

The Declarations Quarterly

Fall 2025 | Edition 40

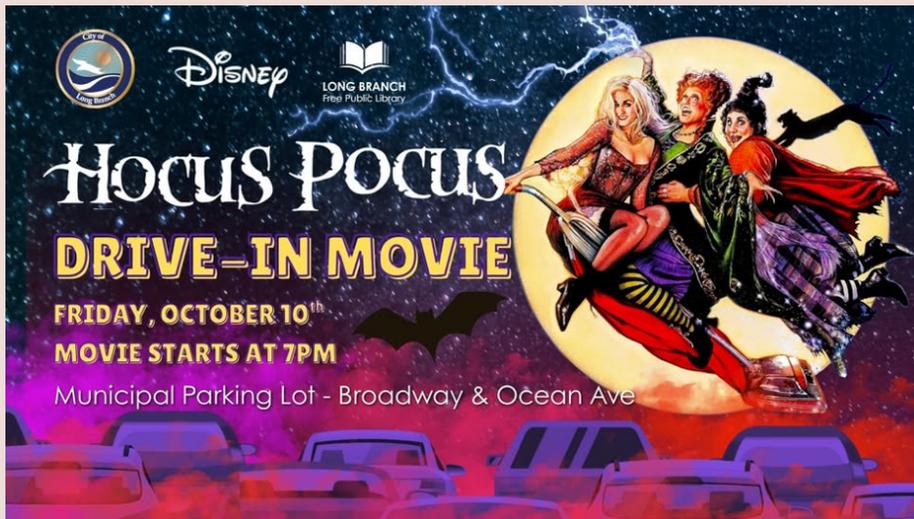
Declarations

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Fall Night Activity!

Daria Sbraccia, Team Leader 1



Are you looking for something fun to do for fall? Come join me for an exciting, well-deserved activity for free that anyone can participate in at the Long Branch at the Municipal Lot for a drive-in movie to watch Hocus Pocus. We can kick off the fall season together and enjoy watching this class Halloween film that goes down in history as one of the best!

The drive-in movie is on October 10th starting at 7pm, so for all those Friday staff, come on by after work to enjoy the movie and relax and bring some snacks if you like!

Photo from: https://allevents.in/long-branch/hocus-pocus-drive-in-movie/200028907184246#google_vignette



Photo by Ylanite Koppens from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/pumpkins-3036364/>

Freshen Your Home This Fall

Deena Ortiz, Assistant Director of Nursing



The Fall is the perfect time to spruce up your living space and prepare for the colder months when we spend more time indoors. Organizing and cleaning our living space can help to improve our emotional health and help us to feel less stressed. It is easier to relax and think clearly when our home is clean and tidy. Implementing a daily cleaning routine can help promote structure in our lives as well as get us moving around and increase our physical activity.

Here are some useful tips to help clean your home and motivate you to get through cleaning tasks with ease.

- Create a list or calendar with daily cleaning and organization tasks. Writing down needed household tasks can help us stay accountable for keeping our space clean. Crossing off tasks helps in making us feel accomplished.
- Don't try to take on too many tasks at once. Attempting to clean a whole residence at once can be overwhelming, start with small steps and take breaks as needed.
- Clean regularly. It is easier to keep your home clean when you keep up on chores on a daily basis.
- Make cleaning enjoyable by playing music while completing cleaning and organization tasks.
- Call a friend! It can be helpful to talk to a friend on the phone while cleaning to help the time go by and increase our motivation to continue working.

- Personalize your space by adding decorations. Adding color, different fabrics, artwork and pictures to our homes can help to improve mood and help to enjoy your space.
- Reward yourself! After completing cleaning and organizational chores, be sure to treat yourself for your hard work.



Photo by cottonbro studio from Pexels:
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-using-a-yellow-and-black-vacuum-cleaner-4107278/>

A Review of the DMHAS Site Visit

Kellen Polito, Director of Quality Assurance

On 8/19/25, a site visit was conducted at Declarations HQ by representatives from the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Assistant Division Director Harry Reyes and Program Analyst Troy Hood led the visit, which included a review of program operations, service delivery, and client satisfaction. Declarations provided five consumer charts for review, representing a range of client experiences: two newly enrolled consumers, two established clients, and one who had recently been discharged. Both Harry and Troy expressed appreciation for the availability of physical paper charts for ease of review.

