



OCFS Youth Newsletter

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Mind Over Matter

By Raven P.

Discovering that you have a learning disability is not easy and it can be very scary and discouraging. Although most people realize they have a learning disability as early as kindergarten, others may not know until they enroll in college. Learning disabilities are problems that affect a person's ability to receive, process or store information. The most common learning disabilities are Dyslexia (a language-based disability), Dyscalculia (a math-based disability), Dysgraphia (a writing-based disability), Auditory and Visual Processing disorder (a sensory-based disability) and non-verbal learning disabilities. Having a learning disability can be challenging but people with learning disabilities have the potential to overcome mental health challenges and barriers and accomplish their goals.

"I Have a Learning Disability" True or False Questions

True or False?

1. I cannot attend college because I have a learning disability.

False. In fact, you can attend college with a learning disability. Many colleges and universities have specialized services and service centers to support students with learning disabilities.

2. Young people with learning disabilities are less intelligent than their peers.

False. Having a learning disability does not mean you are less intelligent or incapable of performing the same intellectual functions as your peers.

3. People with learning disabilities aren't able to live life to the fullest extent.

False. Although having a learning disability may be challenging, it should not inhibit your ability to live your life to the fullest extent. Be sure to seek out supports that will help you along the way.

4. Learning disabilities only affect people who are poor or grow up in poverty.

False. Learning disabilities affect people from all different walks of life regardless of race, creed, social economic status, etc.

5. People with learning disabilities shouldn't go to college or enroll in post-secondary vocational programs because they will not be able to succeed.

False. People with learning disabilities are just as capable of being successful in college, post-secondary institute, or vocational program, etc. You can be successful and accomplish your goals.

May is National Foster Care Month

Each May, National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity to shine a light on the experiences of the more than 400,000 children and youth in the foster care system throughout the country. The campaign raises awareness about the need for foster families. NYS recognizes that every child has the right to grow up healthy and safe with love, protection, and stability of a permanent family. Visit the OCFS website or the Foster Care Month website for more information <http://ocfs.ny.gov> and <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Foster Club All-Star Program

By Raven P.

The 2015 Foster Club All-Star application period closed on February 20, 2015. Applications that were submitted prior to the closing date are now under review. If you are interested in learning more about Foster Club and how you can potentially be the next NYS Foster Club All-Star, please visit www.Fosterclub.com/content/2015-all-star-application.

The Foster Club All-Star Club program is a national network that provides 12 young leaders across the United States with an opportunity to participate in an internship and earn a stipend while learning how to reframe their foster care experience. The selected young leaders are current and former youth in care who are active in the communities

they live in. Young leaders are selected from all over the country to be involved in this initiative every year. The internship allows youth leaders to participate in skill development workshops, raise awareness about foster care, advocate for system-change and network with other participants from all over the country.

Last year, Tyrick S. was selected to be the New York State 2014 All-Star. Tyrick had the opportunity to expand his future plans to help people using the skills he learned and attend a national conference where he had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop on relationships and empowerment. In January 2015, he talked about the impact of trauma for foster care youth at a conference in Washington, D.C. Before participating in the foster club All-Star program, Tyrick was an advocate for New Yorkers for Children, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping transition-

cyber dating abuse and more. The group took a pledge to speak up against any acts of dating abuse whenever they see it and you can too! Simply draw a heart and complete this sentence "I Will..." Don't forget to write #tdvcandyhearts and help spread awareness on Instagram, Facebook or any social media site. With your help we can continue to spread awareness. Speak Up, Don't Do Nothing.

aged youth in foster care. Tyrick is currently a senior in college and enjoys teaching Judo, a modern form of martial arts and was even invited to compete in Barbados in December 2014. Tyrick says his experience at Foster Club in Oregon has made him more interested in education and broadened his perspective about foster care.

Relax, Recollect and Regroup: 5 Steps to Help You Overcome Test Anxiety

By Raven P.

