

May 2026

MONTHLY INNOVATORS NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Issue 01

Spring into Summer



Greetings! Welcome to the first monthly Innovators newsletter!

“You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream.”

- C.S. Lewis

- Mental Health Awareness Month
- World Laughter Day
- Mental Health Challenge
- Infused Water
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Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Month, which serves as an opportunity to raise awareness of, prioritize, and educate others on the topic of mental health. Millions of Americans experience a mental health illness. Mental Health Month provides us an opportunity to come together to increase our understanding of mental health challenges, embrace the benefits of prioritizing our mental health, spotlight resources, and create a stronger mental health community.



**Growth
favors focus.**

For more information on Mental Health Month or resources available to you as an OSU employee, visit nami.org or wellness.okstate.edu.

May 3rd – World Laughter Day (first Sunday)

World Laughter Day is celebrated each year on the first Sunday of May, bringing people together across the globe to share joy and positivity. Founded in 1998 by Madan Kataria, the creator of the Laughter Yoga movement, the day is rooted in the belief that laughter can foster world peace, friendship, and a sense of global unity. Its purpose is to highlight the physical and mental health benefits of laughter, from reducing stress to strengthening social connections. On this day, people in more than 70 countries gather in parks, community spaces, and public venues to participate in group laughter sessions, often practicing laughter yoga exercises that encourage playful interaction and collective happiness.

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- **Laughter triggers the release of “feel-good” chemicals in the brain called endorphins, which help improve mood and reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.**
 - **It lowers levels of cortisol, the body’s primary stress hormone, helping you feel more relaxed both mentally and physically.**
 - **Laughing can improve heart health by increasing blood flow and supporting better function of blood vessels, similar to light exercise.**
 - **Laughter can even boost the immune system by increasing the production of antibodies and activating protective cells in the body.**
 - **Regular laughter is linked to better overall mental health, helping reduce symptoms associated with conditions like Depression and Anxiety disorder.**

Mental Health Challenge

This month, we'll challenge ourselves to prioritize our mental health in following five ways

1.

Set aside at least 15 minutes every day for breathing exercise, reflection, meditation, or prayer.

Setting aside quiet time for yourself can help you recharge and refresh your outlook on life. It can also give your mind a break from excess external stimuli.

2.

Get outside every day.

Whether this looks like taking your lunch outdoors, turning a short team meeting into a walking meeting, or tending to your garden, spending time outdoors can boost your mental health.

3.

Aim to get 30 minutes of exercise every day.

Whether this is done in short, five minute increments or all at once, exercising in a way you enjoy can help reduce symptoms of stress, depression, anxiety, and promote better heart health.

4.

Write a list of positive affirmations for yourself.

It may sound trivial, but posting reminders to be kind to yourself at your desk, in your room, or elsewhere can help improve your mood and self-image.

5.

Share love and kindness with others.

Whether it's a random act of kindness or simply reminding others how much you care about and appreciate them, be the leader this month in creating healthy habits of love.



Infused Water

Here are some recipes for infused water!

For all options:
5 cups of water
1 cup of ice, cubed (optional)

Strawberry, Basil, and Lemon:
1/2 cup strawberries stemmed and sliced, fresh or frozen
5 large basil leaves torn
1 lemon thinly sliced

Honeydew, Cucumber, and Mint:
1/2 cup honeydew cubes
1 cucumber thinly sliced
10 fresh mint leaves torn

Add some flavor to your water

Blackberry, Orange, and Ginger:
1/2 pint blackberries
1 lemon thinly sliced
4 sprigs fresh rosemary

Watermelon, Kiwi, and Lime:
1 cup watermelon cubes
1 kiwi diced or cut into circles
1 lime sliced into circles

Mango, Raspberry, and Ginger:
1 mango peeled and cubed
1/2 pint raspberries
1 (2-inch) piece ginger peeled and thinly sliced



Instructions:

1. Place fruit in the bottom of your jar.
2. Pour water in and stir fruit around.
3. Press on the fruit lightly with a spoon to release some of the flavors.
4. Refrigerate for at least one hour (can even do overnight).
5. Add ice just before serving. Enjoy!

Sip and Enjoy!

Innovator Spotlight



Everyone meet Kelsey Grey, our spotlight innovator of the month

This month, we're excited to spotlight Kelsey Grey, one of our newest Wellness Innovators from Scholarships and Financial Aid, who brings fresh energy and creativity to making wellness approachable and realistic for everyone. Since stepping into the role just last month after completing Innovator training, she has already made an immediate impact by encouraging her team to prioritize wellness, even during the busiest times of year. Her first initiative, centered around "eating your greens," included a thoughtfully crafted newsletter, shared recipes, and an open invitation for colleagues to connect and exchange ideas. She finds it especially rewarding when small efforts turn into meaningful moments, with team members reaching out via Teams or in person to share how they've incorporated the month's theme and other wellness practices into their daily lives.

A proud OSU alum who recently returned in December 2025, Kelsey blends her background in higher education, entrepreneurship, and esthetics with a passion for both internal and external health. Before returning to campus, she ran her own business as a licensed esthetician, offering services like facials, waxing, makeup, and even spray tanning for bodybuilding competitions—an experience she describes as both fun and rewarding. That diverse background now shapes her holistic approach to wellness, where she values both physical health and overall well-being.

Outside the office, Kelsey prioritizes wellness through daily walks on her lunch break, balanced meals, and staying active throughout the day, even incorporating quick stretches or movement breaks between tasks. She enjoys listening to audiobooks and podcasts while walking, kayaking at Lake McMurry with her dogs in the summer, and recently rediscovering her love for rollerblading, which has become one of her favorite workouts. At the heart of her wellness journey is her family. She and her husband, Chazz, are raising their two young daughters, who inspire her to prioritize her health and well-being so she can be present for them for years to come. Her philosophy is simple but powerful: wellness doesn't have to feel like a chore—find something you love and make it your own. She embraces both science-backed practices and "woo-woo" wellness trends, from yoga and meditation to teas, essential oils, and lymphatic health tools, and is always eager to connect, share ideas, and learn what works for others.

Congrats Kelsey!

Wellness Tips

- **Practice Sun Safety**

Those dark and dreary days of winter are over! Make sure to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15. Also wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat for extra protection when outdoors.

- **Move More, Sit Less**

Take advantage of the days getting longer and warmer! Strive to achieve up to 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity every week, plus at least 2 days of muscle strengthening activities.

- **Get Enough Sleep**

The average adult needs at least 7 hours of sleep at night. Research has shown that developing a healthy sleep routine can help maintain a healthy weight! Insufficient sleep is known to influence the hormones that control hunger. Staying up late is shown to increase the likelihood of over eating!

- **Laughing = Health**

Laughter is the best medicine, right? Not only is laughter good for your mental health, but it's also great for your physical health. When you laugh, your brain releases endorphins which make you feel happy and more at ease. Your whole body relaxes, your blood flow increases, and laughing 10-15 minutes a day can even burn some calories!

Important Highlights

Wellness Wednesday- Financial Health

Wed 5/13/2026 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Robert Raab

Registration- Fusion

Climb and Connect

Tues 5/26/2026 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Location: Colvin Climbing Wall

Registration coming soon

Wellness Wednesday-

Wed 6/3/2026 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Balancing professional and personal demands (Roberta Douglas) Seretean Lecture Hall

Walks with Wellness - Mental Health Resource Walk

Thu 6/11/2026 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM