

our

JUNE-JULY 2022

HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE
TO HEALTHY
LIVING

matters™

www.kcourhealthmatters.com

HEALTHY FAMILIES

Mind, Body & Spirit

The Oliveras Family is Focused on
Family, Health and Enrichment.





*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

— *Matthew 5:4*
New International Version



Our thoughts are with every family near and far
who are experiencing the loss of a loved one.

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The Oliveras Family:
Cristina Martinez-Oliveras,
husband, Ricky Oliveras,
daughter, Alexis and son, Carlos.
Not pictured, son, Ivan Quinones.

COVER STORY

Family First

By Cristina Martinez-Oliveras, Zillow Home Loans

There are many ways in which to shape a family's physical, mental and social well-being. *Our Health Matters* asked several local families to share what keeps their family focused on what matters and what inspires them to keep moving forward during challenges.

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Cristina Martinez-Oliveras
Zillow Home Loans



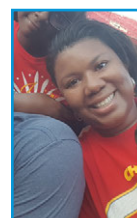
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Family Should Be a Safe Harbor

Janet Carlson Baker,
Executive Director
KC Shepherd's Center



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Financial Aid Coordinator,
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Program Specialist
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One of my favorite photos with my sons.
Values I've passed on to them:
Don't take anything for granted;
love yourself, love your family
and love others.



EVERY FAMILY MATTERS

Condolences can't stop the rivers of tears and lingering heartache of families whose loved ones were killed in mass murders in Buffalo, New York, Uvalde, Texas, and in other less publicized communities. The pain of these families should touch all of us who can relate to the emptiness felt from losing someone you love. My prayer is that the government throws the full measure of its legislative power behind solutions versus doing absolutely nothing!

As we were planning our editorial calendar for 2022, we decided to include a focus on Healthy Families. This is an appropriate topic for the times we are experiencing. In this issue we feature local families who share their thoughts and examples of what they do to make a positive impact on their young and adult children, significant others and community. Each of these families are true gems. Also highlighted in this edition is the call for more foster parents to care for older youth and multiple siblings.

Our Health Matters™ will continue to build on its mission to keep you and your family "health literate." If COVID-19 taught us anything, it is to reflect on what matters most—our health and our families.



Be vigilant, stay safe and hug your family.

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

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is published bi-monthly (6 issues)
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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine.

Email us at
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or write to us at

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A close-up, profile shot of a Black man with short hair and a beard, wearing a plaid shirt and a black face mask pulled down to his chin. He is holding a black microphone to his mouth and appears to be speaking or singing. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting. A diagonal white line cuts across the image from the bottom left to the top right.

>>> COMMUNITY POWER

The future of health
in our region is high-quality
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Health Forward is redefining
our purpose.

Learn more about
the local movement
for health equity.
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Well-child Visits Focus on Your Child's Overall Wellness

Childhood is a time of rapid growth and change. Children have more well-child doctor visits when they are younger. Before each appointment, write down your questions and concerns and bring them with you. This will help you get the most out of the visit.

Each visit includes a complete physical exam. At this exam, the healthcare provider will check the child's growth and development in order to find or prevent problems.

The provider will record your child's height, weight, and other important information. Hearing, vision, and other screening tests will be part of some visits.

Your provider will pay special attention to how your child is growing compared to normal developmental milestones. The child's height, weight, and head circumference are recorded on a growth chart that remains part

of the child's medical record. Talking about your child's growth is a good place to begin a discussion about your child's general health. Ask your provider about the body mass index (BMI) curve, which is the most important tool for identifying and preventing obesity. Discuss your family health history to see if it may affect your child's health in any way and discuss any other health concerns. At your well-child visits, you will get information on topics such as:

- Sleep
- Safety
- Childhood diseases
- Immunizations
- What to expect as your child grows

Your provider will also talk about other wellness topics such as family relationship issues, school, and access to community services.

