



# THRIVE

Doing an act of kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise that has been tested.

*- Dr. Martin Seligman*

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## THRIVE Background



*LiveWell Fergus Falls* is a grassroots group working improving health and wellness in the Fergus Falls area. Achieving and maintaining physical and mental fitness can be challenging. It is critical to nurture both as one affects the other.

To promote mental wellbeing, *LiveWell Fergus Falls* launched a community-based initiative in September of 2018 known as **Thrive**:

- **Thrive** supports health through happiness and meaning via proven resiliency tools.
- **Thrive** aims for a community that flourishes by practicing positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishments (PERMA).

## THRIVE Toolkit

- Developed to use at home, work, school, faith-based communities, and/or social clubs.
- Full of simple ideas and encouragement to use in ways that work for your group or organization.
- Rooted in the concepts of **Positive Psychology** and the work of Dr. Martin Seligman, Dr. Corey Keyes and Dr. Brené Brown.
  - **Positive Psychology:** the study of human strengths that enable communities and individuals to thrive and built on the principle that people want to lead meaningful lives, cultivate what is best within themselves, and enhance their experiences of love, work, learning, worship and play.
  - **Dr. Martin E. P. "Marty" Seligman:** an American psychologist, educator, and author of self-help books known as the founder of Positive Psychology and a strong promoter within the scientific community of his theories of positive psychology and well-being. His theory of learned helplessness is popular among scientific and clinical psychologists.
  - **Dr. Corey Keyes:** an American sociologist and psychologist known for work with positive psychology. Dr. Keyes currently teaches at Emory University in Georgia.
  - **Dr. Brené Brown:** a research professor at the University of Houston whom holds the Huffington - Brené Brown Endowed Chair. "I've spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. I'm the author of five #1 *New York Times* bestsellers: *The Gifts of Imperfection*, *Daring Greatly*, *Rising Strong*, *Braving the Wilderness*, and *Dare to Lead*."

## THRIVE Toolkit Outcomes

Share your outcomes on Facebook at *LiveWell Fergus Falls* or Email to [wellness@lrhc.com](mailto:wellness@lrhc.com).

## Mindset Matters

To improve your wellbeing, you must first believe you can make a change. Psychologists have found that the beliefs we hold about our abilities and potential are predictive of future outcomes, including wellbeing.

Mindset is a frame of mind which orients an individual to a set of associations and expectations. Are you someone who sees the glass half empty or half full?

There are two types of mindsets, fixed and growth.

Each mindset has their own way of dealing with delays or setbacks. A person with a fixed mindset is going to struggle with setbacks, because it hurts their belief in ability. It is not uncommon for them to feel defeated and become totally disinterested.

Growth mindset individuals will have a much different approach to setbacks as they deem them an opportunity to learn and grow. They will throw a lot of effort into overcoming the issues.

Having a positive outlook despite challenges before you, can have a dramatic increase in wellbeing. Being able to identify negative thoughts quickly and turn them into something positive is a skill and a mindset to strive for.

Learning new skills is not the only reason to focus on developing a better mindset. It will affect everything you think about, which can have a big impact on life. For instance, research shows you could recover more quickly from an illness simply because you believe your actions will affect the illness.



“When you embrace stress, you can transform fear into courage, isolation into connection, and suffering into meaning.” *Kelly McMonigal*

How to Make Stress Your Friend: TED TALK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU&t=16s>

In subsequent sections of this manual you will find the evidenced based mental health resiliency tools that you can incorporate into your daily life to create reserves of well-being that can later be drawn upon when times get tough. They include but are not limited to:

**Kindness, Gratitude (3 Good Things & Letters), Finding Your Flow, Social Connections (4 am Friend), Meaning, Accomplishment (Value Compass).**

Growth mindset	Fixed mindset
Embraces challenges	Avoids challenges
Accepts criticism and negative feedback as constructive	Rejects criticism and is hurt by negative feedback
Equates reward with effort	Expects reward without effort
Persists in the face of setbacks	Lets setbacks derail them
Never gives up	Gives up easily
Learns from failure	To fail once is to fail completely
“Talent is developed”	“I’m no good at this”
“What more can I do?”	“Why should I bother?”
	

