roles in healthcare, taking care of ourselves often takes a back seat. However, prioritizing our health is not just essential—it's a necessity.

Beyond merely nourishing our bodies, healthy eating is a cornerstone of self-care, providing us with the energy, resilience, and vitality we need to excel both personally and professionally.

Why should we make healthy recipes a priority? Here are a few compelling reasons:

- 1. Fueling Our Bodies:** Just as we ensure our patients receive proper nutrition to support their recovery, we must also prioritize nourishing ourselves. Healthy recipes provide the essential nutrients our bodies need to function optimally, boosting our immune systems and enhancing our overall well-being.
- 2. Sustaining Energy Levels:** Nursing is a demanding profession that requires both physical and mental stamina. By choosing

nutritious meals and snacks, we can sustain steady energy levels throughout our shifts, minimizing fatigue and enhancing our ability to provide exceptional care to our patients.

- 3. Promoting Long-Term Health:** The choices we make today impact our health tomorrow. By embracing healthy recipes now, we invest in our long-term health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. As healthcare professionals, we understand the importance of prevention, and healthy eating is a fundamental component of disease prevention.
- 4. Setting a Positive Example:** As trusted members of the healthcare community, we have the opportunity to lead by example and inspire others to prioritize their health. By incorporating healthy recipes into our daily lives, we not only benefit ourselves but also serve as role models for our patients, colleagues, and loved ones.

Remember that taking care of ourselves is not selfish—it's essential!

Spring is a great time to incorporate fresh, seasonal ingredients into healthy recipes.

Here are some spring-themed recipe ideas that are both healthy and tasty!

Strawberry Protein Pancake with Yogurt filling:

Pancakes

- ¼ cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup strawberries, stems removed.
- 2 tablespoons vanilla protein powder
- 2 large egg whites
- ½ cup old fashion oats
- 1/8 ounce water
- 2-3 tablespoons sweetener
- ½ teaspoon baking powder

Yogurt Filling

- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons low sugar strawberry jam
- 2-4 teaspoons sweetener that measure like sugar

Heat a nonstick griddle/large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray over medium heat. In a blender combine the yogurt, protein powder, oats, strawberries, egg whites, water, sweetener, and baking powder and blend until smooth. Spoon half of the batter onto the heated griddle. Turn pancakes over when tops are covered with bubbles, and edges are cooked. Repeat with remaining batter.

In a small bowl stir the yogurt, jam, sweetener to taster together for the filling. Divide between the pancakes and roll each pancake up. Place on plate seam side down, or secure with toothpick. Server with additional strawberries or low-sugar jam is desired.

2 servings: each serving 187 calories, 2 grams of fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams fiber, 10 grams sugar, 18 grams protein

French Toast Protein Muffins

- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or skim
- ¼ cup protein powder, vanilla
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ cup low sugar maple syrup or honey
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 4 large egg whites
- 2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 ¾ cups old-fashioned oats
- ½ tsp salt
-

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 14 cups in muffin tins. In a blender place all the above ingredients until the oats are completely ground and the batter is smooth. Divide the batter evenly. Bake for about 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Let cool and enjoy!

14 servings: each serving 55 calories, 1 gram fat, 9 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 1 gram sugar, 4 grams protein.





Here are a few other recipes to try!

1. *Spring Pea and Asparagus Salad:*

- **Ingredients:** Fresh peas, asparagus spears, mixed greens (such as spinach, arugula, and kale), radishes (thinly sliced), lemon vinaigrette (made with lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper), crumbled feta cheese or goat cheese, toasted pine nuts or sliced almonds.
- **Instructions:** Blanch peas and asparagus until tender-crisp, then rinse under cold water. In a large bowl, combine mixed greens, blanched peas, asparagus, and sliced radishes. Toss with lemon vinaigrette. Top with crumbled cheese and toasted nuts before serving.

2. *Grilled Salmon with Strawberry Avocado Salsa:*

- **Ingredients:** Salmon fillets, olive oil, salt, pepper, fresh strawberries (diced), avocado (diced), red onion (finely chopped), cilantro (chopped), lime juice.
- **Instructions:** Brush salmon fillets with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill until cooked through. In a bowl, combine diced strawberries, avocado, red onion, cilantro, and lime juice to make the salsa. Serve grilled salmon topped with the strawberry avocado salsa.

3. *Lemon Garlic Roasted Chicken with Spring Vegetables:*

- **Ingredients:** Chicken thighs or breasts, baby potatoes (halved), carrots (cut into sticks), green beans (trimmed), garlic cloves (minced), lemon juice, olive oil, fresh thyme, salt, pepper.
- **Instructions:** Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). In a large bowl, toss chicken, potatoes, carrots, green beans, minced garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, fresh thyme, salt, and pepper until well coated. Spread the mixture onto a baking sheet in a single layer. Roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender.

These recipes are not only nutritious but also delicious and easy to prepare, making them perfect for healthy meal options. I hope these recipes inspire you to get creative in the kitchen and enjoy flavorful meals. Remember, cooking is not just about following recipes—it's about expressing your creativity, exploring new flavors, and sharing memorable moments with loved ones. Also these are great to share with our consumers!

Sources: <https://www.healthline.com/health/spring-depression>

<https://www.charliehealth.com/post/spring-season-and-mental-health>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/2019/05/suicide-rates-spike-in-spring-not-winter>

Photo by Angele J from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/black-berries-served-beside-strawberry-on-clear-glass-bowl-139751/>

Photo by Vanessa Loring from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/fresh-vegetables-on-brown-wooden-table-5971864/>

Photo by Lain De Macias from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-s-hand-with-cupcake-1000071/>

Coping with the Loss of a Consumer

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration

As individuals working in a helping profession, we become involved, sometimes deeply, in the lives of the consumers we serve. Sometimes those we work with have limited family and social supports. We may see these people more than we see some of our own family members. We do our best to navigate professional relationships and have appropriate boundaries. But what happens when one of those consumers pass away, whether suddenly or after a battle with illness?

Dealing with loss in and of itself is complicated. Dealing with the loss of a consumer presents even more unique challenges. We may feel defeated, as though there was more we could have done to support this person or change the outcome. We may feel relieved, as this person is no longer struggling with their illness. We may feel many emotions at once—anger, sadness, confusion. How do we navigate all of these different feelings?

There are some important things to remind ourselves:

- **Be kind to yourself:** Do not judge the emotions and feelings that come up
- **Having professional boundaries does not mean that we need to be robots and cannot care:** These are human beings we are working with. It is normal and natural to have strong feelings when someone passes away, especially someone we worked closely with. Honor those emotions and feelings as part of your grieving and healing journey.
- **Understand our professional limitations:** Our role is to help our consumers learn how to achieve their goals and become independent. Fortunately or unfortunately, this means allowing individuals to make their own decisions and experience natural consequences. If we do not allow individuals to make their own decisions, we stunt their growth and take away their ability to live their authentic lives. Remind yourself that you can only provide education and support, not force the consumers to change their actions or

behavior based on what you would want them to do. This can help alleviate some of the guilt based on those “what if” questions that may begin to creep in.

- **Appreciate the progress and victories made:** Focus on the good times and the strengths you observed in the client. If they opened up to you, recognize the importance of the rapport built to get you to a place of trust or understanding with this person.
- **Each person’s grief looks different:** Don’t compare yourself to others on the team. Everyone processes grief differently. There is no right or wrong way to navigate the death of someone.
- **Support one another through this process:** Knowing that you are not alone in your grieving process can be helpful, and being able to speak with other teammates when you need support can help both parties share their experiences to process their grief.
- **Find a way to honor the consumer who passed:** As an agency, we have been able to come together to share experiences about consumers or create things to remember them. In the past, we have painted rocks, seashells, held support sessions, etc. to honor the memory of someone who has passed away. Doing something creative can help navigate those emotions and create something beautiful in memory of that individual.
- **Ask for help:** recognizing that you need additional support is wonderful. Reaching out to a professional to speak about your experiences and grief can help you navigate these difficult times with someone unbiased. You may be able to learn tools to help navigate sadness or frustration, or just share with someone neutral, free of judgment.