There are several schedules for

routine well-child visits. A visit with a provider before the baby is born can be particularly important for:

- First-time parents
- Parents with a high-risk pregnancy
- Parents with questions about feeding, circumcision, and general child health issues

After the baby is born, the next visit should be 2 to 3 days after bringing the baby home (for breastfed babies) or when the baby is two to four days old (for all babies who are released from a hospital before they are two days old). Some providers will delay the visit until the baby is one - two weeks old for second-time parents. After that, it is recommended that visits occur one to two months apart at one month old through nine months; three months apart through 18 months; until age 21, every 2-3 years and each year after that.

Source: Medlineplus •





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University Health Truman Medical Center
The Birthplace
2301 Holmes Street
Kansas City, MO 64108



University Health Lakewood Medical Center
Lakewood Family Birthplace
7900 Lee's Summit Road
Kansas City, MO 64139



WHAT DOES A WELL-FUNCTIONING FAMILY LOOK LIKE?

Many parents ask themselves this question, but there is no simple answer, since there can be such broad definitions of what is normal or dysfunctional.

There are several characteristics that are generally identified with a well-functioning family. Some include: providing physical and emotional support to your family; loving and caring for other family members; providing a sense of belonging; open communication; making each person within the family feel important, valued, and respected.

Here are a few questions to consider when evaluating how well your family is functioning.

- Do you take time to laugh and have fun within your family, despite the very real demands of daily life?
- Does your family have rules that have been clearly stated and are evenly applied, yet are flexible and respond to new situations and changes in the family?

- Are the family's expectations of each person reasonable, realistic, mutually agreed upon and generally fulfilled?
- Do family members achieve most of their goals, and are their needs being met?

Do you take time to laugh and have fun within your family, despite the very real demands of daily life?

- Do parents and children have genuine respect for one another, demonstrating love, caring, trust, and concern, even when there are disagreements?
- Is your family able to mature

and change without everyone getting upset or unhappy?

Every family is different, however, these questions can serve as a guide to help enrich the lives and relationships of most families. **Editor's note: If someone in the family is struggling with a mental health crisis, don't hesitate to seek out the counsel of someone you trust, as well as a licensed mental health counselor or therapist.**

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics •





WE ARE FAMILY

El Centro was founded 45 years ago as a welcoming center for Latino families through a grant from the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. At that time, the Latino population in Kansas City, Kansas was increasing, and there were no programs that met their language and cultural needs. El Centro identified five barriers they would address to support families, including:

- Immigration
- Lack of cultural and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS)
- Low education attainment
- Lack of access to affordable healthcare
- Low wages and lack of benefits

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

While El Centro's programs are available to anyone in need, they are uniquely designed to serve low-income, uninsured, underemployed and underrepresented Latino populations. Families in Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas are eligible for these programs and services:

- **ACADEMY FOR CHILDREN:** A year-round, dual language pre-K school that prepares students to start Kindergarten.
- **PROMOTORAS DE SALUD:** Trained community volunteers who serve as ambassadors to help identify affordable healthcare and food resources.
- **HEALTH NAVIGATION:** A dedicated team that increases and improves access to quality, affordable healthcare services and coverage.
- **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:** Provides financial literacy and guidance, job certification training and placement.
- **ADVOCACY:** To amplify the voices, needs and concerns of the community

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**History has taught us to
 both listen to and hear what
 our families need and to be
 prepared to shift and adapt to
 meet the needs before us.**

**— Irene Caudillo
 President & CEO**



SU CONEXIÓN A LA COMUNIDAD

HOW YOU CAN HELP

El Centro welcomes donations. They are a 501c3 tax exempt nonprofit organization. To learn more and to find a list of locations contact::

**WWW.ELCENTROINC.COM
 913.677.0100**

Health Literacy is Necessary to Understand Your Healthcare

Nearly 9 out of 10 adults struggle with health literacy. Even people with high literacy skills may have low health literacy skills in certain situations.

Here are some tips to use before, during, and after your medical appointment to make sure you get good quality healthcare and have better outcomes.

Before Your Appointment

- Know your current medical conditions, past surgeries, and illnesses.
- Prepare top 3 questions to ask during your appointment (e.g., your medicines, medical test or surgeries you may need).
- Prepare a list of all medicines. This includes:
 - Prescription medicines.
 - Non-prescription medicines, such as aspirin or antacids.
 - Vitamins
 - Dietary or herbal supplements.