## PERMA Elements



### **Positive Emotion**

Developing feelings of contentment & joy.



### **Engagement/Flow**

Being absorbed, interested, and involved in an activity.



### **Positive Relationships**

Feeling loved, supported, and valued by others. Other people matter!



### **Meaning**

Having a sense of purpose, feeling life is valuable and worth living, or connecting to something greater than ourselves



### **Accomplishment**

Working toward and reaching goals and feeling able to complete tasks and daily responsibilities. Feelings of mastery and achievement.

## PERMA Enhancing Practices

(With corresponding PERMA Elements)

### **1. Kindness (P, M)**

Kindness practices include doing random acts of kindness, but also everyday acts of kindness that do not require money or special skills. Kindness is good for our physical health and mental health, and the old adage is true and backed by science: It IS better to give than to receive. Participants will learn the research-backed benefits of kindness and gain some ideas for making kindness a part of everyday life.

### **2. Gratitude (P, R)**

Having an attitude of gratitude can be as effective as medication for improving a person's mood and can last even longer! During this practice period, you will learn how to practice gratitude in a few simple ways and the benefits of doing so. You can change your life in less than 10 minutes a week, what is there to lose?

### **3. Finding your Flow (E, A)**

Have you ever lost track of time when doing something you enjoy? An activity that brings you happiness and makes you feel energized? If so, you may have experienced something called "Flow," which is a state of mind that is essential for well-being. During this practice period, you will learn about what flow is, and how to achieve more of it in your life. Improved concentration and feeling accomplished are just two of the many benefits of Flow.

### **4. Connection (R, E)**

We are wired for connection: we need other people to survive and to thrive as well. For this tool, you will learn how simple acts of connection and small changes in your relationships can improve your well-being and even help you live longer. In a world where we often substitute on-line communication for genuine connection, it is important to be reminded of why connection is vital. You will also learn some new ways of making our brains happier by connecting with other people.

### **5. Values (M, A)**

How do you know what is most important to you? How do you know which battles to choose? And how do you know if you did the right thing? Having a sense of your values is essential to knowing the answers to these questions and finding more meaning in your life. This practice will guide you in discovering your personal values and how to put those values into place. You will identify the thoughts and behaviors that let you know you are on the right track.

### You can commit to be a Thrive partner by:

- Executing **Random Act of Kindness** regularly and empower your employees to do the same
- Encouraging your customers/members to “Pay it Forward”. Share your gestures of kindness on the Thrive Facebook page
- Promoting **3 Good Things** initiative and invite your family, friends, employees, customers, members to participate
- Writing **Gratitude Letters** to someone who has had an impact on your life. Better yet, read it to them, even if over the phone
- Creating a relationship with employees and customers and ask them about their **Social Connections**. Healthy and positive relationships are vital to happiness
- Identifying greater **Meaning and Purpose** while serving others
- Promoting the importance of **Values** and **Accomplishment**.
- Committing to promote and model the evidence-based resiliency tools
- Hosting a Thrive educational presentation/event for your employees, members and/or customers
- Proudly displaying your Thrive window cling
- Sharing lessons learned and your inspiring stories on Thrive Facebook page

### Benefits of being a partner

- Increased happiness and well-being of your team
- Enhanced relationships at home, work and community
- Identify greater purpose and meaning
- Improved health and quality of life
- Foster and renew relationships with your family, friends, members, employees and customers
- Greater employee productivity, satisfaction and decreased absenteeism
- Receive Thrive Toolkit, pre/post survey, Random of Acts of Kindness cards, 3 Good Things Post Its and access to templates to print your own resources, and Thrive partner window cling
- A listing of your support on Thrive website

For more information contact Mahmoud Toumeh at [mtoumeh@co.ottertail.mn.us](mailto:mtoumeh@co.ottertail.mn.us) or Natalie Knutson at [nknutson@lrhc.org](mailto:nknutson@lrhc.org) or Jason Bergstrand at [jason.bergstrand@co.clay.mn.us](mailto:jason.bergstrand@co.clay.mn.us)

## How might you promote the tools in your place of employment or community?

Our goal is to create a community that flourishes. One of the best ways to accomplish that goal is to foster a culture that is committed to long-term sustainable change around wellbeing. The first step is to model the behavior you want to see. More importantly the policies, systems, and environment within an organization needs to support healthy behavior. The following are a few examples of sustainable change that may lead to a culture that better supports mental health.

**Example:** At a huddle or staff meeting ask co-workers to share one good thing that has happened to them either professionally or personally in the last week and share with the group. Model the behavior by you sharing first. *(Systems change)*

**Example:** Each quarter, provide staff with gratitude cards and encourage them to write a handwritten note to someone that has made an impact on them. Handwritten notes are rare these days and yet serve as a powerful emotional boost for the giver and receiver. *(Policy, System or Environmental Change)*

**Example:** Create a gratitude board at your place of work. *(Environmental Change)*

A school partner of Thrive's has created a gratitude bulletin board in the staff lounge. Colored paper and markers are readily accessible, and staff are encouraged to write a brief note of appreciation for other employees highlighting a positive quality of that person or something the person did that makes their place of employment better for all.



**Example:** Host an employee or customer appreciation event *(Social Support)*

**Example:** Start each day by sending a gratitude email or text to someone. You will likely get an expression of appreciation back within the day leaving both you and the recipient feeling good. *(Personal Policy)*

**What are other effective ways to communicate in your organization and what strategies might be best?**

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## Random Acts of Kindness (RAOK)

“Doing an act of kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise that has been tested”. *Dr. Martin Seligman, University of Pennsylvania*



### Benefits of practicing kindness:

Did you know that people who practice kindness live longer, healthier lives? People who volunteer tend to experience fewer aches and pains. Giving help to others protects overall health twice as much as aspirin protects against heart disease. People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have a 44 percent lower likelihood of dying—and that’s after scrutinizing for every other contributing factor, including physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status, and many more.

Volunteer work substantially reduces symptoms of depression; both helping others and receiving help is associated with lowered anxiety and depression.

This may be especially true for kids. Adolescents who identify their primary motive as helping others are three times happier than those who lack such unselfish motivation. Similarly, teens who are giving are also happier and more active, involved, excited, and engaged than their less engaged counterparts. Generous behavior reduces adolescent depression and suicide risk, and several studies have shown that teenagers who volunteer are less likely to fail a subject in school, get pregnant, or abuse substances. Teens who volunteer also tend to be more socially competent and have higher self-esteem. If we want our children to live happier healthy lives, then it critical that we teach them to be kind.

### Kindness fuels energy and esteem

Kindness produces serotonin which generates that feeling of calmness and even helps heal wounds.

In one Berkeley study, almost 50 percent of participants reported feeling stronger and having more energy after helping others, with reports of greater feelings of calmness and enhanced self-esteem also predominant.

### Kindness makes you happier

A Harvard Study showed that those who were selfless and gave away money were, overall, the happiest.

### Kindness is good for your heart

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation reports:

Witnessing acts of kindness produces oxytocin, occasionally referred to as the 'love hormone' which aids in lowering blood pressure and improving our overall heart-health.



## Kindness helps you live longer

Christine Carter, author of *Raising Happiness; In Pursuit of Joyful Kids and Happier Parents*, writes: People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive 44 percent lower likelihood of dying early, and that's after sifting out every other contributing factor, including physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status and many more. This is a stronger effect than exercising four times a week or going to church.

## Kindness decreases lots of bad stuff

Studies have shown that developing a habit of kindness reduces pain, stress, anxiety, depression, and blood pressure.

People who practice kindness as a habit have 23 percent less cortisol (the stress hormone) and more of a chemical called nitric oxide, which dilates blood vessels (thus lowering blood pressure).

Kindness practices include doing random acts of kindness, but also acts of kindness that do not require money or special skills. Kindness is good for our physical and mental health, and the adage is true and backed by science: It is better to give than receive. Make kindness a part of your everyday life.

The giver of RAOK receives as much joy as the receiver. You will never feel badly about giving affirmation to someone nor receiving positive, heartfelt words of praise from another. Kindness extends love and compassion and opens us up to receive such goodness ourselves.



### Why are we encouraging you to practice kindness?

Oxytocin – the love hormone

Happiness – altruistic people are happiest of all

Pleasure – when being kind to others, your brain reacts like you were the one receiving the kindness

Serotonin – kindness increases serotonin, the same chemical in many antidepressant medications

### Ideas for Random Acts of Kindness

- Offer to return a supermarket cart to its rack for a busy parent or a senior
- Participate in United Way annual Day of Caring or other service projects
- Host a healthy food drive for local food shelf
- Donate money to police or sheriff's department ask them to hand out gift cards to those in need
- Pay for someone's meal in line

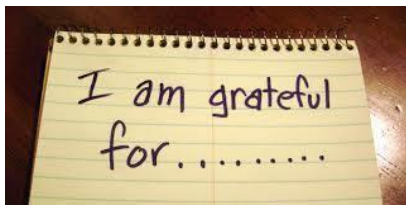
*Sources: Lyubomirsky & Della Porta, 2010; The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation 2018*

## Expressing Gratitude

“The negative screams at you when the positive only whispers”, Barbara Fredrickson UNC Chapel Hill

**3 Good Things** Best time right before bed. For 14 consecutive days write down three positive things that either happened to you or are grateful for. Results in better sleep positive interactions, start looking for positive patterns, positive benefits last up to 6 months and has shown to be as effective as antidepressants. (*Seligman, Steen, Park, Petersen 2005*)

Consider **Gratitude Journaling**: writing or photographing something for 3-4 days a week that you are grateful for and then reflecting on it.



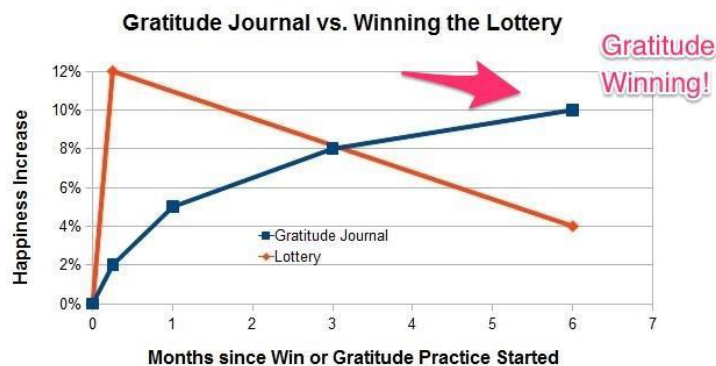
Write **Gratitude Letters** and send it to someone you care for; better yet read it to them in person or over the phone. Getting handwritten notes now days is rare and yet powerful form of communication and connection.

**Home:** While at the dinner table ask family members to share a highlight from their day.

**Work:** Have employees share one positive event during the past week during a staff meeting or huddle.

**Community:** Host a customer appreciation event. Join the 3 Good Things text app through Fergus Falls Schools

**Faith based:** Host a special meal after a service highlighting some of the positive aspects or growth of your organization





Download a **gratitude app** on your phone, there are many to choose from. Here are just a couple of options:

[From Gratitude to Bliss](#), [Gratitude Journal 365](#), [Delightful](#)



**Gratitude is a gift you give yourself.** It leads to decreased depression symptoms and increased wellbeing, increased psychological well-being, working memory, sleep, immune system, relationships and coping with emotional challenges. (*Emmons, 2010*)

**Chasing Happiness:** We all want it right? How do we get it? **By building and maintain quality relationships, being grateful, and being content.** Gratitude is one of the best tools to build relationships.



Stop saying I'll be happy when.....and start saying I am happy because.....

## Social Connections



“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty” *Mother Teresa*

We are wired for connection. Social connection is one of our fundamental human needs. We need others to survive and thrive. In a time when we often substitute on-line communication with genuine connection it is important to be reminded why social connection is critical to our wellbeing.