Information from: https://www.naadac.org/assets/2416/aa&r-spring2019_good_grief_a_counselors_thoughts_on_navigating_client_death.pdf

Earth Day 2024

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration



April 22, Earth Day, is quickly approaching! This year, their theme is “Planet vs. Plastics,” with the goal to encourage the world to reduce plastic production of all kinds by 60% by 2040.

Here are some surprising facts, according to [EarthDay.org](https://www.earthday.org/):

- “8.3 BILLION Metric Tons (9.1 Billion US Tons) of plastic has been produced since plastic was introduced in the 1950s”
- “79% of plastic that has ever been made still sits in landfills or the natural environment (with the exception of the small amount that has been incinerated or recycled)”
- “At least 14 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year.”
- “When plastics end up in landfills, they aren’t harmless. They break down into tiny toxic particles that contaminate the soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them.”

Over the years, we have seen some work being done to help reduce use of plastic: we’ve seen companies use thinner plastic for water bottles and caps; swaps from plastic straws to paper, or cup lids that do not require straws; Styrofoam coffee cups to paper cups; and more.

Why is reducing our plastic usage important? Plastics don’t break down as easily as other materials, so they end up in landfills or in our environment, harming wildlife and resulting

in micro-plastics leeching into our soil and waterways. With the passage of time, we have learned more and more about the impact of plastics and micro-plastics on our environment, as well as our own health, and that our heavy reliance on these materials may have a negative impact on our overall wellness.

What are some ways that you can reduce your plastic consumption?

- Reach for reusable containers—reusable storage bags, grocery totes, stainless steel or glass water bottles
- Say no to plastic utensils, straws, paper plates—bring your own reusable utensils and straws with you if you plan to get take out or beverages
- Many coffee places will put your order in a reusable travel coffee cup if you bring one with you
- When possible, opt for liquid or powder detergents instead of the pods wrapped in plastic (we know these are more convenient, but they do require plastic wrapping on each one!)

For more tips, please check out Earth Day’s website at : www.earthday.org to see how big your carbon footprint is, as well as ways to help reduce it!

Information from: <https://www.earthday.org/>
<https://www.earthday.org/fact-sheet-single-use-plastics/>
Photo by Porapak Apichodilok from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-world-globe-facing-mountain-346885/>

Staff Spotlight On...



Monika Skora

Life Coach 2, Adams Program

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: Since she has come to be part of the Adams team, we have seen how dedicated and diligent Monika is about the work she does. Monika is thorough and ensures the safety and wellbeing of her consumers by being a strong advocate for their needs. She is approachable, always willing to help and communicates with others with efficiency. Monika, we can not thank you enough for how much you do every day. Your commitment and devotion to the care of our consumers is truly invaluable.

Submitted by: The Nursing Team

Staff Spotlight On...



Daria Sbraccia

Life Coach 1, Jefferson Program

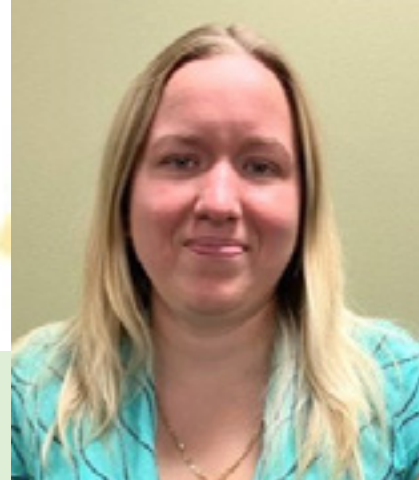
Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: I would like to put a spotlight on Jefferson Life Coach, Daria. Since coming back from maternity leave, the Jefferson team and agency have gone through vast changes in a short period of time. Whether it was needing to face several consumer crises and change in caseloads (many times in the past few months :))– you are consistently present, work-oriented, and flexible from day-to-day. I want to highlight Daria for being consumer driven and focused in completing any task in front of her with a positive attitude. Daria continues to show motivation daily to overcome any and all challenges presented, all while doing it with a smile on her face! I am proud to have this life coach in our agency and she really is the epitome of the life coaching model. I look forward to seeing you continue to grow in your role and in the agency. Thank you for your patience while the team got back on track. Your dedication to the consumers and value to our agency does not go unnoticed! Looking forward to a great upcoming quarter!