During Your Appointment

- Explain your symptoms, health history and any problems with medicines.
- Ask questions to make sure you understand what your doctor is telling you.
- Let your doctor know if you are worried about being able to follow instructions.
- If your doctor recommends a treatment, ask about options.
- Ask if there are any vaccines you should get.
- Ask for referrals if you feel unsafe at home; lack housing or food.

IF YOU NEED A TEST, ASK:

- How the test is done.
- How much it will cost and whether there is a co-pay.
- What you need to do to get ready for it.
- How and when you will get the results.

IF YOU NEED A PRESCRIPTION, TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU ARE PREGNANT, ARE NURSING, HAVE REACTIONS TO MEDICINES, OR TAKE VITAMINS OR HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS.

After Your Appointment

- Always follow your doctor's instructions.
- If you do not understand your instructions after you get home, call your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before you stop taking any medicines that your doctor prescribed.
- Call your doctor if your symptoms get worse or if you have problems following the instructions.
- If your doctor advises, make appointments to have tests done or see a specialist.
- Call your doctor to find out test results. Ask what you should do about the results.

Source: Medlineplus

What Is Health Literacy?

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, health literacy involves the information and services that people need to make well-informed health decisions.

Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to make good health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

Examples of personal health literacy include understanding prescription drug instructions, understanding doctor's directions and consent forms, and the ability to navigate the complex healthcare system.



EVERY DAY BETTER FUTURES WALK THROUGH THE DOOR



Whenever a community mobilizes to overcome inequities, it becomes a force for change. EarlystART (formerly known as United Inner City Services) was established in 1967, during the height of the Civil Rights movement. For more than 50 years, it has been dedicated to improving the lives of children from 6 weeks to 5 years old, as well as those of their families.

EARLYSTART, AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

EarlystART students enter kindergarten at a 90% readiness rate, compared to the 34% average for Kansas City, MO. EarlystART centers offer an arts-based

curriculum designed to help young children express their thoughts and feelings through song, color, texture, percussion, sound and found materials. This arts-focused curriculum prepares developing brains for learning and healthy social-emotional growth.

Open year-round, EarlystART serves families in the most economically challenged Kansas City zip codes at three sites: St. Mark Child and Family Development Center, Metro Child and Family Development Center, and the newly opened North Child and Family Development Center (Pleasant Valley, MO).

Every child has the ability to succeed and contribute to a world that values diversity, equity and inclusion. EarlystART families are assured their child is provided the skills and resources to succeed.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

EarlystART gratefully accepts financial donations and welcomes support from advocates of early childhood education. To donate, visit <https://earlystartkc.org/ways-to-give/donate/>.



HEALTHY FAMILIES

Mind, Body & Spirit

The Oliveras Family is Focused on
Family, Health and Enrichment.

The Oliveras Family:
Cristina Martinez-Oliveras,
husband, Ricky Oliveras,
daughter, Alexis and son, Carlos.
Not pictured, son, Ivan Quinones.



Cristina Martinez-Oliveras,
daughter, Alexis and sons, Ivan and Carlos.

FAMILY FIRST

Cristina Martinez-Oliveras

Zillow Home Loans

What healthy lifestyle routines have you adopted?

Maintaining health takes time and commitment. It is not easy but it is possible when your family is on board with the same mission. My husband and I are very intentional in what we teach our children about eating healthy and staying active. We choose to drink water and less of sugary beverages; we retire early to get a good amount of sleep; we take walks together, dance, play volleyball and attend many of our daughter's soccer games. So, we are pretty active.

Name something that is preparing your child to thrive in this chaotic world.

RESPONSIBILITY. Teaching my children to be responsible helps them learn to be accountable in every area of their life. They understand the importance of performing well in school and being committed to their sports practices.

SUPPORT. Our kids have our full support. We encourage them to never give up, to be confident

and put forth their complete effort in everything they do.

What are some family values you've taught and upheld as most important to you and your family?

Keep family first and stay true to who we are. We believe in staying in touch with family even if it means attending a cousin's soccer game or recitals. We support and cheer on all of our extended family. Family vacations are big events, we travel as a herd. We are a proud Catholic Mexican family and have a lot of traditions. We respect and enjoy learning about other cultures as well.

