



CHANGING LIVES TODAY

Please visit www.heartlandbehavioral.com or call 1(800) 654-9605 for more information on our services.

A Note from our CEO

I don't know about all of you but I am ready for spring... bring on the sunlight and the longer days! This has been a wild winter, full of ice and snow. Hopefully you were able to capitalize on spending quality time with your children, building snowmen, drinking hot cocoa and enjoying indoor game nights. As I look forward to the smell of spring and the flowers beginning to bud, I also begin to panic about keeping children occupied for the entire week of spring break! In this edition of the *Changing Lives Today*, we offer you ideas for Spring Break activities. Along with Spring Break comes spring cleaning—and thanks to all of the blooming and budding trees; spring marks the initiation of allergy season. The clinical staff at Heartland offers you ideas to organize your homes, pound out the dust bunnies and take care of your sniffles.



For many of us, spring marks an important time in our spiritual lives as we recognize Lent and Passover. As a child, I was always taught to “give up” something during the Lenten season. However, as I have transitioned into adulthood, I have learned that Lent is a time to focus myself on my spirituality and rather than *giving up* something, I *give to* something during this sacred time. I give to myself through nightly affirmations and scripture, I give to my children and family through spending quality time together, and I give to my community through volunteerism and practicing good will toward others. As always, I have a lot to be thankful for. I have the privilege of working with amazing children and families every day. It is truly a pleasure to walk through the 100 year old doors at Heartland. I am wishing away old man winter and welcoming in the spring. I look forward to watching the trees bloom and

the flowers peek through. I wish you and your families a glorious spring season.

Alyson Harder, LCSW, LSCSW
Chief Executive Officer

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New Connections Unit is OPEN!

Connections opened its door on February 21st. The Connections Program is designed to assist with sensory enhancement, reactivity and improving the child's response to stimuli. The program will combine a variety of treatment approaches to target and improve highly reactive behaviors. The ideal candidate for this residential program will be children and adolescents, age 7-16, who have been diagnosed with or exhibit characteristics of: Reactive Attachment Disorder, Mood Disorders, Post Traumatic Stress, Asperger's Disorder, Impulse Control Disorder, and Adoptive Home Disruption. The Connections unit has a large sensory room as well as a “break” room that allows youth to improve management of their highly reactive behaviors as well as develop safe replacement behaviors in a safe and structured environment. Both of these rooms can be found pictured below:



 **New Website is live! Check it out!**

Spring Cleaning with your Kids!

Spring is a great time to get organized. Spring cleaning and closet organizing can be a huge task. Children are not only capable of helping, but, they should be an active part of this process, no matter their age. Developing responsibilities at an early age will help them develop lifelong personal discipline. This is a key to healthy development. There are a number of chore charts available online that can be modified to meet your family's needs. Consider the following when trying to decide what tasks are age appropriate for children.

Ages 2 and 3: Many toddlers are eager to help with chores, and while their "helping" may not always be appreciated, keeping their excitement and developing a habit early in life, is important. Sticker charts are a great way to keep toddlers excited about helping. Their chores may have to be completed with you helping every step of the way, but you are laying important groundwork for children. **Some chores 2-3 year olds can do...**help make the bed, pick up toys and books, take laundry to the laundry room, help feed pets, help wipe up messes, and dust with socks on their hands.

Ages 4 and 5: Preschoolers still find helping to be an exciting endeavor and usually are thrilled when time is taken to teach them new chores. They are ready to do some chores without constant supervision. Rewards at this age are very motivating. A sticker chart that allows you to build up to bigger rewards can be appropriate. For some preschoolers, tying chores to a tangible item is a great option and fosters independence in choosing a reward. **Some chores preschoolers can do in addition to the ones above...**clear and set the table, help out in cooking and preparing food, and carrying and putting away groceries.

Ages 6-8 These school age kids may or may not still have enthusiasm for completing chores. What they do have, however, is an overwhelming desire to be independent. Parents and caregivers can guide children to become independent in their chores, using chore charts to keep track of their responsibilities once completed. This is a great time to begin tying chores with an allowance. They can then begin to save money and learn to budget for big ticket items. **Some chores that they are capable of in addition to the ones above...**take care of pets, vacuum and mop, take out trash, and fold and put away laundry.

Ages 9-12 Children in this preteen age are capable of increasing responsibility where chores are concerned. Allow them to begin to choose which responsibilities are theirs. Make sure that you factor in rewards and consequences and address those issues with your children. Let them know the consequences of not completing chores, as well as the rewards for fulfilling their responsibilities. This is a great time to enter into a "responsibility contract." They write the contract of what additional chores they will do and what the "pay off" will be if they honor that contract. They should also develop what will occur if they don't honor the contract. **Some Chores preteens are capable of in addition to the ones above...**help wash the car, learn to wash dishes, help prepare simple meals, clean the bathroom, rake leaves, and operate the washer and dryer.

Ages 13-17 Teenagers are developmentally ready to handle almost any chore in the home. At the same time a teenager's schedule can sometimes become quite hectic, leaving little time for chores. Make sure that the workload of your teenagers is manageable. This is the age to teach time management and teach them to create a schedule for themselves. Having a dry erase board or chalkboard with a calendar in their room is a great way for them to schedule their days and write themselves reminder notes...not to mention it looks pretty cool! **Some chores teenagers are capable of in addition to the ones above...**replace light bulbs and vacuum cleaner bags, all parts of the laundry, wash windows, clean out refrigerator and other kitchen appliances, prepare meals, prepare grocery lists.

Did You Know...

As we move into spring it is time to consider the onset of seasonal allergies and how they impact any that suffer from them. Many people are affected to the point that medication is necessary to help manage the adverse signs and symptoms of seasonal allergies. If you are the parent of a child taking psychotropic medications, especially psycho-stimulants, it is crucial that you let your child's primary care physician/pediatrician know this so that any potentially negative interactions between medications can be identified and avoided. In addition, if you consider utilizing an over-the-counter medication for temporary allergy relief, speak to your pharmacist regarding potentially negative interactions. Examples of these negative interactions include elevated heart rate, elevated blood pressure, dizziness, light-headedness, and more. If your child experiences any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider for assistance.



Spring is the time for kids to move from the house to the outdoors! Simple precautions such as communicating with your child's physician and/or pharmacist can assure that they experience this season to the fullest!

Nathan Taylor, Director of Nursing

Caring for kids for over 100 years.
A great place for kids, when kids really need a great place.

A whole week off of school...yikes! Spring is a time of sunshine and rainbows, April showers and May flowers. Try some of these indoor and outdoor activities with your little ones. Enjoy, they don't stay this age forever....

1. **Make a schedule for the week.** Solicit the help of your children in planning daily activities during the break. This will help prevent the endless, "I'm bored...what are we gonna do today?" that we often hear.

2. **Play treasure hunters.** This is one of those rainy day activities that requires a little advanced prep, but is always a big hit with kids. Stash clues around the house (adjust difficulty based on the ages of your kids; use picture cues for little ones, tricky puns for older children), directing kids to hunt for a hidden prize.

3. **Take the hunt outside.** Have a spring themed outside treasure hunt. Look for 4 leaf clovers, blooming flowers, bugs and other spring themed items.

4. **Bring outdoor games in on those rainy days.** Play basketball with a soft foam or sponge ball, or just wad up some newspaper; the hoop can be any basket or receptacle (either hung on the wall or resting on the floor). Have kids shoot from different parts of the room or in different ways. Indoor bowling is always a hit

5. **Bring the sandbox indoors.** Set up a tub of dried noodles, rice and beans. Allow toddlers and preschoolers to play with measuring cups, bowls and run trucks and toys through their "noodle highway." (Be sure to monitor little ones, as I have a 2 year old that loves to plug noodles in his nose!)

6. **Make spring crafts.** The internet is full of great ideas for making spring themed crafts. Ladybugs, beetles and butterflies are a favorite. String them together and hang them from children's ceilings. They will love looking at their creations and it will bring spring into their rooms!

7. **Take a field trip. Go to the YMCA, community center or take a picnic to the park.** Everyone, (especially mom and dad) will love the change of scenery.