Submitted by: Shauna Fontenelli, Assistant Program Director

Staff Spotlight On...
Adams Program



Alicia Greaney



Monika Skora



Joe Russoniello



Karen Rutt

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: This newsletter, I wanted to give a shout-out to the Adams Team Leader, Alicia, and our Life Coaches Joe, Monika, and Karen. The team has proven continuously to be resilient and trustworthy in the light of staff changes/absentees and recent loss on the team, not shying away from additional responsibility and supporting their colleagues. It's a pleasure to be their supervisor and continue to watch them grow to reach their personal and agency goals by working hard and being open-minded.

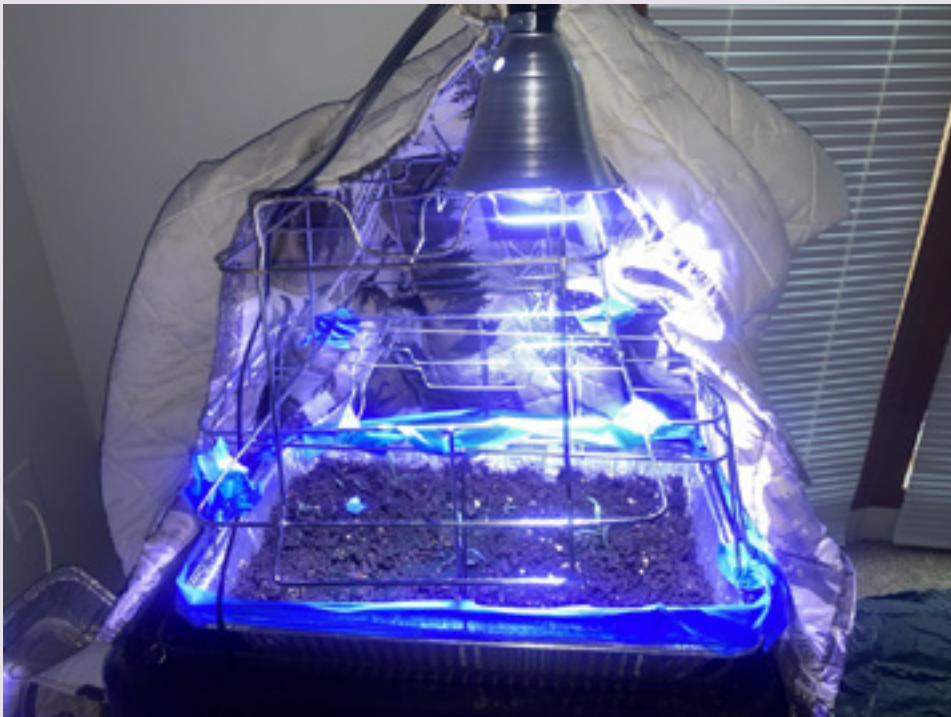
Submitted by: Alli Turnbach, Assistant Program Director

In Memory

Allison Turnbach, Assistant Program Director

In Memory of Our Friend

One of our friends passed away during the spring of 2024. We had worked together for about a decade, and they had many valued life roles, including parent, employee, outdoor-enthusiast, and carer of animals. They loved working with their hands on projects, horses, and gardening. The team enjoyed listening to this person's humorous rhetoric and witnessing whatever new home invention or home project they would be creating. They will be fondly missed by the team and members of Declarations, Inc. Rest in peace.



Here are photos of their most recent project, started late in February 2024. They built an indoor growing system and planted string beans, jalapenos and cherry tomato seeds. They made the indoor system from recycled items they found. This was just one example of their ability to innovative and resourceful.



Springtime Activities in Monmouth County: Let's Get Involved!

Alexandra Schueler, QA Assistant



The Monmouth County Park system always releases a calendar of events each month to help Monmouth County Residents get out into nature, socialize, and get involved in their community. For a full list of activities and events, as well as additional details, you can visit their website (listed below).

