



Work2BeWell Monthly Newsletter

May 2026

May is a time of growth, renewal, and fresh energy. And, it's also a powerful opportunity to celebrate wellness and mental health. At Work2BeWell, we believe that taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. This month, we're focusing on what it means to truly thrive: building healthy habits, strengthening connections, and recognizing the small, everyday actions that support well-being.

Mental health isn't just about getting through tough moments. It's about creating a life where you can feel balanced, supported, and empowered. Whether it's practicing self-care, reaching out to a friend, or learning new ways to manage stress, every step matters.

Join us this May as we highlight stories, tools, and ideas that celebrate wellness in all its forms. Together, we can continue building a community where mental health is prioritized, supported, and openly talked about.

How Are You #Working2BeWell?

"I'm constantly learning that it's okay to feel everything."

— Olivia Rodrigo

American singer-songwriter and actress



Olivia Rodrigo shares, "I'm constantly learning that it's okay to feel everything." That message fits right into this month's focus on celebrating wellness because taking care of your mental health isn't about always feeling happy or having it all together. It's about recognizing your full range of emotions and understanding that they're all part of being human.

When you give yourself permission to feel what you're feeling, you create space to better understand what you need, whether that's rest, connection, or a moment to reset. Wellness grows when you start paying attention to those signals and responding in small, meaningful ways. It's not about changing everything at once. It's about building awareness and choosing what helps you feel more balanced, supported, and like yourself.

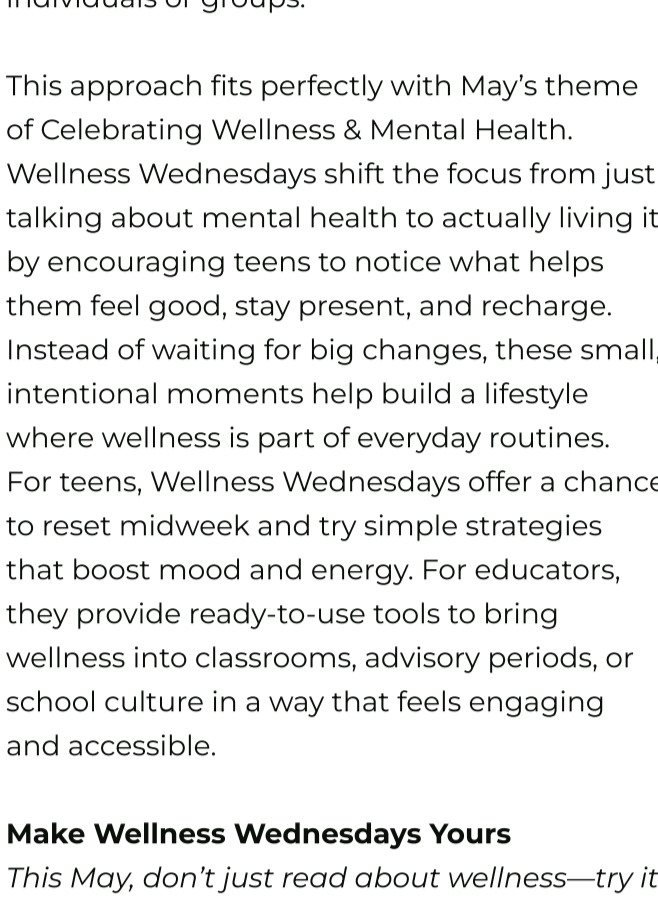
Try This for May: The "Feel Good" Checklist

Instead of focusing on what's going wrong, try adding more of what feels right.

- Pick 2-3 things each day that boost your mood:
- Take a minute to listen to a song that instantly lifts you up.
- Get some sunlight (yes, it actually helps)
- Laugh! Watch something funny or hang with friends, letting your joy bubble to the surface.
- Get solid sleep. It's underrated but powerful.

Wellness isn't just about fixing problems. It's about creating more moments where you feel like yourself.