8. **Make tie-dye T-shirts and socks.** The kids will love to show off their new spring outfits when school returns

9. **Have a movie marathon afternoon with healthy home-made treats that you and the kids make together.** There are a lot of great children's recipe books available online, search together with the kids and happy cooking!

10. **Try and enjoy at least an hour of sunlight each day.** Plan your summer garden with the kids, rake up remaining leaves and prepare flower beds for the spring blooms.

11. **Have a rainy day closet clean out....**get ready for spring cleaning and a garage sale! Entice the children with collecting and selling their old items and being able to buy new ones with their garage sale profits. It's amazing how much a few quarters can motivate a child!

Get Psyched for Finding Your True Self!

Do you ever find yourself thinking "how did I get to where I am in life today?" "Is this really *ME* or just a product of what society or family expects me to be?" Part of becoming an individual human being is recognizing and accepting that nobody else has your unique DNA, feelings, thoughts, experiences or needs. Embrace this fact of ultimate aloneness-celebrate it! It is my fear that with today's demands in work, family-well... life, really, that most people hide from this basic fact and end up being absorbed by others values and expectations. As a result, they end up living according to the standards and demands of others. Does this sound familiar "Go to school, get a job, get married, have kids, work until you reach retirement and eventually die" all because that is what we are supposed to do. Can't you just feel that heavy load on your back now? The only way to be truly free is to discover that unique person that is *YOU*. Many of us do not know who that

is because we have grown up and lived in the presence of pressures to behave according to the norms of others. These environments have influenced our values, likes and dislikes in life. Who you think you are and what you think you like and need, may just be a result of what you have absorbed from others which does not represent the *REAL YOU*. Living your life without *Finding Your True Self*, leads to frustration and unhappiness.

Can you answer "Yes" to:

- Are you accepting a relationship (of any kind) that is no longer healthy and happy?
- Are you afraid to end unhealthy relationships because you fear the drama of the break up?
- Are you accepting a job you really didn't or don't now want?
- Are you letting those close to you dominate you to keep the peace?
- Are you accepting commitments and obligations that restrict your time or freedom

because it seems right?

Find your true self deep within your natural core by paying attention to your reactions and feelings. What makes you comfortable? What makes you uncomfortable? What makes you happy? Recognize and be able to differentiate between your high levels of negative and positive emotions-learn from them.

* Spend some time alone. If you don't, then you will likely be influenced by other people. Simply getting away from people allows you to discover things about you that you might not otherwise have known. * Do something different-order something different on the menu-do as many new things as you possibly can. You might like them! * Pay attention to your fantasies. What do you dream about? It may be a signal that's worth exploring.

Leah McManis, Director of Clinical Services

CHANGING LIVES TODAY



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Hearthland Behavioral Health Services offers residential treatment and acute hospitalization for youth ages 4-19.

We treat youth with mental health issues, substance abuse issues, or emotional and behavioral disorders. We offer quality programs including our Tri-Care Certified Treatment Program and Self Injurious Behavioral Program. Our services are tailored to meet the needs of General Psychiatric Disorders, and we also offer an Intensive Treatment Program for Behavioral/Conduct Disorders.

At Heartland, we believe that nature and leisure activities are a vital element in healing. That's why our beautiful 50-acre campus offers a fishing pond, ropes course, basketball court, tennis court, baseball field, bowling alley, gymnasium, and last but not least, our beloved equestrian program. We've seen it time and time again — teamwork, trust and self-confidence grow as youth participate in these activities.

Throughout our wide range of programs and services, the individual stands out. It is this commitment to the individual that sets Heartland apart.

Acute Hospitalization

Offers comprehensive psychiatric treatment for ages 4-17. Our short-term intervention program helps the troubled child or teen make sense of confusing feelings, and come to terms with himself or herself as a healthy, independent individual having the skills to sustain positive relationships, both with family and friends.

Residential Treatment Services

Allows adolescent males and females, ages 7-18, an extended period of psychiatric treatment. This opportunity is helpful to the adolescent who may be experiencing severe behavioral, chronic and often chaotic family, social and educational disturbances.

Caring for kids for over 100 years.