As part of the evaluation process, Harry and Troy also had the opportunity to speak directly with one of the program's consumers via phone. The individual shared positive feedback, emphasizing their satisfaction with the services received and praising the dedication and professionalism of Declarations' staff. This firsthand account reinforced the impressions formed during the documentation review.

At the conclusion of the site visit, both Harry Reyes and Troy Hood conveyed their high level of satisfaction with Declarations' operations. The visit affirmed that Declarations is providing effective, consumer-centered services and maintaining high standards in program management and care delivery.



Photo source: <https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/home/about/DMHAS%20Mission-Vision-Values-updated%20Dec.%202023.pdf>
https://media.licdn.com/dms/image/v2/D4D22AQQGjoJXlguyuA/feedshare-shrink_800/B4DZYQ9Z1YH4Ak-/0/1744041255139?e=2147483647&v=beta&t=nHTT6nZB_000Dw6AtE2m5zZQ1okj3WRmt7WhOdCmrc0

Puzzle Corner: Fall Frenzy!

Test your word search and scramble skills!

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration

Answers to puzzles are on pages 10 and 11.

Fall Frenzy

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

thanksgiving

sunflowers

halloween

september

sweaters

thankful

football

pumpkin

october

spooky

costumes

november

apples

leaves

harvest

autumn

candy

cider



CSS Word Scramble

IRP LPVDMETONEE

AEDUVL FLEI ORLE

IEFL ACCHO OEDML

OELNGD HERDAT

PNENEENEDICD

KLISL VEENOTLMEPD

IMNUTOCTMY KANGIEL

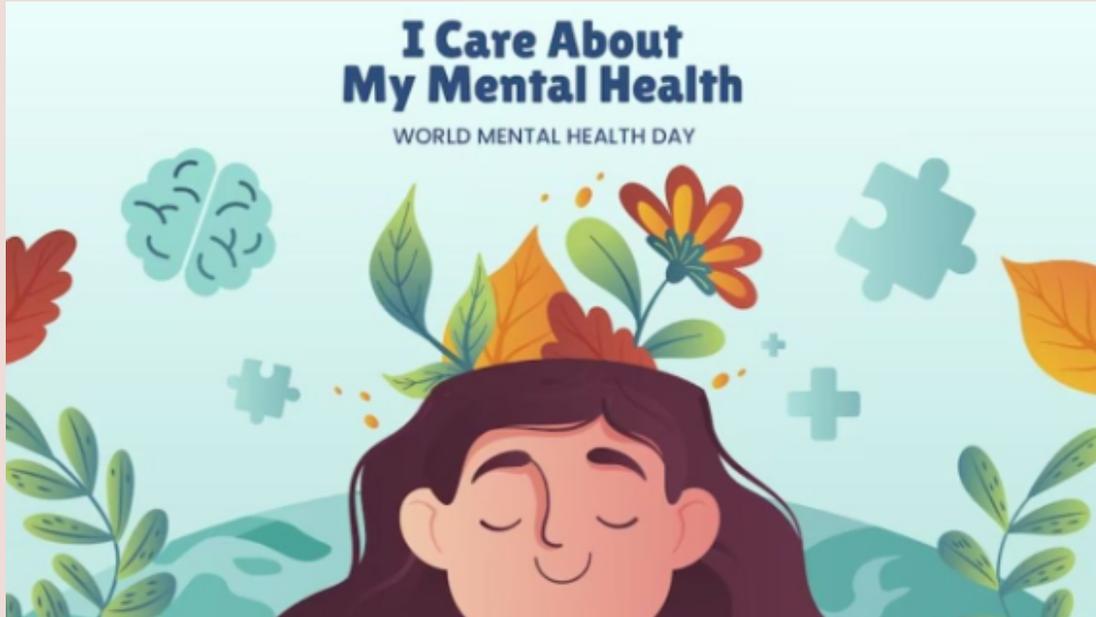
SEORREUC UCNQASIOTII

ENWSSLEL OSEDMIINNS



World Mental Health Day

Kaitlyn Beard, Life Coach 1



As the seasons begin to change, fall offers a moment for personal reflection and self-care. Every year on October 10th, we celebrate World Mental Health Day, a global observance dedicated to raising awareness of mental health challenges and efforts to support mental well-being around the world.