Here are some fun upcoming events hosted for the spring:

- **Splendid Spring Stroll at Clayton Park:** Say “farewell” to the frosty weather as you join a Park System Naturalist on a peaceful trail walk through Clayton Park, Upper Freehold. Meet in the Emley’s Hill Road parking area. Sturdy footwear is recommended as trails used may have inclines or tree roots to step over.
 - **When:** 4/18/24, 10AM-11:30AM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Nature Lecture: Dogfish are Sharks:** Come to the Bayshore Waterfront Park Activity Center, Port Monmouth, and discover everything you wanted to know about the most common sharks to be found in coastal waters in Monmouth County during this lecture.
 - **When:** 4/18/24, 7PM-8PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Earth Day Open House:** Celebrate Earth Day at the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center, Howell, with guided nature walks, live animal presentations, and nature crafts. Plus, local nature organizations will be on hand to provide information.
 - **When:** 4/20/24, 10AM-2PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Beach Cleanup and Beach Combing at Bayshore Waterfront Park:** Head to Bayshore Waterfront Park, Port Monmouth, and help clean up trash and debris while learning about local shellfish and shells.
 - **When:** 4/21/24, 10AM-12PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Beach Cleanup and Beach Combing at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park Activity Center:** Head to Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Long Branch, and help clean up trash and debris while learning about local shellfish and shells. Meet at the Activity Center.
 - **When:** 4/21/24 1PM-3PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **The Casual birder at Holmdel Park:** Join a Park System Naturalist for a laid-back morning bird walk at Holmdel Park, Holmdel.

Meet at the Shelter Building. We'll meander through the park for about an hour and a half to see what birds we can find. Participants should expect to be walking a few miles (2-4) on sometimes uneven or muddy terrain. No need to be an expert at identifying birds to enjoy. A limited number of binoculars will be available to borrow if needed.

- **When:** 4/23/24, 9AM
- **Cost:** Free!
- **Seabrook-Wilson House Open:** Visit this house at Bayshore Waterfront Park, Port Monmouth, which dates back to the early 1700s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and see displays on the ecology of the bay and local history.
 - **When:** 4/28/24 & 4/29/24, 1PM-4PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Historic Battery Lewis Tours:** As part of Weekend in Old Monmouth, the restored Historic Battery Lewis in the Rocky Point section of Hartshorne Woods Park, Highlands, will be open. Tour the site and learn about the history of this important former coastal defense site.
 - **When:** 5/4/24 & 5/5/24, 10:30AM, 11:30AM, 1:30PM, & 2:30PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Creative Arts Festival:** Come to Thompson Park, Lincroft, for this art festival. See the works of artists and fine crafters from all mediums including pottery, jewelry and painting. Admission and parking are free.
 - **When:** 5/11/24, 10AM-4PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Plant a Sunflower at Historic Longstreet Farm:** Head to Historic Longstreet Farm, Holmdel, and help the staff plant this year's sunflower field. Then return in the fall and harvest one to bring home.
 - **When:** 5/12/24, 12PM-2:30PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Climb Time at Shark River Park:** Head over to Shark River Park, Wall, and try the Park System's 25' portable climbing wall. You must be 42" or taller to climb. Open to ages 8 and up; under 18 with adult.
 - **When:** 5/15/24, 3PM-6PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Nature Lecture: Horseshoe Crabs Trying to Survive in a Modern World:** Come to the Bayshore Waterfront Park Activity Center, Port Monmouth, and discover why the population of horseshoe crabs is declining and what people are doing to protect the crab through research, and what you can do to help during this talk.
 - **When:** 5/22/24, 7PM-8PM
 - **Cost:** Free!
- **Thompson Park Canoe Rentals:** Canoes will be available for rent on Marlu Lake in Thompson Park, Lincroft. All equipment provided; limited number of canoes available. Open to all ages; under 18 with adult. All rentals must be returned by 3 pm
 - **When:** 5/25/24 & 5/26/24, 10AM-3PM
 - **Cost:** \$15 per boat for 1-3 people for 2 hours, cash or check only (call 732-842-4000 for details)
- **Boat Tours of the Manasquan Reservoir:** These 45-minute tours of the Manasquan Reservoir, Howell, are narrated by Park System Naturalists and include opportunities to view local wildlife. Please call to confirm schedule as tours are both weather and water level dependent. All tours leave from the Visitor Center. Life-jackets required. Tickets can be purchased on day of tour only.
 - **When:** Every Saturday & Sunday in June, 2PM, 3PM, 4PM, & 5PM
 - **Cost:** \$6 per adult and \$4 per child, age 12 and under (call 732-751-9453 for details)