1. Write, rewrite, highlight, retype and repeat!

Repetition is key. Developing good study habits will help you to remember the concepts taught to you in class. Consider reviewing and rewriting your notes after every lecture, highlighting key concepts, retyping your notes and reading them aloud to yourself. Rewriting your notes shortly after the information is provided to you while the information is still fresh in your mind, may help you retain the information better. The more time you dedicate to learning the concepts taught to you, the more inclined you are to remember, understand and increase your chances of earning a higher grade on your test.

2. Namaste: Meditation, relaxation or a cup of tea

Studying for long periods of time can be exhausting and can take a negative toll on your body. Consider taking a break, even if it's for five minutes to meditate in silence to clear your mind. Meditation can increase self-awareness, increase nitric oxide (a compound that opens your blood

Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention

February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month and the Region 3 Youth in Progress (YIP) group met at William George Agency to discuss healthy relationships. The young ladies discussed privacy, the importance of communication,



vessels and is found to play a role in lowering blood pressure) and most importantly, decrease your anxiety levels. Consider meditating before an exam or every morning before you start your day. Meditating can help you develop healthier habits that can lead to a healthier lifestyle. Always remember to put your health first. Maintain a healthy balanced diet, exercise regularly and drink lots of clear fluids preferably water to optimize your health. Namaste.

3. Mind, body and soul: Eating a healthy breakfast the morning of your exam

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Eating a balanced nutritious meal the morning of your exam will help to improve your cognitive abilities, set the tone for the rest of the meals you will eat throughout the rest of the day and provides the fuel your body needs to increase your concentration. A balanced breakfast includes foods that are high in fiber and protein, whole grain, fruits and vegetables. Great healthy breakfast foods include whole grain cereal, oatmeal, unrefined bagels, whole wheat toast, yogurt, peanut butter, etc. All of things are packed with the nutrients your body needs to function at its full potential.

4. Take a break: Creative hobbies and extracurricular activities

Creative hobbies and extracurricular activities could help increase your work performance. Take your mind off of your studies for short intervals of time doing something you enjoy. Creative hobbies can be anything you like to do when you aren't studying such as reading, drawing, singing, playing an instrument, solving puzzles, writing poetry, cooking, baking, painting, video games, watching your favorite

television shows and more. Hobbies can provide an outlet for you to express yourself creatively and exude your inner capabilities.

5. Get a good night's rest

Avoid going to bed late the night before your exam. Try to get between seven and a half and eight hours of rest so you feel refreshed and alert during your exam. Try to avoid staying up the night prior to study by studying for exams at least two weeks prior to the day of the test. This will allow you ample time to master the concepts and build on existing knowledge. Adequate rest is essentially important in order to have energy to perform regular daily activities throughout the day, safety and overall physical, mental and social well-being.

..... “A Roof Over My Head”: Exploring Housing Options to Prevent Homelessness

By Raven P.

Most young people experience a lot of hardship upon exiting care. More and more young people are gradually able to become self-sufficient adults when they seek out educational or work experience but a large number of youth exiting foster care are still experiencing hardship. These hardships are known to be a direct result of a lack of preparedness and abrupt exit out of foster care which sometimes leads to high rates of homelessness but this does not have to be the case. Young people have the potential to exit foster care successfully by tapping into existing resources and establishing a support system. In efforts to spread awareness about youth homelessness, the following information has been provided:

What is public housing?

Public housing was established to provide low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities and others at risk of homelessness or housing instability with safe and affordable housing. Individuals and families are eligible based on their income, citizenship status and other factors. To learn more about public housing visit: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/new_york.

What is subsidized housing?

Subsidized housing is a form of housing that is offered to low or moderate income families and individuals to help alleviate some of the cost of housing expenses. Subsidized housing includes housing subsidies, public housing managed by the government, cooperative apartments, private sector housing, non-profit housing such as churches and other community organizations, rent supplements, etc. To learn more about subsidized housing options visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website at: www.hud.gov

Are you in college? Are you interested in living on campus?