What Is World Mental Health Day?

World Mental Health Day was first celebrated on October 10th, 1992, at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health. Since 1992, it has grown into a day recognized internationally, encouraging open conversations about mental health, reducing stigma, and promoting support and advocacy. It has since been adopted by the World Health Organization, recognized as one their “Global Health Days.” Interestingly, each year has a unique theme, focusing on different aspects of mental health – from workplace wellbeing, age specific mental health, and even this year’s “Mental Health in Humanitarian Emergencies.” Regardless of theme, the message remains consistent: mental health is as important as any other form of health, and everyone deserves to be heard and supported.

Why It Matters

The day encapsulates something we all can relate to – we all have mental health! It is the thing that has brought us all together. Mental health affects how we feel, think, and behave. It shapes how we cope with stressors, interact with others, and make choices - through every season of life. World Mental Health Day reminds us that it’s okay to ask for help, and it is often much closer than we think.

At our agency, we see every day how transformative support and active listening can be. This October 10th, let's come together as a community to honor our ability to take meaningful steps toward healing and connection!



Here are a few recommendations to take part in on or before World Mental Health Day to support yours and others mental health:

- **Take a Mental Health Walk:** Take some time to enjoy the change in scenery. Use the time to clear your mind, practicing deep breaths and grounding techniques.
- **Journal Your Autumn Goals:** Spend some time to set some fall intentions and goals. What do you need more of? What do you need less of? Ask yourself what you want to accomplish this season.
- **Reach Out:** Call or text a friend, family member, or loved one. Ask how they're really doing. A simple check-in can make a difference!
- **Attend a Mental Health Workshop or Event:** If interested, reach out to staff as Monmouth County has many free and/or low-cost resources to attend regarding mental health and wellness!

Happy fall and World Mental Health Day everyone!



Information source: World Mental Health Day, <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>

Photo by lil artsy: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/gray-mug-on-top-of-piled-books-3150547/>

Photo source: World Mental Health Day 2024: Date, Theme, History And Significance, All About This Important Day

My Favorite Stovetop Broccoli Cheddar Soup Recipe

Submitted by: Camryn LaSala, Adams Team Life Coach

One of my favorite things about Fall is finding new recipes that fit the vibe of the cool weather. I love this one because it is super simple to make and can be adjusted to your liking. I also love how this recipe tastes just like Panera Bread's Broccoli Cheddar Soup. It's perfect for staying in, watching football and all other things Fall! 😊

Cook Time: 25 Minutes

Servings: 8

Ingredients Needed:

- 4 Cups of Chopped Broccoli Florets
- 1 Cup Shredded Carrots
- 1 Medium Yellow Onion (Chopped)
- 3 Cloves Garlic (Minced)
- 4 Tbsp Olive Oil
- ¼ Cup Flour
- 2 Cups Milk or Water (whole milk recommended for creamier soup)
- 2 Cups Chicken Broth
- 2 Cups Cheddar Cheese
- ½ Cup Heavy Cream (optional but recommended to thicken soup)
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Step 1:

- Heat olive oil in a large pot or Dutch Oven over medium heat. Add in chopped onion and garlic and cook for about 5 minutes until softened.

Step 2:

- Stir in flour before gradually pouring in the milk, stirring constantly. Add in chicken broth, shredded carrots and broccoli florets. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for about 10 minutes or until broccoli and shredded carrots are tender.

Step 3:

- Add in cheddar cheese, heavy cream and season with salt and pepper

Step 4:

- Enjoy! 😊

*Recipe Found on Pinterest from Grumpy Recipes
Link: grumpyrecipes.com*





PHOTO BY: THE NEW YORK TIMES

ONE POT LASAGNA SOUP

Recipe adapted from The New York Times by Jennifer Hodge, Jefferson Team Leader

SERVINGS: 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOKING TIME: 30 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground meat (beef, turkey)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ yellow onion, chopped
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp italian seasoning
- 1 tsp salt
- Ground pepper, to taste
- 14 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 32 oz chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp tomato paste
- 6 oz lasagna noodles, broken
- 1 cup frozen spinach
- ¼ cup Greek yogurt (sub. cream)
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella cheese
- Ricotta cheese, for topping

