

Monthly Newsletter

July 29, 2021 Issue 4

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Our Pets Challenge!

Do you have a pet or enjoy nature and animals?!

Post a photo of your pet or a nature photo that you took on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) and caption the photo with a brief description of how animals and/or nature has helped with SEL in your daily life! This is a great activity to do with the children in your life as well, feel free to download the free coloring page we created [here](#).



How Animals Improve Our SEL

As many of us know, animals can be great friends and companions, but they also help us start conversations and provide comfort to those around them.

Domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, and horses have been used in animal assisted therapy for the benefits just mentioned and much more. Animals have a unique effect on the people they interact with no matter their age or relationship with the animal. Organizations such as [Gizmo 4 Mental Health](#), [Mutt-i-grees Curriculum](#), and [Animal Allies](#) discuss the many ways in which animals can be used in a way to improve children and adults social and emotional learning, such as teaching empathy and selflessness.

Animals not only help children but adults as well. In this [article](#) by Help Guide and this [article](#) by Mental Health America discuss the many health benefits of owning pets. These benefits include lower blood pressure, decreased anxiety and depression levels, decreased levels of heart disease, increased positive affect, increased feelings of connectedness and social wellbeing. The articles also

discuss other health benefits such as increased exercise, daily structure, and companionship.

For more information please visit our full blog post [here](#).

The Importance of Friendships



We all know how important friendships can be, especially in times of uncertainty. During the Covid-19 pandemic many of us realized how important friendships are; and as our lives begin to go back to normal, it is more important than ever to cherish these friendships.

This [interview](#) with Lydia Denworth on her book about friendship with The Greater Good explains that friendships are not just good for children but adults as well. Friendships help to provide social skills and social connections with others. Friendship also teaches us to create strong bonds with others based on similar interests other than familial relations. For more information please view the full blog post [here](#).

Family Resource Round-up

The month of July is a great time to celebrate and recognize family members who may not always get the spotlight - such as aunts, uncles, and cousins.

According to the [National Holiday Calendar](#) there are many “holidays” this month to celebrate family members such as [National Cousins Day](#), [National Parents Day](#), [National Aunt & Uncle Day](#), and much more. With such beautiful weather and fun holidays we thought this would be a great time to do a Family Resource Round up. Below is a brief list of some great family resources, however you can find many more resources on our [family page](#) and in our [blog posts](#).

- [Women in SEL & Resources for Women and Families](#)

- [SEL4CT Father's Day Blog Post](#)

- [SEL4CT Pride Month Blog Post](#)

World Listening Day

We talk a lot about the value of listening skills as part

of SEL work. So we couldn't let July pass without noting that July 18th was World Listening Day, a day dedicated to taking a moment to pause and listen to the world around you. This [article](#) by National Today explains what world listening day is, the history behind it, how to celebrate it, and why it is important to celebrate it. As we discuss World Listening Day we thought that it would be a great time to remind everyone about mindful listening. This great [article](#) by Mindful and this [article](#) by Mindworks explains why mindful listening is so important, but also the difficulties of listening. This [article](#) explains how practicing mindfulness can help you to reconnect with nature. Although it mentions to walk and observe or to sit and observe nature, it also goes hand in hand with World Listening Day - a time where you can sit and listen to nature or walk and listen to nature. For more information please see the full blog post [here](#). We hope that this inspires you to go outside and take in the wonderful world around you!

What do

you hear?

Laughter and Social, Emotional Learning

Did you know that laughter can boost your immune system, decrease pain, and even help prevent heart disease? Did you also know that laughter can relieve stress and some anxiety, while increasing positive affect? You might be wondering why we are discussing laughter right now - but we thought that after all these difficult times and with so many people still working from home it would be a wonderful topic to discuss. This article, [Laughing is good for your mind and your body – here's what the research shows](#), by The Conversation discusses how important laughter is for the mind, body, and friendships. This article, [Laughter and Learning: Humor Boosts Retention](#) by Edutopia, discusses the importance of humor in education. This [article](#) by CNBC explains the connection between laughter and productivity. We have all heard the saying that happy employees work harder, and according to this article there is truth behind that saying. Please see the full blog post [here](#) for more great information on laughter.

SEL, Equity, and Anti-Racism

CASEL [recently updated their definition of SEL to include equity](#). How does that impact the work that you are doing? Are you



participating in expanding equity efforts in your work? SEL4CT is looking to take our next steps in this work and would love to hear more about your efforts. Please send us an email so we can set up some time to discuss further at info@sel4ct.org.

Are you looking for resources to support your efforts or perhaps expand further into equity work? Check out our [resource page](#) and [blog posts](#). We're adding content as we learn about it. Is there something we should include, or have missed? Is your organization doing this work? Please send us an email and let us know!

SEL Day 2022 Committee

#SELday



Do you think it is important to spread awareness about SEL? Do you have some free time that you would like to fill with SEL advocacy? Then we have the perfect opportunity for you! We are looking to add new members to the SEL Day committee to prepare for SEL Day 2022 and to spread the word about SEL. These committee positions are flexible and voluntary, if you have any ideas on how to increase awareness of SEL Day and SEL in general please reach out to info@sel4ct.org.

Gratitude Minute: Our Furry Friends

As we discuss friendships and pets in this issue of our newsletter, we want to take a moment to thank all of our pets. Our pets have helped us get through many tough times, including the global pandemic of Covid-19. Our pets are always there for us and accept us for who we are at all times. If you haven't yet today, we hope that you take a moment to thank your pet for everything that they have done for you. If you are looking for ideas on how to thank your furry friend please view our blog post [here](#).

Gratitude Resources

Promote The Work

Are you feeling the need to share and connect? Do you have a perspective, opportunity, or new information to share, something you think we should be talking about? Well we want to hear from you! Tell us about it so we can share it and spread the word.

We are looking for guest blog writers, passionate committee members, enthusiastic novices and generally interested folks to join us as we do the work to share the word about SEL with children of all ages looking to learn, practice and share the social emotional skills needed to thrive.

Gratitude Germination Challenge
The Importance of Gratitude in SEL
Mindful Appreciation



Have an event you'd like us to promote? A method you'd like to discuss, a perspective we should all hear, or a resource we should all see? Please reach out! info@sel4ct.org



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SEL4CT, the Social Emotional Learning Alliance for Connecticut, is powered by the Connecticut After School Network.