

More Good Days

With the start of another school year, worry of what the year will bring is heavy on us all: parents, caregivers, teachers and students. Many of the messages I shared last year are still relevant at the start of the 2021-22 school year and are a great reminder to bring us strength:

- ❖ *We need EVERYONE to be healthier than they have ever been:* staff, student and families (that means physically, mentally, relationally)
- ❖ As caregivers, *we have the most influence on resilience and the psychological wellness of our children.* It is critical that we manage our own angst of the school year, because our children will pick up on our feelings. *We are strong, brave and adaptable, and so are our children!*
- ❖ *Regardless of the boat we are in, we are all in this COVID-19 storm together.*
- ❖ Let us navigate with *respect, empathy, courage and responsibility.* Throw a lifeline to the ones who are struggling, accept a lifeline if someone reaches out to help.
- ❖ From the words of Dr. Jody Carrington: *We are fighting a virus, not each other.*
- ❖ Focus, point out and grasp onto the brief moments of *normalcy, joy and delight* like our lives depend on it. Share the message to our children: *all hard times come to an end, and will give way to the promise of better days ahead.*

Michael Franklin with CTV News published an article on August 27, 2021 that I feel all families in Northern Gateway can benefit. The Alberta Blue Cross recently partnered with two other organizations, Kickstand (mykickstand.ca) and the Mental Health Foundation (mentalhealthfoundation.ca) to launch a messaging service that will help inspire young people throughout the school year.

The service, called *MoreGoodDays*, delivers advice and uplifting messages to mobile phones that are subscribed to its service. "Youth across Alberta can text 'MoreGoodDays' to [393939](tel:393939) to receive these daily text messages for free," the company said in a release. All of the messages sent out from the service are written by youth, for youth.

"I think something you should know is that you are green with great, pink with perfect, aqua with awesome, blue with brave. You are a rainbow of qualities. Remember that!" - MoreGoodDays Message written by a young person in Alberta

"Hi Friend! I noticed you're a bit stressed... let's unclench our jaw, drop our shoulders, relax our face and take a deep breath. In & Out. There we go! Much better. Have a great day :)" - MoreGoodDays Message written by a young person in Alberta

"Don't forget that rest is okay. We don't always have to be working in order to feel productive. Rest can be productive too." - More Good Days message from Albertan young person

"Children are very resilient," said Brian Geslinger, vice-president of corporate relations at Alberta Blue Cross and a father of three school-aged children, in a statement. "But, like all of us, the pandemic has brought massive change in our lives – and even as we see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we need to be aware that many children are still deeply affected by the stress and uncertainty."

Sadly, we are still living in uncertainty, but that does not mean we cannot look forward to the school year and embrace it with optimism. Despite the challenges we have before us, do not forget everything we have overcome. We will get through this too - TOGETHER, because together, we can have More Good Days.

For more information or support, AHS offers resources that can be [accessed online](#) (albertaservices.ca, [Help in Tough Times](#)). Blue Cross offers [a series of mental health tips](#) (ab.bluecross.ca) to help support children, youth and their families. Or call the Mental Health Helpline [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) or Kids Help Phone [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868)

This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. She is a support for schools, students, parents and caregivers to promote success in school. Tammy advocates for students and families, providing a link to the community programs. Tammy has been a registered social worker for more than 20 years and is a mother to 3 teenagers and 1 young adult.