How do you encourage positive family interaction?

We are not perfect, but we take opportunities to learn. Communication is key, and we encourage our children to be open and honest with us. Even if we may not agree, they will always have our attention and love.



Left to right: Chad Baker, Aaron Baker, Sophia Mollentine (in Janet's arms), Greg Baker, Sydney Baker Mollentine

FAMILIES SHOULD BE A SAFE HARBOR

Janet Carlson Baker,
Executive Director, KC Shepherd's Center

Name one thing you believe helps a child to thrive or succeed in this chaotic world.

Realize that life is messy. Embrace and find humor in the mess. Who knew that Greg and I would still have grown kids (and ALL their dogs!) at home with us? We are grateful that we have a home where they can come and that our family relationships provide a safe harbor and re-launching pad as they try to navigate a COVID-19 and post-COVID reality.

FAMILY VALUES IMPORTANT TO OUR FAMILY INCLUDE:

FAITH. The most important family value we want all of our family to uphold is faith in God. We cannot possibly navigate this chaotic world on our own. Our family has seen us struggle through many problems, especially in the last 10 years, but they have never seen us off our knees. I only hope that we have trained them in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. As life happens, health issues arise, successes and learning experiences happen, people grow, evolve, and make choices that help or hurt—family is family. No matter what.

RESPECT. Genuine respect for all people is a required family value in the Baker household. If 40 miles of bad road has taught our family anything, it's "there but for the grace of God go I." No matter what you achieve or receive, it's by grace and with the support and strength from others. We operate on the belief that ALL of God's children are worthy of love and respect.

INTEGRITY. Be honest and truthful and we will always defend you. Do what you say you'll do so people will believe you when you speak. Always tell the truth. I have always told our kids that if you're about to do something, ask if your parents would be proud of you. If you have to wonder, then don't do it.

GRATITUDE. We know nothing is guaranteed, and any blessing we receive, even the food on our table and roof over our heads, is a privilege, not a right. One thing I am most proud of is that despite ups and downs, our children express their gratitude openly.

SERVICE. Our family knows the value of volunteering. They have been raised to serve, whether it's in social causes or animal welfare.



Smith family at KC Chiefs game, Ray (husband), Ivori (myself), Ray, III (son) and daughter, Ivori, II.

VALUES CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER HEALTH MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

Ivori Smith

Financial Aid Coordinator, Default Management, Johnson County Community College

What healthy lifestyle habits or routines have you adopted?

We started a routine of walking together as a family after dinner every evening. This has not only helped us to stay in shape, but also gives us a chance to relax and decompress. We use this time to talk about what's been going on and to refocus. For us walking is also a time to meditate and get in touch with our thoughts and understand what's important. The more our family walks, the more we like it, so we look for more of these opportunities. The benefits are great. We find ourselves having more energy and making better food decisions. It's an easy and perfect routine for our family.

What family values have you taught as most important to you and your family?

Something we stay true to is having dinner together as a family. During dinner we talk about our day and catch up on upcoming events. Eating meals as family sets an example of how important it is and can also demonstrate what a healthy meal looks like. We tend to eat more fruits and vegetables and less fast food and sugary beverages. I've also noticed it has improved our kid's communication. They have an actual conversation instead of just responding with yes or no to questions. Overall, we view family dinner as a supplement to family therapy. It's a time to share and discuss different thoughts and feelings on a variety of topics.

Sara (middle) enjoying time with daughter, Isabel and Sam, her son.



LISTENING AND BEING PRESENT MATTERS

Sara L. Adams

Chief Compliance Officer, Vibrant Health - Wyandotte Neighborhood Clinics

How do you help your adult children have positive experiences socially, mentally or educationally?