What You'll Need for May



Midweek Reset: Building Wellness, One Wednesday at a Time

Work2BeWell's Wellness Wednesdays are simple, flexible activities designed to help teens build healthy habits in real, everyday ways.

From taking a mindful walk or listening to music, to practicing gratitude, journaling, or connecting with friends, these activities focus on small actions that support mental health, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being. They're easy to do, require little to no preparation, and can be adapted for individuals or groups.

This approach fits perfectly with May's theme of Celebrating Wellness & Mental Health. Wellness Wednesdays shift the focus from just talking about mental health to actually living it by encouraging teens to notice what helps them feel good, stay present, and recharge.

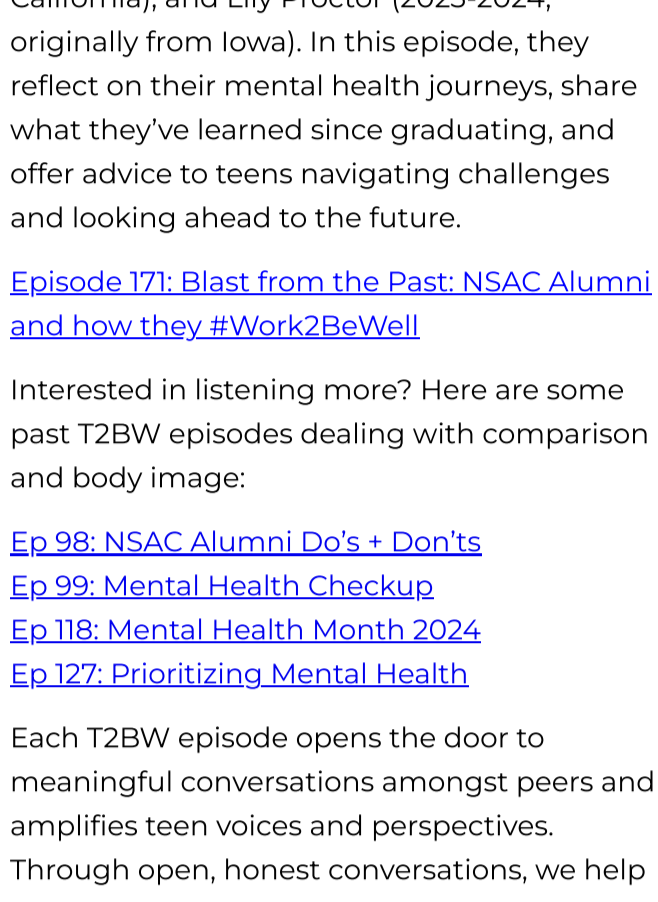
Instead of waiting for big changes, these small, intentional moments help build a lifestyle where wellness is part of everyday routines. For teens, Wellness Wednesdays offer a chance to reset midweek and try simple strategies that boost mood and energy.

For educators, they provide ready-to-use tools to bring wellness into classrooms, advisory periods, or school culture in a way that feels engaging and accessible.

Make Wellness Wednesdays Yours

This May, don't just read about wellness—try it out. Commit to 4 Wednesdays = 4 small actions this month. By the end of May, you'll have your own "wellness toolkit" of go-to strategies that help you feel your best. Because celebrating wellness isn't about doing everything, it's about doing something that makes a difference.

Click Here to Access: W2BW's Wellness Wednesdays



Talk2BeWell Podcast: "Blat from the Past: NSAC Alumni and how they #Work2BeWell"

Looking back on high school, a lot changes with time and perspective. Check out our new podcast where Dr. Robin Henderson, Work2BeWell's Chief Clinical Officer and Chief Executive of Behavioral Health for Providence Oregon, talks with three of our former National Student Advisory Council members, Hailey Hardcastle (2018-2019, originally from Oregon), Dominic Brown (2020-2022, originally from California), and Lily Proctor (2022-2024, originally from Iowa).