Photo by Pixabay from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/yellow-sunflowers-54267/>
Source: <https://www.monmouthcountyparks.com/EventCalendar.aspx>

Spring Cleaning

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration



Spring is here, which means it's a perfect time to clean and declutter your spaces! With the warm weather moving in and the longer hours of sunshine, it's a great time to open those windows and break out the cleaning supplies to refresh and reinvigorate your home.

Here are some tips to help reset your space to improve air quality and overall feel:

- **Use your tools to clean your flooring.** If you have carpets and have access to a carpet cleaner, shampooing your rugs and letting them air dry may be a great way to remove build up of pet dander, dust, and any other irritants or spills that may be hiding in those fibers. If you don't have access to a carpet cleaner and aren't comfortable renting one, vacuuming your space can still help pick up any dust and debris. Some people enjoy sprinkling some carpet refresher and doing a second vacuum, as it can give some clean scent to the space.
- **Wipe/dust blinds and wash curtains.** Windows and window dressings are often spaces that we forget about during our maintenance of our home. Curtains can collect dust, especially on the top, or pet hair that can irritate our senses. Follow the instructions on the label for how to care for your blinds and curtains to clean them while maintaining the health of these items. Some curtains may be able to be washed in your typical machine, while others may require spot cleaning or dry cleaning. Blinds can be dusted and wiped with a solution of water and household cleaner.
- **Clean your windows and windowsills.** If you're like me, your windows may stay closed most of the year because of seasonal allergies. Since my windows are rarely open, it's easy for me to miss the build up of dirt and debris on the sill and outside of the windows. Spring cleaning gives me a chance to give my windows some TLC that may otherwise be neglected.
- **Change your batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** For fire safety, it's important to make sure your detectors are always in working condition. Some detectors may be sealed with 10 year batteries, so you may be able to skip this step. If not, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors



get a fresh 9-volt battery this season so you're ready for anything.

- **Clean out your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry.** Sometimes, we forget that condiments and spices have an expiration date. Go through your kitchen spaces and assess your cooking aids to determine which have passed their date and which are safe to stay. While you're in there, you can also wipe the spaces to help remove dust and build up of any food items that may have leaked since the last clean.
- **Clean out your closet.** This can be a challenge for many people. I've had this shirt for 5 years and haven't worn it, but maybe it will come back in style! These jeans used to fit and I am determined to get back into them! When I find myself saying these things, I may set them aside for a season. If I return to them and they're still not being used or don't fit, it's time to say goodbye. I used to keep a pile of clothes for those "what if"s, but I found that it was making me unhappy every time I returned to them and they didn't fit or I hadn't worn them. Now, I try to be mindful and embrace the shape and weight I'm at, rather than making myself upset every time I try to squeeze back into something from before. It also feels nice to have extra room in my closet vs. fighting through hangers of clothes that never see the light of day.

There are many different ways to prepare your home for the spring and summer seasons. We hope these suggestions above give you some inspiration to start (or continue) your spring cleaning journey for 2024!