I practice being a good listener when my adult child shares experiences with me. For me that means not confusing a pause in my child's talk with meaning she is done talking. I've learned that

I ALSO HELP MY ADULT CHILDREN BY ROLE MODELING RESILIENCE AND HOPE.

her pauses are the time-outs she takes to decide how she wants to share her thoughts/feelings. She is not done and does not want me to interrupt her. By not interrupting, I demonstrate that my focus is on her and what she is experiencing and sharing. I also help my adult children by role modeling resilience and hope. I share information about challenges I encounter and how they affect me socially, professionally, mentally and spiritually and how I find ways to bounce back from the negative and to be constructive and hopeful. I discipline myself to not tell my adult children how to "fix" their problems or to try to rescue

them. Instead, I build their confidence that they have the skills to find ways to move forward from adverse situations...and that there are resources available if they need help. And we talk about those resources, such as mental health counseling, career counseling, and so forth. If asked, I help them research, filter and perform due diligence on resources to best respond to immediate and longer-term needs.

What types of activities do you feel are important to share as a family?

My adult children live overseas or on either US coast. We've had to become resourceful in finding ways to stay connected. We don't let a week go by without texting, calling or having virtual visits. We make sure to keep each other updated on our lives, big and little events, challenges and achievements...as well as just to share there is no new "news". We intentionally plan in-person visits and family trips...even when we know they may not occur until months or years in the future. This gives us something to look forward to that become memories to be passed down generation after generation.



Mother's Day 2022 outing with my boys. Anne and husband Scott are the proud parents of Benjamin, Jameson and 'Topher.

CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW THEY ARE LOVED

Anne Foley Rauth

Director Development, Marketing, Community Outreach, Mercy and Truth Medical Missions



If you had to name one thing that you believe helps a child to thrive or succeed in this chaotic world, what would that be?

I think one thing that helps a child to thrive and succeed in this chaotic world, is to know that they are loved. Not only by their mother and father but even more importantly, by Jesus Christ. When I would drop the boys off at school, I would always tell them, "The favor of the Lord surrounds you like a shield." At their ages of 24, 18, and 16, I pray they always remember that.

FAMILY TIME MATTERS

Amy Ruse-Cheung, LCSW, LSCSW

Program Specialist, Gilda's Club Kansas City

What family values have you taught as most important to you and your family?

Family values that I have taught include taking responsibility for our actions, providing space for open communication, and practicing being present.

What types of activities do you feel are important to share as a family?

We've learned to take nothing for granted. Having meals together, spending time outdoors, playing games, sharing and reading books together brings us many hours of pure joy.



Every Child Deserves to Be Safe and Wanted

A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds in the United States. Right here in our community, every day we learn of children who are in unsafe situations or have experienced traumatic events.

The Children's Place located in Kansas City, Mo., was founded in 1978 by a group of concerned citizens and community stakeholders responding to an increase in awareness of child abuse. More than 40 years later, the agency continues to provide lifesaving mental health services for young children who have experienced traumatic events, from abuse or neglect to divorce or a car accident.

Research shows when children experience multiple traumatic events, it causes a tremendous amount of stress on their developing minds and may have a lasting impact on their ability to feel safe and wanted. Early intervention has the power to mitigate future health and social issues. Traumatic events are similar to an ear infection—it hurts, and the sooner treatment is administered, the quicker

the pain subsides, and long-term suffering and future complications are prevented.

The Children's Place specializes in helping young children under the age of 8 who have experienced traumatic events. They have four programs that serve the mental health needs of children which children, including Assessments & Screenings and Day Treatment.

If you believe that a child in your life is in an unsafe situation, please report it immediately by calling the Children's Division's child abuse hotline at 1-800-392-3738 (Missouri) or 1-800-922-5330 (Kansas).•



By Lacey Helmig
Marketing and
Communications Manager
The Children's Place

To learn more contact The Children's Place at 816.363.1898 or visit [childrensplacekc.org](https://www.childrensplacekc.org).

THERE ARE FOUR COMMON TYPES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

- Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force that can result in physical injury. Examples include hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other shows of force against a child.
- Sexual abuse involves pressuring or forcing a child to engage in sexual acts. It includes behaviors such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities. Please see CDC.gov Preventing Child Sexual Abuse webpage for more information.
- Emotional abuse refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include name-calling, shaming, rejecting, withholding love, and threatening.
- Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs, which includes housing, food, clothing, education, access to medical care, and having feelings validated and appropriately responded to.