In this episode, they reflect on their mental health journeys, share what they've learned since graduating, and offer advice to teens navigating challenges and looking ahead to the future.

Interested in listening more? Here are some past T2BW episodes dealing with comparison and body image:

- Ep 98: NSAC Alumni Do's + Don'ts
- Ep 99: Mental Health Checkup
- Ep 118: Mental Health Month 2024
- Ep 127: Prioritizing Mental Health

Each T2BW episode opens the door to meaningful conversations amongst peers and amplifies teen voices and perspectives. Through open, honest conversations, we help students connect with one another and work towards breaking the stigma around mental health.

Want to easily find episodes to accompany lesson plans and activities? Check out this ready to go list of all the T2BW Episodes categorized by W2BW Curriculum! It's a great resource for Counseling Offices and Wellness Rooms!

From Our Curriculum Development Director

"Rooted in Belonging: Celebrating Student Wellness in Action"



Heather Ransom

This May, as we celebrate wellness and mental health, we're reminded that true well-being grows in spaces where people feel they belong. That idea came to life at this year's Student Symposium in Renton School District (Washington), centered on the theme "Rooted in Belonging." Students and speakers explored the powerful connection between wellness, school culture, and engagement.

The results were amazing, showing that when students feel seen and supported, they are more likely to thrive both in and out of the classroom.

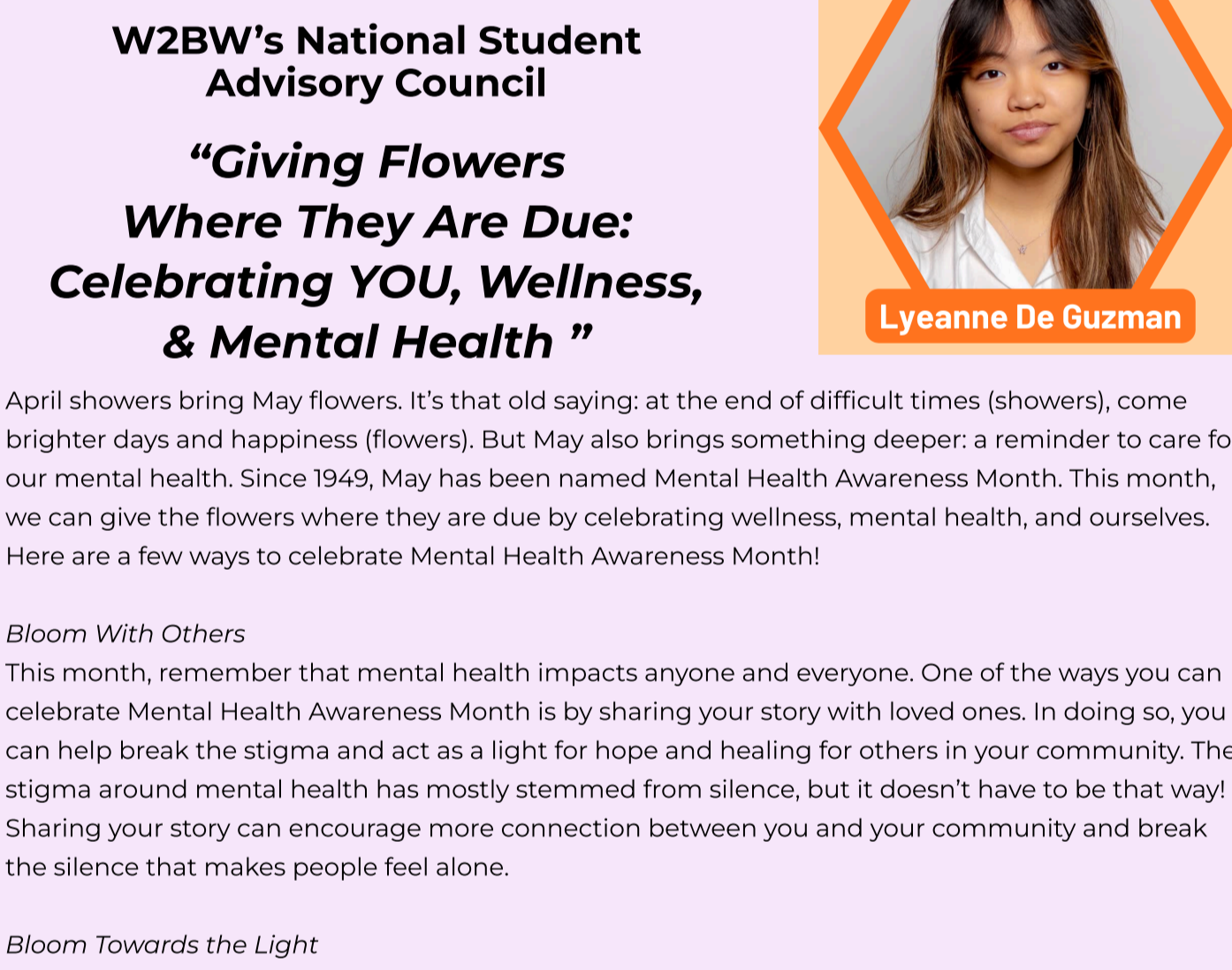
I had the opportunity to attend this symposium and was truly impressed by the thoughtfulness, energy, and student leadership woven throughout the day. Hosted at the Renton Community Center, the event brought together students from across the district for a morning filled with connection, creativity, and meaningful conversation.

From energizing icebreakers and student-led Share2BeWell sessions to breakout discussions focused on listening, school-wide data, and building a W2BW "Roadmap to Wellness," the day was designed to amplify student voice and turn ideas into action. The inclusion of a session where each high school was able to present their findings to their administrators, including challenges they recognized from the data and actions they wanted to help put into place, created a space where ideas were not only shared, but truly valued.

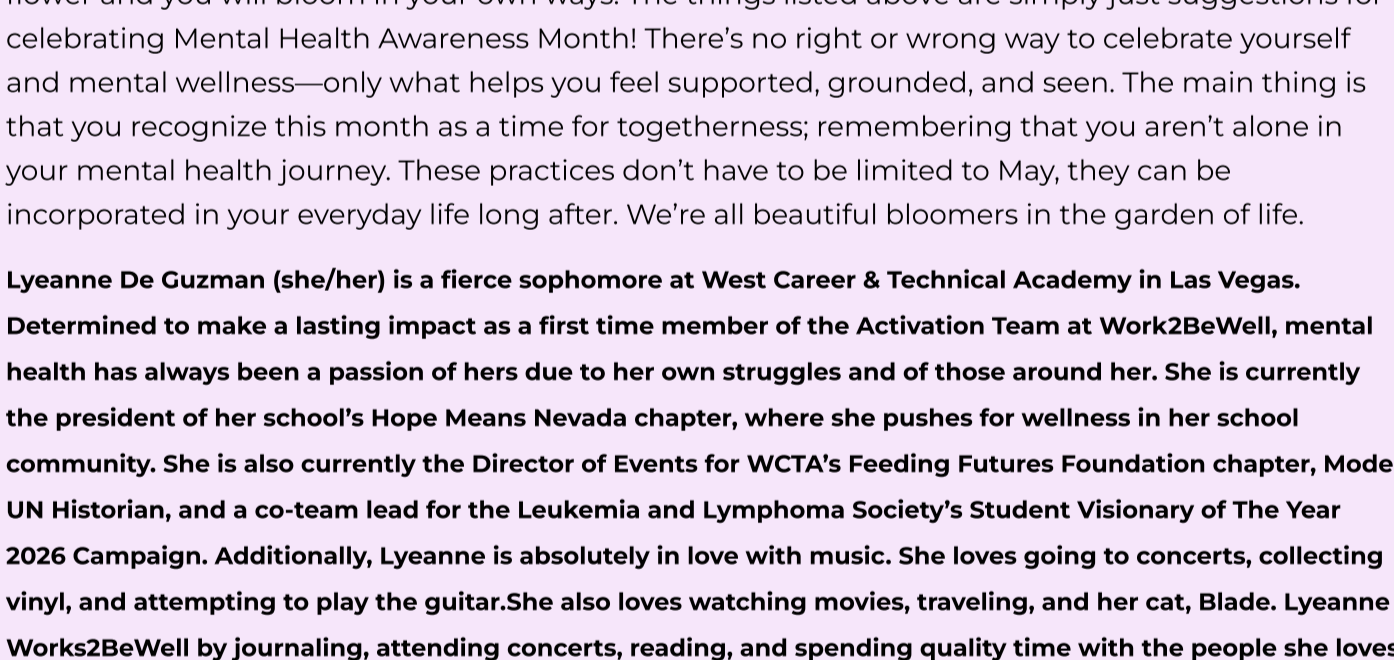
This impactful event was thoughtfully planned by the Renton School District Student Support team, whose leadership helped create a day that was both inspiring and actionable. Their work is a powerful example of what's possible when schools invest in student voice and well-being.

As we reflect on this experience, one thing is clear: celebrating wellness isn't just about individual habits. It's about building communities where everyone feels connected and valued. When students are "rooted in belonging," they don't just participate, I watched as they led, advocated, and helped shape healthier futures for themselves, their schools, and their communities.

If you would like more information on planning this type of student symposium, please contact Vickie Blakenev, victoria.blakenev@rentonschools.us, or Macie White, macie.white@rentonschools.us.



After growing up in northern Idaho and Alaska, Heather Ransom earned her Masters degree, specializing in Curriculum Development and Design from Southern Oregon University, and then began the adventure of teaching in a middle school classroom. For thirty years, besides educating students about science, health, careers, creative writing, and leadership, Heather also coached at middle and high schools, worked with local and state student leadership programs, and created curriculum now used in school districts around the country. She is also the author of the award-winning, Young Adult Sci-Fi "Going Green" trilogy. Heather enjoys speaking at workshops and conferences, creating new opportunities to engage students and educators in their passions, and helping her husband, Mary, in their local businesses. Heather #Work2BeWell by listening to audiobooks every morning as she prepares for her day.



Shop Wellness Wear Now!

Partnership Update

Stronger Together: Celebrating Wellness Through Our Partnership with NAMI Oregon

At Work2BeWell, we believe that mental health is something we build together. That's exactly why our partnership with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is so powerful. Both organizations are rooted in the idea that wellness isn't just about individual habits; it's about community, connection, and making sure no one feels alone in what they're going through.

Work2BeWell focuses on empowering teens with tools, education, and real conversations around mental health, while NAMI brings decades of experience in advocacy, support, and resources for individuals and families. Together, we're creating a stronger, more supportive environment where young people feel seen, heard, and equipped to take care of their mental health, not just during tough times, but every day.

This partnership is especially meaningful in May, a time dedicated to celebrating wellness and mental health. It's a chance to shift the focus from just awareness to action, finding ways to build healthy habits, support one another, and create spaces where mental health is openly talked about and prioritized.

One of the most inspiring ways NAMI brings people together is through NAMI Walks, happening in communities across the country this May. These walks are more than just events. Students, families, educators, and advocates come together to show support, share stories, and take meaningful steps toward breaking stigma.

Participating in a NAMI Walk is a powerful reminder that wellness doesn't happen in isolation. Whether you walk with a team, volunteer, or simply show up to support, you're contributing to a larger message: mental health matters, and we're stronger when we show up for each other. NAMI Walks events in 2026 are primarily held in the spring, with a major "United Day of Hope" scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2026. Major walks, including those in NYC and Northwest, take place in mid-May, while other local chapter events are scheduled throughout the year. Check out the official [NAMI Walks website](http://NAMIwalks.org) to find a specific local walk near you.