“A deep sense of love and belonging is an irresistible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.” We are profoundly social creatures. We may think we want money, power, fame, beauty, eternal youth or a new car, but at the root of most of these desires is a need to belong, to be accepted, to connect with others, to be loved”, Brene Brown

According to a sociological study in 1985 Americans claimed to have only three friends they felt they could confide in. In 2004 it dropped to one friend, with 25% of Americans saying that they have no one to confide in. This survey suggests that one in four people that we meet may have no one they call a close friend. This decline in social connectedness may explain reported increases in loneliness, isolation and may be why studies are finding that loneliness represents one of the leading reasons people seek psychological counseling. Those who are not socially connected are more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior, and even suicidal behaviors which tend to further increase their isolation. Most poignantly, a landmark survey showed that lack of social connectedness predicts vulnerability to disease and death above and beyond traditional risk factors such as smoking, blood pressure, and physical activity! Eat your greens and exercise, yes, but don't forget to connect.

### Loneliness Kills

- Increases premature death by 14% (*Winch, 2014*)
- Nearly half of Americans are lonely at any one time (*Signa Health Insurance, May 2018*)
- Do you have a **4am friend**, someone you can call in the middle of the night if necessary? (*Seligman, 2011*)
- Why is talking about loneliness taboo?
- Facebook makes loneliness worse

Health insurer Cigna conducted a nationwide survey of 20,000 adults and found that 54% of respondents said they feel like no one actually knows them well, NPR reports. Additionally, 56% of people said the people they surround themselves around “are not necessarily with them,” and approximately 40% said they “lack companionship,” their “relationships aren’t meaningful,” and that they feel “isolated from others”.

## 7 Keys to Staying Socially Connected written by UVM Medical Center



**Set a routine.** Keep up with regularly scheduled appointments as much as possible. If getting together with friends or family happened sporadically before, try to be more consistent about getting together now. It's okay to say no to an invitation for coffee or an offer to drive you to the store occasionally, but don't make it a habit.

**Keep up with hearing and vision tests.** People with an undiagnosed hearing or vision problems often avoid social situations out of embarrassment and difficulty with communicating. Have any problems treated as soon as you can to remove this barrier to connecting with others.

**Share a meal.** Dine with others whenever possible, whether with a church group, at the local senior center or at a café. Even going to a diner on your own for a cup of coffee can be social. Just sit at the counter and chat with your server, or simply watch all the coming and goings.

**Develop a hobby.** Besides providing a sense of purpose, many hobbies and interests are social in nature. Anything that involves a group, like playing bridge, can be socially healthy. Check out your local senior center, town recreation program, library or church for educational classes, one day seminars and activities.

**Volunteer.** Doing something that helps others has a positive effect on how you feel about yourself. The meaning and purpose you find in helping others will enrich and expand your life. Schools, churches, nonprofits and charitable organizations all depend on volunteers for their survival. <http://getconnected.uwotc.com/>

**Ask for help.** When we ask for help, we give someone a chance to feel valued and useful as well as keep ourselves engaged. Worried about getting up the stairs to that restaurant? Don't stay home. A lady I know asked the young staff person at her neighborhood deli to hold the door and take her cane as she climbed in for a cup of soup. Now this staff person watches out for her on her weekly visits and chats with her while she eats.

**Offer to help someone else.** Offer to pick up a few things at the grocery or post letters or pick up a newspaper for a neighbor who needs help. It will make both of you feel good and lead to additional interactions.

## Values

Our purpose is our usefulness; it's our contribution to serving others and improving the things around us.

When you have a sense of purpose you feel like there's something moving you—and it's taking you to someplace great. You feel like all the pieces fit—that YOU fit! You feel like what you do MATTERS! You feel like you're a part of something bigger than just you! ...everything's right with the world.



In life you have two choices to either focus on yourself or others.

When we focus on ourselves bad things can happen like pre-occupation or rumination.

The power of purpose is when we take our focus off ourselves and put it on others better things happen. Our brain gets a rush of helpful chemicals.

Oxytocin-social bonder + Serotonin-mood elevator + Dopamine-motivator = happiness trifecta

These helpful brain chemicals protect us from things like Alzheimer's, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. These chemicals also help us to perform better, work harder, be happier and be a better friend.

How does purpose help an organization? When a person understands their purpose at work, they're focused on helping others which means they are not fixated on themselves.

A purpose driven employee is 6x more satisfied with their job and 4x more likely to be engaged.

This means that a purpose driven employee is more likely to look forward to going to work....and while there, time flies (**finding your flow**) and when they go home feel a sense of **accomplishment**.

