



# Eugene Education Association

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## 4J BENEFITS AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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Prepared by Julie Wenzl • 541-790-7682 • December 10, 2018 • Issue Number 308

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### WELCOME COLLEEN JONES!

With the recent departure of Andrea Webb, 4J has been without a Benefits Manager. The recruitment process for that position is now complete, and I'm pleased to share that Colleen Jones will be stepping into the role.

Colleen began her employment with 4J Human Resources in April 2017, supporting benefits, and is currently supporting classified staff. Prior to her arrival in 4J, Colleen had 14 years of school district experience in the state of Washington. She brings a passion for collaboration and systems improvement to her new position. Colleen has developed a strong understanding of the 4J operating system and is looking forward to contributing to the district's ongoing effort to create a healthy and positive working environment for all. Please join me in welcoming Colleen to the 4J benefits team!

### COMMUNICATION: HOW TO STAY COOL IN HOT CONVERSATIONS

The 4J Joint Benefits Committee, in partnership with Cascade Health, is offering a free Communication: How to Stay Cool in Hot Conversations wellness class to 4J employees. The class will take place:

- **Tuesday, January 8, 2019**
- **5:00 – 6:00 p.m.**
- **Education Center Auditorium**

Everyone knows what it's like to be in a difficult conversation: you can't think straight, speak clearly, or listen effectively. In this workshop you will learn the neuroscience of conflict and how to navigate these challenging situations more effectively. A few of the topics that will be covered:

- How and why the brain is activated in conflict
- Discerning your own specific triggers
- Real life tools and strategies to apply to your most difficult and challenging communications

To sign up, please reply by Friday, January 4<sup>th</sup> to Julie Wenzl: [wenzl@4j.lane.edu](mailto:wenzl@4j.lane.edu) or 541-790-7682.

### MONDAY RESET – PRACTICE KINDNESS

Radiate kindness on Monday. When you practice kindness towards others it helps them, and surprisingly, it will help you too.

Acts of kindness are motivated by a selfless desire to help another person. However, performing random acts of kindness is one of the best ways to increase your own happiness.

Why do random acts of kindness increase a person's sense of happiness? Kindness can promote gratitude. You are kind to others in need; having that awareness then heightens the sense of your own good fortune. Kindness promotes empathy and compassion, which in turn, leads to a sense of interconnectedness with others. Kindness can forward the will to live in depressed individuals who feel isolated and different; this is why performing volunteer work is so powerful. When you feel connected with others, you lessen alienation and you enhance the sense that we are more similar than dissimilar in our experiences. Feeling connected melds us together rather than divides us. Kindness is potent in strengthening a sense of community and belonging.

Extending kindness can improve your physical and mental health. It can release stress and tension, calm your emotions, and boost your immune system.

There are so many ways you can extend yourself. Being kind could mean holding the door open for a stranger. It also means going deeper, like volunteering at a charity or an event that helps others.

On Monday, start practicing kindness and then keep it up the rest of week. You'll feel happier and stronger, which can help alleviate stress and worry. One act of small kindness can release an enormous chain of positive events.

### SICK LEAVE ALLOTMENTS AND ACCUMULATION

In the last round of collective bargaining, we did away with family leave as a separate leave category, essen-

tially merging family leave into sick leave. Under the old system, licensed employees received 10 days (80 hours at 1.0 FTE) of sick leave and 2 days (16 hours at 1.0 FTE) of family leave per year, and both were frontloaded. Starting with the 2018-19 school year, licensed employees will earn 12 days (96 hours at 1.0 FTE) of sick leave, but none of it will be frontloaded. Rather, it will be earned month-to-month, based on the hours worked in that month. The ending balance of sick leave on your wage statement includes sick leave earned for the month. Up to 40 hours of sick leave per year may be used to care for an ill or injured family member.

We concluded negotiations after the 2017-18 school year had started, so the negotiated changes in leaves were not immediately implemented. Last year, we were frontloaded 10 days of sick leave and 2 days of family leave, as had been the method prior to the contract changes. For the transition from last year to this year, if a licensed employee ended 2017-18 with family leave and/or accumulated family leave, those balances were rolled into the sick leave balance.

We continue to receive 2 days (16 hours at 1.0 FTE) of personal leave per year, which were initially reflected on the end of August wage statements. Unused personal leave carries over to accumulated personal leave at the end of the school year, but accumulated personal leave is capped at 3 days (24 hours).

If a licensed employee works part-time FTE, the total hours referenced above should be adjusted accordingly.

To read the sick leave language, please see Article 8.1 of the EEA/4J Collective Bargaining Agreement: <http://www.eugeneteachers.org/4j-members>

## FREE EXERCISE GUIDE

If you are looking for some guidance on how to start exercising, you may want to consult the free 120-page *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide* from the National Institute on Aging. It focuses on workouts for people over 50, with illustrated exercises for strength, flexibility, endurance, and balance. You can download it at [tinyurl.com/NIA-exercise](http://tinyurl.com/NIA-exercise) or order a free copy in English or Spanish by calling 800-222-2225.

## ARE YOU DUE FOR A ROUTINE SCREENING OR EXAM?

Are you healthy?

Hopefully so, but being healthy isn't all about how you feel or look. There are routine screenings that every child and adult should get. Screenings such as some blood work, colonoscopy or mammogram are meant for the general population to detect disease prior to the appearance of symptoms. Your healthcare provider can help you know what screenings you are eligible for and to help you make informed decisions about whether you want to be screened.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that children should have a cholesterol screening once between ages 9 and 11 years, and again when they reach 17 to 21 years. The general recommendation for adults is to have a cholesterol screening every 4 to 6 years, but some people need to get their cholesterol checked more often. Adults who have heart disease should talk to their healthcare team about how often to have their cholesterol checked.

Having an annual physical is an important first step to maximizing wellness. You can't plan for your healthy 2019 without knowing your risks.

The 4J Wellness Clinic can help you with many of your healthcare needs, including annual wellness exams and appropriate screenings. The Wellness Clinic is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. with the last appointment slot at 5:15 p.m. They close for lunch from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. The phone number for the clinic is 541-686-1427.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a healthcare widget you may want to check out. The myhealthfinder widget provides consumers with personalized recommendations for clinical preventive services based on the age, sex, and pregnancy status they enter, for themselves or a loved one. You can find the widget here:

<https://healthfinder.gov/FreeContent/HealthWidgets/>

## WELLNESS CLINIC CLOSURE

The 4J Wellness Clinic will be closed during part of winter break: December 24, 2018 – January 1, 2019. Please plan ahead if you will need prescription refills during that period. If you have an urgent medical need arise during the clinic closure, please seek care at an urgent care or other primary care clinic.

Regular clinic hours will resume January 2, 2019.