As we celebrate wellness this month, the Work2BeWell and NAMI Oregon partnership highlights what's possible when education, advocacy, and community come together. Because when it comes to mental health, connection isn't just helpful—it's everything.

For more information about NAMI and the resources they provide, please visit www.nami.org.

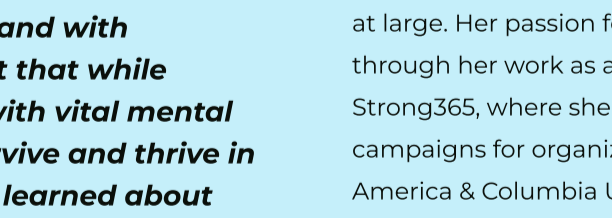
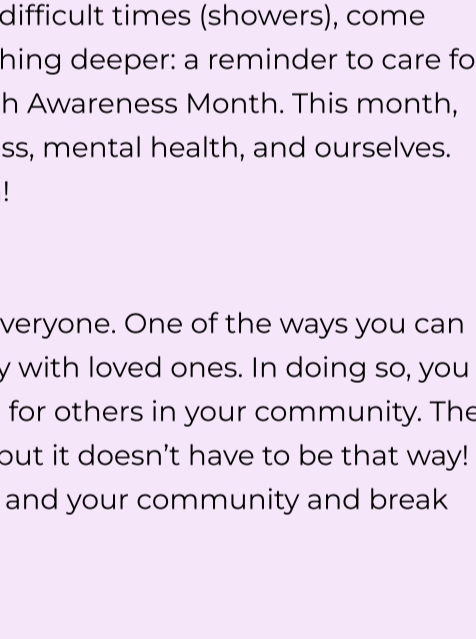


Photo Source Link

A Word from NSAC

W2BW's National Student Advisory Council

"Giving Flowers Where They Are Due: Celebrating YOU, Wellness, & Mental Health"



Lyeanne De Guzman

April showers bring May flowers. It's that old saying: at the end of difficult times (showers), come brighter days and happiness (flowers). But May also brings something deeper: a reminder to care for our mental health. Since 1949, May has been named Mental Health Awareness Month. This month, we can give the flowers where they are due by celebrating wellness, mental health, and ourselves. Here are a few ways to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month!

Bloom With Others
This month, remember that mental health impacts anyone and everyone. One of the ways you can celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month is by sharing your story with loved ones. In doing so, you can help break the stigma and act as a light for hope and healing for others in your community. The stigma around mental health has mostly stemmed from silence, but it doesn't have to be that way! Sharing your story can encourage more connection between you and your community and break the silence that makes people feel alone.

Bloom Towards the Light
You can also celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month by prioritizing self-care, practicing gratitude, and engaging in positive activities! These strategies tend to build personal growth, resilience, and optimism, like a flower reaching for the light. To practice self-care, set a goal that prioritizes your well-being through everyday matters, whether that be through making sure you get better sleep, or eating healthy. To practice gratitude, you can tie into self-care by incorporating gratitude into your everyday routine, you tend to focus on the more positive aspects of life rather than the things that may bring you down. Try writing down at least 3 things you are thankful for throughout the day, every day throughout the month! Finally, "positive activities" could truly be anything, but this month, it's especially important to remember that everyone has their own story. Be kind to yourself and others; give compliments, spend time with loved ones, and give back to your community...there's so much you can do to bring a smile to somebody else's face!

It's important to recognize that you don't have to bloom at anyone's pace; you are your own unique flower and you will bloom in your own way. The things listed above are simply just suggestions for celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month! There's no right or wrong way to celebrate yourself and mental wellness—only what helps you feel supported, grounded, and seen. The main thing is that you recognize this month as a time for togetherness, remembering that you aren't alone in your mental health journey. These practices don't have to be limited to May, they can be incorporated in your everyday life long after. We're all beautiful bloomers in the garden of life.