Pathway to Successful Blended Families

Moses and the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years with the hopes of making it to the promised land. The beginning stages of blending a family can cause you to feel much like you are wandering around in the wilderness. You may lose hope and feel like you will never make it to the promised land of “happily ever after.” Most stepfamily experts say that it takes an average of seven years for a newly formed stepfamily to blend. Here are some suggestions to get on the right path towards the life you desire.

- 1. LEARN THE DYNAMICS OF ENTERING INTO A STEPFAMILY.** Understand the myths associated with stepfamilies such as “instant bonding” like the Brady bunch. Bonding does not happen instantly. Avoid common pitfalls like trying to force relationships.
- 2. SET GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR FAMILY, BUT BE WILLING TO LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS.** Expecting a non-biological parent to automatically function like a biological parent is an expectation that is too high. Relationships take time.
- 3. DEFINE ROLES IN THE FAMILY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Have a family meeting to discuss roles and to assure children that the stepparent is not replacing their biological parent. Avoid trying to be super

stepmom or super stepdad. Help children to understand their role in the new family.

4. EAT MEALS TOGETHER.

Believe it or not, eating meals together helps stepfamilies to bond. Dinner is one of the best meals for stepfamilies and any family to enjoy, because everyone can talk about the events of their day.

5. GIVE EVERYONE TIME

AND SPACE. Everyone needs space. If possible, plan for a home where children can have their own space rather than sharing with a stepsibling. Allow the biological parent time and space with their kids. Set boundaries to ensure “couple time.” Be willing to understand when a stepparent needs a break from your children.

Pray for your family and be willing to do what it takes to make your marriage and new family work. Before you know it, you will be on your way. •



By Dr. Janice R. Love
Certified Christian
Counselor and Stepfamily
Specialist

Dr. Love is the wife of Rev. Bobby Love, Sr., and author of *One Plus One Equals Ten: A First Lady's Survival Guide for Stepmoms*.



Shifting My Mind, Shifted My Weight

My weight-loss struggle is real. People who know me would say, “all Nina ever talks about is how FAT she is.” Over the last 50 years I have always felt self-conscious about my weight. I was either too skinny or someone reminded me that I had picked up a lot of weight! Because of that, I was never satisfied with my weight. I never tried on clothes in a store and would not view myself in a full-

**I CAN CHOOSE HOW I WILL
ACHIEVE MY HEALTH GOALS
AND YOU CAN DO IT TOO**

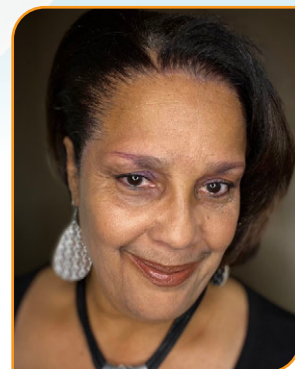
length mirror. I have always let my weight define me—at least in my mind. Over the past 10 to 15 years, I spent more than \$17,000 on diets or weight-loss procedures that did not provide permanent results, because I never followed them to the finish line. At the tender age of 64, something clicked in my brain, I retired and began to see life differently.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

I came to the realization that the issue was not my weight per se, but rather how I allowed my weight issues

to affect my mental health and let others’ opinions define me. I already knew that losing 5 to 10 percent of my body weight would not only make me feel better, but also improve my mental health and lower my risk of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. I had read many times in *Our Health Matters* magazine over the years about things that impact my health. I’ve been reminded that I must keep my weight within a healthy range, know my blood pressure numbers and get in at least 30 minutes of daily exercise.

I can choose how I will achieve my health goals—and you can do it too. Your physical and mental health depends on it! By the way, with a few lifestyle changes, drinking more water, and getting those steps in, I have lost 35 pounds—down from 210 to 175! It was a choice I made for me—no one else. •



Nina Howard

Retired, Director of
Community Relations
and Engagement
Samuel U. Rodgers
Health Center

Family, Faith and Unwavering Resilience

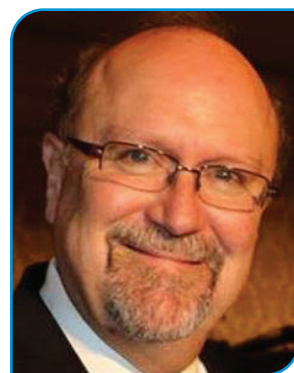
When I was 12 years old, my mother passed along some wisdom about what a healthy family needed. In all my endeavors in my own family, as a person involved in community betterment, and as a pastor, I've not found a better set of guidelines.