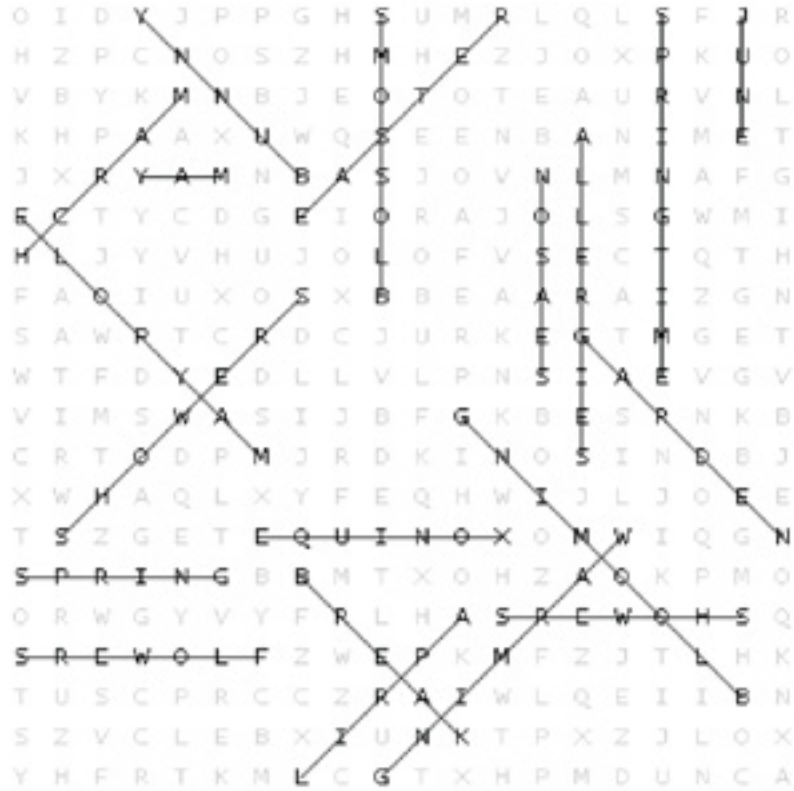
Information from: <https://www.marthastewart.com/267295/spring-cleaning-checklist>

Photo by cottonbro studio from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/black-and-white-spray-bottle-4107120/>

Photo by cottonbro studio from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-wearing-white-pants-and-white-socks-standing-be-side-brown-broom-4108715/>

Puzzle Answer Key

Springtime Word Search



Allergies

Blossoms

Easter

Garden

May

Showers

Springtime

Blooming

Bunny

Flowers

March

Season

Spring

April

Break

Equinox

June

Maypole

Showers

Warming

Spring-ing Into Celebrations

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration



Join us in celebrating the following spring milestones:

April	May	June			
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Birthdays</i></p> <table><tr><td data-bbox="99 1129 586 1266">Wendy Marinko - 4/6 Barbara Mele - 4/6 Jennifer Morrell - 4/12 Camryn LaSala - 4/17</td><td data-bbox="586 1129 1073 1245">Potato - 5/11 Allison Turnbach - 5/23 Monika Skora - 5/29</td><td data-bbox="1073 1129 1526 1203">Jessica Sandler - 6/14 Karen Rutt - 6/22</td></tr></table>			Wendy Marinko - 4/6 Barbara Mele - 4/6 Jennifer Morrell - 4/12 Camryn LaSala - 4/17	Potato - 5/11 Allison Turnbach - 5/23 Monika Skora - 5/29	Jessica Sandler - 6/14 Karen Rutt - 6/22
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Work Anniversaries</i></p> <table><tr><td data-bbox="99 1350 586 1423">Wendy Marinko - 4/14/08 - 16 yrs Megan Cotter - 4/12/22 - 2 yrs</td><td data-bbox="586 1350 1073 1392">Joseph Russoniello - 5/30/23 - 1yr</td><td data-bbox="1073 1350 1526 1455">Jennifer Morrell - 6/15/15 - 8 yrs Camryn LaSala - 6/13/23 - 1 yr Lisa Schneider - 6/13/23 - 1 yr</td></tr></table>			Wendy Marinko - 4/14/08 - 16 yrs Megan Cotter - 4/12/22 - 2 yrs	Joseph Russoniello - 5/30/23 - 1yr	Jennifer Morrell - 6/15/15 - 8 yrs Camryn LaSala - 6/13/23 - 1 yr Lisa Schneider - 6/13/23 - 1 yr
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Other Updates:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jennifer Beattie & her husband are expecting their second baby, a girl, due in the fall! Karen Rutt, finishing graduates school in June to receive her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling! Megan Cotter is now the Team Leader for Franklin & Sherman! Jennifer Hodge is now the Team Leader for Jefferson! & The agency welcomed the following staff: Karen Rutt, Adams Life Coach (February 2024); Jessica Sandler, Franklin Life Coach (February 2024)</p>					

Photo by Pixabay from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/red-purple-and-yellow-tulip-fields-69776/>