Lyeanne De Guzman (she/her) is a fierce sophomore at West Career & Technical Academy in Las Vegas. Determined to make a lasting impact as a first time member of the Activation Team at Work2BeWell, mental health has always been a passion of hers due to her own struggles and of those around her. She is currently the president of her school's Hope Means Nevada chapter, where she pushes for wellness in her school community. She is also currently the Director of Events for WCTA's Feeding Futures Foundation chapter, Model 20K Historian, and a co-lead for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Student Visionary of the Year 2026 Campaign. Additionally, Lyeanne is absolutely in love with music. She loves going to concerts, collecting vinyl, and attempting to play the guitar. She also loves watching movies, traveling, and her cat, Blake. Lyeanne works 2BeWell by journaling, attending concerts, reading, and spending quality time with the people she loves most.

Club Spotlight

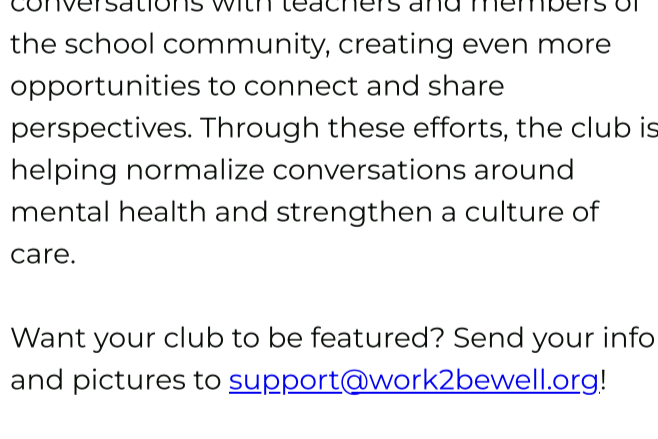
University Gardens High School San Juan, Puerto Rico

"Growing Wellness Through Student Leadership"

This May, as we celebrate wellness and mental health, we're highlighting a student-led effort that is making a real difference. The Work2BeWell UGHS Club in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is part of a growing youth movement focused on mental health awareness, emotional well-being, and creating safe, supportive spaces where students can truly feel connected.

The club was founded by 11th grade students Natalia Echevarria Katwaroo and Adiel Torres Resto after being inspired by Work2BeWell during a Student Council meeting at TASIS Dorado. Recognizing the academic pressure and stress many students face at University Gardens High School, they saw an opportunity to bring meaningful mental health conversations to their own campus. Their goal was simple but powerful: help create a healthier, more balanced school environment where students feel supported rather than overwhelmed.

Work2BeWell has truly changed my life. It has given me the tools to understand myself better, the confidence to advocate for others, and the opportunity to help create spaces where students feel supported. Because of that, I'm proud to be part of an organization that is not only encouraging mental health conversations but also empowering young people to lead that change."