Employees with purpose experience joy from serving others and happy customers tell others.

***'Firms of Endearment' found that purpose driven workplaces....***

Are 30% more productive

Have 30% less turnover

Have 62% less safety concerns

Have 37% less absenteeism

Corporate purpose is the single most powerful to for growing an organization's top and bottom lines.

The path to purpose includes: transform, Test, Translate, Trigger, Transcend

## Finding Your Flow

*If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.*

*Thomas Edison*

Small achievements day in and day out build one's capacity to be successful. It is the striving rather than the reward that is long-lived. Little achievements are success, build self-esteem and make us want to achieve more.

Self-esteem feels good because it is highly linked to the emotion of pride. Pride in turn arises from one's sense of confidence and abilities. Esteem and related emotions instill a sense of success and the confidence that you can accomplish whatever you set out to do.

"There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure." – Paulo Coelho.

"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act." – Anatole France

### **7 Activities to Feel a Sense of Personal Achievement:** *(Katherine Chatfield, 2017)*

- 1) Meditate
- 2) Complete an endurance event
- 3) Volunteer
- 4) Save for something you really, really want
- 5) Learn a second language or a new skill
- 6) Speak in public
- 7) Acknowledge and face something you're afraid of

### **Things that keep us from living BIG**

- Perfectionism
- Self judgement
- Fear
- Sadness
- Fear of emotional pain

## THRIVE Evaluation - Organizational and Personal

Effective initiatives incorporate evaluation to ensure objectives are met, identify successes, and highlight challenges.

If your organization participates in the 2019-2020 bi-monthly community support meetings, please complete the organizational baseline evaluation by May 21, 2019 and post-intervention evaluation May 21, 2020. Participation allows us to track progress, tell the broader story regarding the importance of this initiative, and secure future funding.

### 1) Organization Evaluation - Demographics and PERMA Survey:

- Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XTV7QPD>
- 7 demographic type questions followed by the PERMA questionnaire

Conducting a personnel inventory of your own mental health can be of great benefit. Complete the PERMA Questionnaire twice a year to monitor your status and compare your outcomes to others across the country in your demographic set.

### 2) Personal Evaluation – Individual PERMA Survey:

- Go to: Authentic Happiness website: <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>
- Create an account - click on Questionnaire tab - click on **PERMA**
- Log in and complete the PERMA Questionnaire

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## THRIVE Organizational Action Plan Guide

<b>ACTION STEPS</b>  What task(s) will be done?	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>  Who will do it? Are there multiple parts with multiple accountabilities or just one?	<b>TIMING</b>  When will it be done? (Once a year, quarterly, monthly)	<b>RESOURCES</b>  What do you need to complete this step? (People, money, tools)	<b>RESULT</b>  What indicator(s) will be used to monitor the progress/ effectiveness of the action item?
EXAMPLE: Random Acts of Kindness Cards Distribution	Workplace Wellness Committee (Carol, Kim, Ron)	Staff Meeting each month	Random Acts of Kindness Cards	# of RAOK cards given to employees; # and % of employees that complete a RAOK



# Communication Guide

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## Communication Tips and Suggestions

- Set up easy systems
- Facebook page where employees post their Random Acts of Kindness
- Gratitude bulletin board
- Share at a staff meeting
- Intranet
- Web site page
- Come up with your own ideas
- Be creative and have fun

## Introductory Employee Communication Example

We are excited to announce that [Organization] is participating in a community-wide well-being project promoting health through happiness called **Thrive**, a project developed through LiveWell Fergus Falls.

Our organization is participating in a community-wide well-being project promoting health through happiness and meaning called Thrive. The initiative is sponsored by LiveWell Fergus Falls, serving Fergus Falls and Otter Tail County.

We care about the wellbeing of our employees and our work culture. That's why we're participating.

What that means is that we're going to do fun simple yet impactful practices over the next year. We want everyone to participate by intentionally doing the practices. We believe that participation can reduce burnout and increase engagement and mental well-being throughout our organization and ultimately our community.

We believe that to participate in Thrive, you only need to devote 10 minutes a week. And we want you to have fun with it. Get creative and help us collect fun stories, or suggestions on how to participate, and increase participation.