In the midst of a potentially tragic situation—news that my mother had been diagnosed with an incurable disease — our family affected by divorce (at a time in our nation when divorce was rare), the specter of poverty—we were saved by following a core set of priorities. My mother seemed to be unfazed. Courageous and sure, even facing her own impending death, she moved our family to a new town. During a curiously comforting drive, halfway through the expanse of the King Ranch, on the way from Brownsville, Texas, to Pasadena, Texas (a suburb of Houston), she remarked: “Just remember, son, if you have a good congregation, a good school, and a good doctor, a family can have a good life.”

Living by that set of guidelines, our family avoided tragedy and, in fact, experienced more than a few triumphs thereafter.

This precious memory has consistently helped to guide me as a pastor and as a person concerned about community betterment, when individuals, families, and organizations have sought out reassuring support during times of crisis and chaos.

As my mother said years before I understood her point, I also ask, do we have good school systems? Do we have a good healthcare system? Do we have good congregations? A focus on these could yet guide many families considering our present societal predicaments. •



By Dr. Robert Lee Hill
Community Consultant

Dr. Robert Lee Hill is Minister Emeritus of Community Christian Church, where he served for more than 30 years. He is also Community Consultant with the Kauffman Foundation, with a focus on community engagement with public education. He is the author of ten books, most recently, *Life is to Be Celebrated: Messages for the 21st Century*.



“Just remember, son, if you have a good congregation, a good school, and a good doctor, a family can have a good life.”

— Bennie Lee Smith Hill
Dr. Robert Lee Hill's mother

Foster Parents Serve a Valuable Purpose

By Matt Hamer

FosterAdopt Connect

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult on everyone, but particularly difficult on foster parents and the youth in their care. As schools closed, workplaces went remote, and health precautions made everyday life more complicated, many foster parents were unable to continue fostering. Though a shortage of foster homes is nothing new, we now face a crisis-level scarcity of foster families, particularly ones that are willing to take in older youth and sibling groups.

Youth who age out of foster care without having a permanent family face some grim statistics:

42% will be convicted of a crime

20% experience instant homelessness

70% of girls become pregnant by age 21. The children born to these young parents often end up in foster care, and the cycle continues.

Most kids who are in foster care also have siblings in care. Being removed from one's home, no matter how dysfunctional the environment was, is an incredibly

traumatic experience. Families willing to take multiple children at once allow agencies to keep sibling groups together, thus sparing children the additional trauma of being separated from each other. Any bit of consistency and normalcy helps ground these kids and ease them into a new environment as they begin their healing journey.

**FAMILIES WILLING TO TAKE
MULTIPLE CHILDREN AT ONCE
ALLOW AGENCIES TO KEEP SIBLING
GROUPS TOGETHER.**

FosterAdopt Connect is a local resource with more than 20 years of experience working in the Kansas and Missouri foster care systems. They break the cycle of generational trauma by offering services to youth in foster care, foster/adoptive families and the biological families of kids in care. Children entering the foster care system need families that will provide love, healing and stability for a brighter future.

Consider becoming a foster parent by opening your home to youth who need a loving family. To learn about requirements to become a foster parent, visit fosteradopt.org. •

WHAT'S NEXT?



- SEPTEMBER 2022 - Finding That Happy Place Together

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services about half of all people in the United States will be diagnosed with a mental disorder at some point in their lifetime. Mental disorders affect people of all ages and racial/ethnic groups, but some populations are disproportionately affected.

Our Health Matters' delivers insights on mental health and substance use disorders. Learn about various types of conditions and disorders, as well as counseling and treatment programs/services relevant to age, gender, mental health disorder and payment source.