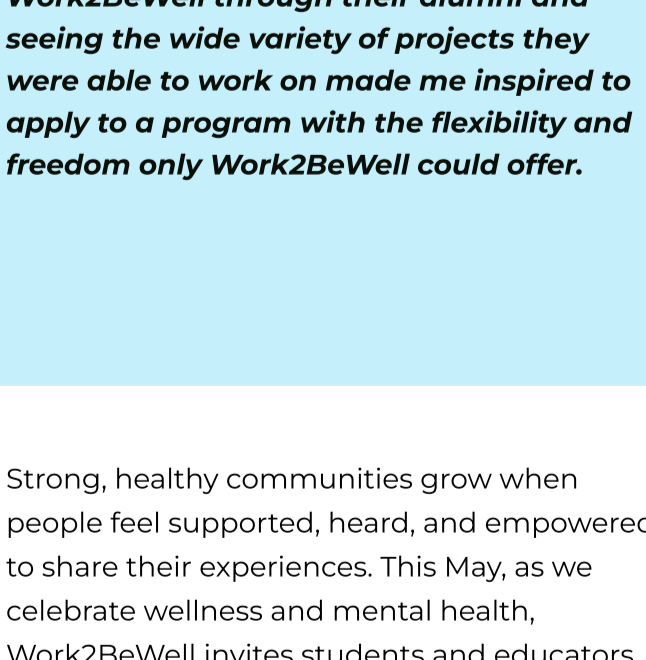


Since launching, the club has already made a strong impact. Student leaders have facilitated workshops for upperclassmen focused on gratitude, empathy, and healthy relationships, encouraging open dialogue, reflection, and real-life application. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with teachers inviting the club into classrooms and students showing excitement to get involved. It's clear that these conversations are not only needed, but deeply valued.

Looking ahead to the UGHS Work2BeWell Club is under way to launch a podcast featuring conversations with teachers and members of the school's community, creating even more opportunities to connect and share perspectives. Through these efforts, the club is helping normalize conversations around mental health and strengthen a culture of care.

Want your club to be featured? Send your info and pictures to support@work2bewell.org

Testimonials



Srika Balabommala

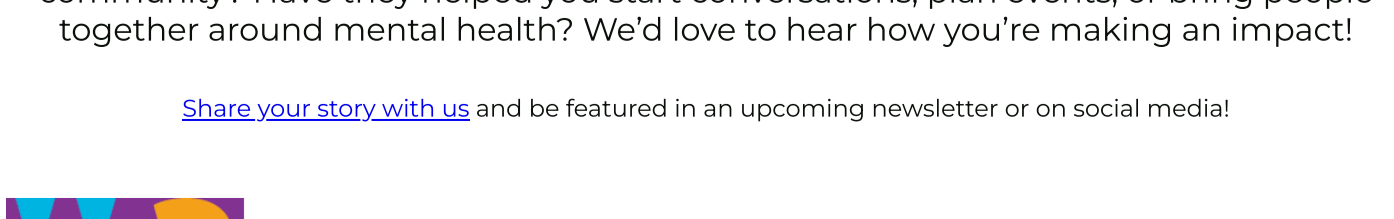
"My passion for mental health and the social sciences stems from a desire to work for and alongside people, and with Work2BeWell, I can do just that while equipping young people with vital mental health skills needed to survive and thrive in the new generation. I first learned about Work2BeWell through their alumni and seeing the wide variety of projects they were able to work on made me inspired to apply to a program with the flexibility and freedom only Work2BeWell could offer.

In my first year at Work2BeWell, I work as an Activation Team Co-Lead. I seek to increase mental health access through nationwide clubs and legislation. At Work2BeWell, I've been given the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects such as the Wellness Backpack Modules, an Oregon bill regarding AI usage relating to minors, a conversation with Discord executives and more, while being supported by a super involved community. Work2BeWell has given me the support and opportunity I need to become a better mental health advocate while reaching thousands of teens to create a better future for all youth.

Srika Balabommala is a junior from Massachusetts interested in psychology, business and the humanities at large. Her passion for mental health is displayed through her work as a Teen Advisory Board Member at Strong365, where she's worked on mental health campaigns for organizations like Mental Health America & Columbia University, and her previous work as a Spring Fellow at Nurch and Community of Practice Member with NAMI. She's also worked as a Youth Co-Creator with Headstream, innovating with 10+ mental-health driven businesses (and writing an article you can read here), and serves as the COO of the Youth Entrepreneurship Association, a non-profit geared towards equipping youth with entrepreneurial skills.

WHERE TO FIND US THIS MONTH

Dates / Location	Event
May 16 Portland, OR	NAMI Walk https://www.namimwalks.org/northwest
May 17 Bend, OR	NAMI Walk



How are you using W2BW resources to make a difference in your school or community? Have they helped you start conversations, plan events, or bring people together around mental health? We'd love to hear how you're making an impact! [Share your story with us](http://Share.your.story.with.us) and be featured in an upcoming newsletter or on social media!