DIRECTIONS

1. Brown the ground meat: In a large soup pot, over medium heat, brown the ground meat and drain excess liquid
2. Sauté aromatics: Add garlic, onion, garlic powder, onion powder, italian seasoning, salt, and pepper to taste. Cook until onions are soft, about 5 minutes
3. Make the soup base: Stir in the crushed tomatoes, chicken broth, water, tomato paste, and broken lasagna noodles.
4. Simmer: Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes
5. Add spinach and yogurt/cream: Stir in frozen spinach and yogurt OR cream. Simmer uncovered 5 minutes.
6. Assemble bowls: Place a slice of mozzarella cheese in the bottom of a bowl, ladle in the soup, then top with a spoonful of ricotta cheese. Sprinkle with parmesan and basil, if desired.



I chose this recipe because it has all the deliciousness of a lasagna, without all the time and energy to layer and bake. It's become a meal I look forward to making every fall to help get me into the Fall spirit, and I have had fun experimenting with little changes - trying different meats, adding different vegetables, like squash - which makes this a simple but versatile meal.

Puzzle Answer Keys

Fall Frenzy

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

thanksgiving

september

football

spooky

apples

autumn

sunflowers

sweaters

pumpkin

costumes

leaves

candy

halloween

thankful

october

november

harvest

cider



CSS Word Scramble

IRP LPVDMETONEE

IRP DEVELOPMENT _____

AEDUVL FLEI ORLE

VALUED LIFE ROLE _____

IEFL ACCHO OEDML

LIFE COACH MODEL _____

OELNGD HERDAT

GOLDEN THREAD _____

PNENEENEDICD

INDEPENDENCE _____

KLISL VEENOTLMEPD

SKILL DEVELOPMENT _____

IMNUTOCMY KANGIEL

COMMUNITY LINKAGE _____

SEORREUC UCNQASIIOTII

RESOURCE ACQUISITION _____

ENWSSLEL OSEDMIINNS

WELLNESS DIMENSIONS _____



With Survivors, Always

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, and this year's theme is "With Survivors, Always." The goal is to raise awareness about domestic violence and how to help survivors toward safety, support, and solidarity.

Sometimes domestic violence or intimate partner violence is covert, only witnessed by survivors behind closed doors. Other times, it may be more overt, where acts of violence may be displayed in front of others. Power and control also can take on many forms: economic, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; isolation; intimidation; using children. It does not discriminate--domestic violence effects people of all races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, education levels, genders, abilities, etc.

Every survivor deserves respect, empathy, and support. Their stories and experiences are valid, and it often does not just end by simply leaving the relationship. If children are involved, survivors may need to learn how to engage with their abuser to co-parent for years to come.

Check out the resources at [JBWS](#), [180 Turning Lives Around](#), and [Domestic Violence Awareness Project](#) for more information about warning signs of domestic violence, how to help someone who may be experiencing domestic violence, and how to support survivors.



Info from: <https://www.dvawareness.org/WithSurvivors>

Photo source: <https://www.instagram.com/ndvhofficial/p/DPRH5RBjjuu/>



Falling into Celebrations



Join us in celebrating the following fall milestones:

October	November	December
None	<i>Birthdays</i>	
	None	Kellen Polito - 12/7 Quinn Olsen - 12/30
<i>Work Anniversaries</i>		
Daria Sbraccia - 10/31/23 - 2 yrs Kaitlyn Beard - 10/22/24 - 1 yr	Jennifer Hodge - 11/8/22 - 3 yrs Andrea Guzman - 11/25/24 - 1 yr	Erin Mullen - 12/18/12 - 13 yrs Deena Ortiz - 12/13/22 - 3 years Mike Wilmot - 12/12/23 - 2 yrs William Hodgdon - 12/12/23 - 2 yrs
<i>Other Updates:</i>		
<p style="text-align: center;">We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new nurse, Alexa Raspante!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shauna Fontenelli will be on maternity leave with her little one for the remainder of 2025! Congratulations!</p>		

Photo by Pixabay from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/red-leaf-trees-near-the-road-33109/>