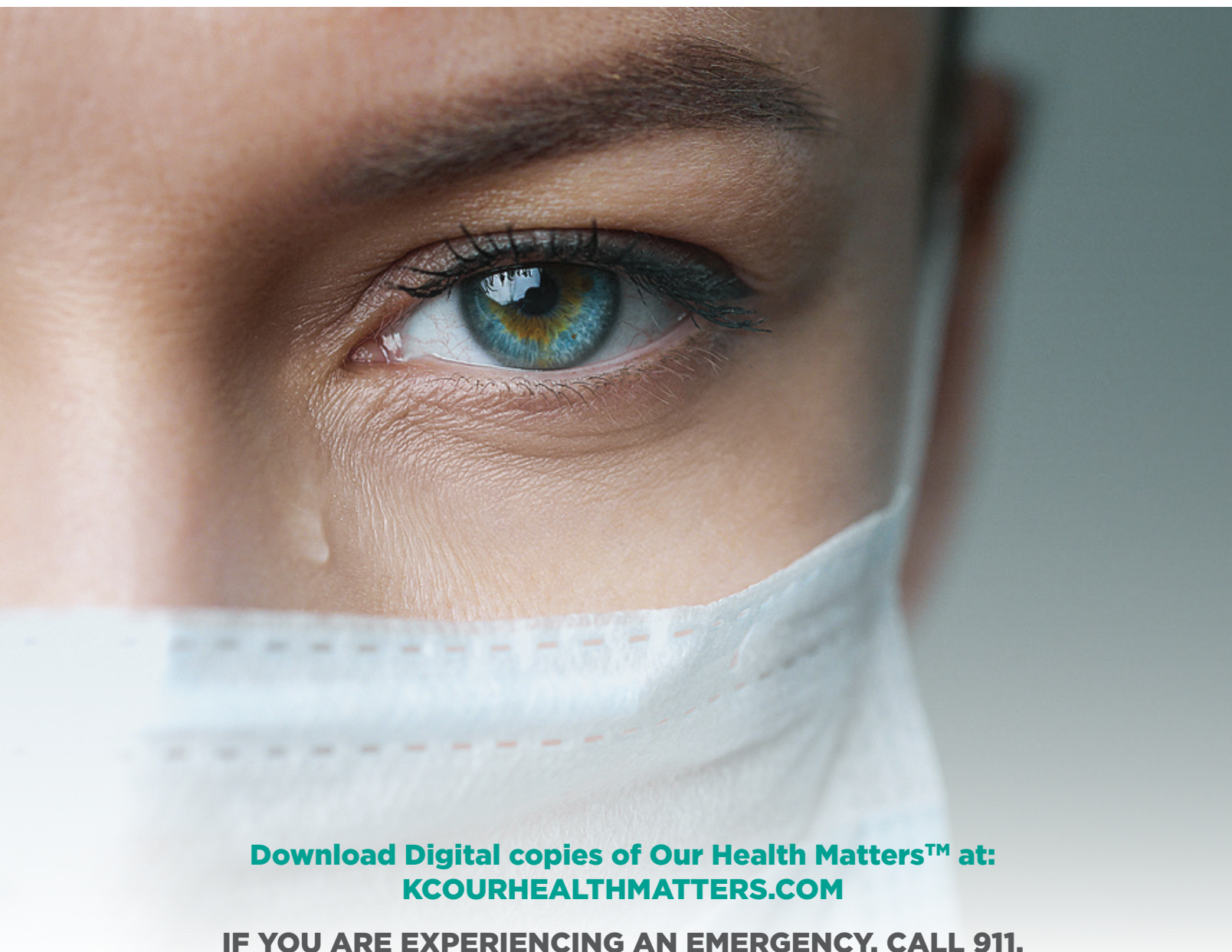
Individuals and families will learn steps that enable them to effectively navigate mental and behavior health systems. Included are resources to help you identify licensed counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, to name a few.

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IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

If you or someone you know is struggling to cope or threatening self-harm, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK

**FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION ON COVID-19 TESTING
AND VACCINATIONS VISIT THE KANSAS CITY MO HEALTH
DEPARTMENT WEBSITE AT [KCMO.GOV](https://kcmo.gov)**