At this time, we only ask that you complete the questionnaire found here [web link] by [two weeks after sending communication].

In gratitude,

[Name]

## Communication (continued)

### Practice 1 Example: Gratitude

This month our first practice will be focused on *Gratitude*.

Why are we encouraging you to practice *Gratitude*?

*Gratitude* has been shown to:

- Decrease depressive symptoms and increase feelings of well being
- Improve psychological well-being
- Improve working memory
- Improve sleep
- Improve immune system function
- Allow for celebration of the present moment
- Increase empathy and reduce aggression
- Increase mental strength which aids in coping with trauma and PTSD
- Improve coping with emotional upheavals
- Experience a more joyful life
- Improve relationships
- Strengthen social ties and self-worth
- Make us less self-centered
- Block toxic emotions (envy, resentment, regret, depression)

Below are simple *Gratitude* suggestions we'd like you to practice, choose one or more:

1) Three Good Things: Each day for at least one week, write down three things what went well for you that day and an explanation of why they went well. (here's one phone app you can use but you may want to a pad of paper on your night stand [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.northstar.gratitude&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.northstar.gratitude&hl=en_US))

2) Gratitude Journal: Grab a notebook or journal and begin writing about what you are grateful for three times a week

3) Write a letter of gratitude to someone, and for best results read it to them in person

There are many ways to practice gratitude, do what works best for you!

- Hand write thank you notes and mail them
- Send people text messages and emails about something about them you are grateful for
- Thank strangers for kind acts like holding the door open, taking your grocery cart, or helping others
- Try a gratitude meditation
- Use a gratitude App

Let us know what worked, about any success stories or moments of inspiration and thank you for your participation!

Your Thrive Champions,

[Names]

## Communication (continued)

### Practice 2 Example: Kindness

As you recall, our workplace is participating in The People Project with the goal of creating a flourishing workplace, a flourishing community. Last month you practiced Gratitude thank you! This month we're practicing Kindness.

Why are we encouraging you to practice kindness?

Kindness has been shown to increase:

- Oxytocin – the love hormone.
- Energy – feeling stronger and more energetic after serving others.
- Happiness – altruistic people are happiest of all.
- Lifespan – people who serve others experience fewer aches and pains and people 55 and older who serve at two or more organizations have a 44% lower likelihood of dying early.
- Pleasure – when you are kind to others, your brain reacts as though you were the one receiving the kindness.
- Serotonin – kindness increases serotonin, the same chemical in many antidepressant medications.

Below are simple *Random Acts of Kindness* suggestions we'd like you to consider to carryout, as well as incorporating your creativity and ideas.

*Random Acts of Kindness:*

- Practice courtesy: Holding the door and saying “please” and “thank you” are easy ways to recognize the feelings and situation of another person. *Smile.*
- Offer to return a supermarket cart to its rack for a busy parent or a senior.
- Call a relative or friend to see how they're doing.
- Offer to pick up groceries or medications for someone who is ill.
- Buy a cup of coffee for a stranger.
- Write a check to a worthwhile charity.

Let us know what worked, about any success stories or moments of inspiration and thank you for your participation!

Your Thrive Champions,

[Name]