If so, consider residing in a college dorm. A college dormitory (dorm) or residence hall is a living quarters provided by most colleges and universities for students who wish to live on or in the vicinity of the college campus. Student housing options can be anything from a single occupancy room, to an apartment occupied by more than one person. The types of student housing options available vary in cost depending on the institution. Some schools may offer year-round campus housing for their students to reside when school is not in session and during the holidays and some do not. If you

Submit Your Work to the OCFS Youth Newsletter

Do you have ideas for the newsletter? Do you want your story, artwork, or poem featured in our next newsletter? Submit a reflective essay about your experiences, challenges, and inspirations in foster care! To submit material or ask questions, email Kenneth Kirton: Kenneth.Kirton@ocfs.ny.gov

Next deadline:
7/13/15

are interested in living in a college dorm, you should contact the office of residential life at the college you wish to attend. To learn more about paying for your education, applying, financing your education and other helpful resources, please visit: www.youthincarecorner.org.

Health matters: "Medicaid to 26"

Were you in foster care? Are you younger than 26? Do you believe having health insurance is important?

Beginning January 1, 2014, under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), young people who have aged-out of foster care are now allowed to use Medicaid until they turn 26. This means that, if you left foster care between the ages of 18 and 21, and were enrolled in Medicaid when you left, you may be eligible for health insurance. The great thing about this new benefit is that, once you've enrolled for the first time, you won't have to reapply for Medicaid until you turn 26. That means no paper work, no renewals, and no interruption in your health insurance.

You also don't need to provide any income information when you apply, because this benefit is not based on how much you earn. If you were in foster care outside of New York State, but now live in New York, you're also eligible! New York is one of a few states that have agreed to provide coverage to all former foster care youth, even if they were in foster care in another state.

How do I enroll?

Enrolling is easy! Simply enroll through the Department of Social Services office where you live or online through www.nysstateofhealth.ny.gov.

For more information please visit: <http://www.scaany.org/scaa-resources/medicaid-to-26/> or www.medicaiddirectors.org.

New York/U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Mar. 2015.

Youth Creativity Corner

I am a cat, a cat who is smart, without my hat. A cat who doesn't need any extra machines to help me clean up the mess I made. I have paws to clean up the mess in my bedroom. I have a heart to wipe away the tears and scars that stay hidden or shown on my skin. I am a cat. A cat who is smart without my hat. A cat who doesn't need any extra machines to help me clean up the mess I have made. I am not a furry cat but I do have fur to cover up my skin although I can show my skin just as well as cover it. I am pretty well dressed. I am a hybrid a cat of two sides—one mean and



one nice. I know my way around the alley. Makeup is not my cover up nor is my skin or fur. You see I don't really have one because I like being myself.
—Najhiah H.

Buffalo Ranch Chicken

In January, residents from St. Anne Institute brought a crock pot of Buffalo Ranch Chicken to the post-holiday party for the Region 4 Youth in Progress (YIP) group, hosted at the Charlton School. This is the recipe they followed but the girls say before you serve it, "add the heat you want!" This was their first attempt in using a crock pot and it was a big hit!

Ingredients: 1/2 cup hot sauce, 1 cup ranch dressing, 1 tsp each salt & pepper, 2 pounds chicken breast

Directions: Clean chicken and cut it into bite sized chunks and place in a crock pot. Season with seasoning salt and pepper and rub in well. Add hot sauce and continue to mix well. Add ranch until pinkish in color, mix well. Add hot sauce until desired sauciness. Cook for four hours on high or eight hours on low. Have hot sauce and ranch to serve with to taste. Serve on small rolls. Enjoy!

Coy

Why hide your emotions, because it may affect others and yourself. Show some emotion and be proud of who you are. Don't let anyone change you, you are perfect the way you are. —Anonymous