## Examples From Practicing Organizations

### Practice Examples Continued

- Weekly goals such as 100 acts of kindness
- Introduced PPT at a professional Staff Development Day : pass a talking stick, divided into 4-6 groups and shared one kind thing that happened to you, one kind thing you did, last person you thanked – also on post it notes and compiled these to post for all to see
- Get people together more for lunch, encouraging them to leave their desk
- Improved lunchroom making it more appealing
- Posting employee poster of 5 favorites with photo for every employee to get to know each other
- Gratitude flowers placed at bottom of kindness tree – put these in people’s mailbox
- At a staff meeting, did 3 good things on a post it and did a pair and share
- Reviewed kindness at tables of 6-8, all write but one stood up and shared one meaningful kindness
- Had staff bring their computer or phone to send a thank you to someone;
- Superintendent did a gratitude letter to someone outside of core team – very powerful
- Gratitude jars - some are doing it with family
- Jar of conversation starters in break room
- broke each practice up, discussed each practice at a different week and had folks report back what was most impactful: #1) Gratitude letters, #2) 3 Good Things, #3) Journaling – two have purchased journals and have become prolific in writing about Gratitude
- Posting it on their slack channel– gamified it by giving away a \$10 gift card
- first share a gratitude and then nominate someone else to share – post on slack channel
- Encouraged people to do a gratitude journal or share what they’re grateful for on a social media platform of their choice
- Put slips of paper into a box saying specific things about people who have done something for them and then read the slips at a team meeting once a month
- Desk drops with candy and information with the monthly theme
- Considering a lunch celebration at the end
- Each employee created their own In the Zone Hazard sign for their door to use when they didn’t want to be interrupted (Finding Your Flow).
- They started listening to film scores as they work (Finding Your Flow)
- For Flow they used their monthly wellness challenge encouraging participation in a mileage challenge to organically get in the Flow
- Flow posters asking employees to use sticky notes to put down when they’re in The Flow
- Spent ½ hour during their back to school Professional Development days
  - Broke into groups of 9 or 10 people
  - Shared one kindness and one gratitude from the summer
  - Had everyone go around the room and find another with the same summer flow activity, running around everyone having fun
- rolling coffee conversations – coffee on a cart, stop by for coffee and a visit
- Practicing Flow for 10 minutes a day for 21 days
- Writing thank you notes
- Kicked off Connections at an Employee Enhancement Event in August
  - Divided folks up by birthday months and gave them conversation starters
  - Encouraged to find people they didn’t know

## Examples From Practicing Organizations

### Practice Examples Continued

- Bistro Days – when their common space isn't used for meetings, encouraging staff to leave their desks and join each other for lunch in Bistro area
- Appreciation Event for Direct Support Professionals that included daily events like a carnival, movie night, trivia, etc
- Everyday 2:00 pm walk for anyone that shows up
- Quarterly volunteer events, e.g. will partner with the non-profit Great North Pole for holidays
- Staff book club – kick-off in November at an employee's home (half have signed up)
- Quarterly social event outside of work: Escape Room, Circus, Picnic
- Will lead a loving kindness meditation
- Brain breaks – stop what you're doing to move, walk, stand, get fresh air, adult coloring sheets; consider doing it with a co-worker.
- Practicing with clients/constituents, beyond employees
- 3 am Friend ice breaker

## Year-Long Calendar

The following national or international days or weeks can serve as a platform to engage others in the Thrive tools. Over time many will find different entry points to the movement. Observing a national day that puts the spotlight on one of the resiliency tools is a not only a fun but a meaningful way to connect with others who are not currently engaged in the Thrive movement.

**Here's a few ideas to consider.**

February 4<sup>th</sup> National Day of Courage Rosa Parks Birthday

February 14<sup>th</sup> Giving Hearts Day largest 24-hour giving event in northwest MN

February 17<sup>th</sup> National Random Acts of Kindness Day

March 20<sup>th</sup> International Day of Happiness

April: National Volunteer Week

April & October 3 Good Things Fergus Falls Schools

September 12<sup>th</sup> Mindfulness Day

September 21<sup>st</sup> National Day of Volunteering

September 21<sup>st</sup> National Day of Gratitude

Each fall United Way has a Day of Caring

November: 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, Thanksgiving Day



**What other ideas might your organization do to create a fun and engaging way to connect with others?**

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## Additional Resources

Dr. Brene Brown, Daring Greatly series <https://brenebrown.com/>

Dr. Martin Seligman, Authentic Happiness  
<https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/home>

Dr. Corey Keyes, PERMA Questionnaire

**Fergus Falls Public Library** has several books on resiliency and a recommended list from Thrive. Many of those titles have multiple books available that can be checked out as a book club opportunity.

### Random Acts of Kindness Cards

#### **Ways to stay informed:**

Visit: [www.forwardfergusfalls.com](http://www.forwardfergusfalls.com) then click on **LiveWell Fergus Falls** tab

Find us on Facebook: LiveWell Fergus Falls

**Want to go deeper in building resilience then learn more about the importance and role of:**

- Courage
- Vulnerability
- Trust
- Boundaries
- Integrity
- Generosity of Assumption



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