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## Youth Suicide

07-09-16

Suicide now is the second-leading cause of death among young people in Minnesota and across the country, according to new research published this week. The report, titled "Suicide and Suicide Attempts in Adolescents," updates an American Academy of Pediatrics report from 2007, when suicide was the third-leading cause of death for people age 15 to 19. The new research lists bullying and internet use as big risk factors for that age group. Dr. Benjamin Shain of NorthShore University HealthSystem is the lead author of the report. He says online bullying can be as serious as face-to-face bullying...

..."behaviors and suicides." :14

According to the suicide awareness group Save, 25-percent of public school 9th graders in Minnesota have had suicidal thoughts. Dr. Shain says one of the best ways for parents to help prevent youth suicide is to talk openly and calmly with their kids.

And while the report notes that more than 5 hours of internet use a day is strongly linked with high levels of depression, Shain warns that simply trying to block access to a teen's online social network likely won't help the situation. 7:30

Sat/Sun

## **Report Concludes Children of Color Lag Behind in Minnesota**

07-01-16

Minnesota tops the nation when it comes to children's well-being, but a new report says there's still work to do, especially for children of color. In the latest national study, Kids Count Data Book, Minnesota ranked number one for the second year in a row, with big improvements in education and health-care access. The numbers also show the state has seen a big drop in the rates of teen drug abuse and teen births. But Stephanie Hogenson with the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota says the state continues to struggle with one of the highest rates of poverty among minority children.

HOGENSON CUT 1 10 SEC

OUTCUE"...almost half of Asian children live in in low-income households."

Hogenson says Minnesota could help ease the financial burdens on these families in several ways, including setting up a statewide paid family-leave program and boosting childcare assistance. The Data Book ranks each state on 16 benchmarks, including health and education.

## **Otter Angel Program Still Helping Students In Fergus Falls**

07-19-16

A program called Otter Angel Fund was started in 2014, to help Fergus Falls Students who do not have money in their lunch accounts to purchase lunches. With community support and donations, a supplemental fund was set up and Otter Angel was born. The program is still going according to Superintendent Jerry Ness...

FFPS NESS 21 SEC

OUTCUE: "...we'll put it into that account.

Ness says that it has been steady with donations and usage for the last couple years and provides a much needed safety net for students in need.

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## **Summer Child Nutrition**

07-16-16

Minnesota could be doing more to help low-income families feed their children when they're not in school. The summer nutrition report from the Food Research and Action Center shows for every six Minnesota kids who receive free or reduced-price lunches during the school year, only one has access to a summer meal program. Cathy Maes heads up the nonprofit Loaves and Fishes Minnesota. She says for some families in the state, summer meal programs are one of the only options they have to help keep their kids fed...

... "just not happening." :14

Nationally, the report ranks Minnesota 24th for providing access to summer meals for lower-income children. Advocates for those families say the state could do more, particularly to inform parents that the programs are available, to help feed thousands of additional kids. Colleen Moriarty with Hunger Solutions Minnesota says the U-S Department of Agriculture has made recent changes to its summer meals program, aimed at expanding access to people living in Greater Minnesota. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, about 870 summer meal sites are operating across the state. To find one near you, call the Minnesota Food HelpLine at 888-711-1151.

## **New Farmer Program**

07-16-16

As the average age of Minnesota's farmers continues to trend toward retirement, a longtime program is helping the next crop of young farmers. New faces are much-needed in the industry, according to the Land Stewardship Project, a sustainable-agriculture support group. It holds a "Farm Beginnings" course and is taking applications for people looking to get started. Course organizer Dori Eder says the goal is to connect new and prospective farmers with their more experienced counterparts, and folks with related business experience...

..."course for farmers." :15

In the past 19 years, more than 750 people have gone through the Farm Beginnings course. For the next round of classes this fall, people have until September 1st to apply.

The U-S Department of Agriculture says consumer demand for locally-grown foods is continuing to expand. Eder believes the next generation of Minnesota farmers and the state itself will see long-term benefits from making farm operations both profitable and sustainable. The training program runs for a full year and typically meets on weekends to help freshman farmers to navigate everything from farm and financial planning to marketing.

## Coats for Kids

08-08-16

The Coats for Kids drive is now underway in Otter Tail County. The program helps to defray cold weather clothing costs for parents who may not be able to afford it.

Residents are asked to clean out closets. New or gently used coats, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens, sizes birth to adult XL, are welcome. Though the program is called "Coats for Kids," adult coats are welcome as well, because many parents also go without the proper attire.

Donations can be dropped off at United Way in Fergus Falls and at Farmers and Merchants State Bank of New York Mills. There are four drop-off locations in Perham: Bremer Bank, Calvary Lutheran, United Community Bank, and St. Henry's Church.

The coats and other cold weather gear will be distributed through the Salvation Army in Fergus Falls and Calvary Lutheran Church in Perham.

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## School Lunch Prices To Rise

06-13-16

Fergus Falls students will see a 10 cent increase across the board in school meal prices with the 2016-2017 school year. In a resolution that was approved by the Fergus Falls School Board, all K-5 school meals will rise from \$2.15 to 2.25 and all 6-12 meals will go up from \$2.30 to 2.40, which in a typical 180 day school year amounts to an \$18 increase not counting any breakfast or extra food or drink. Business Manager Mark Masten said it was certain that the district would lose federal funding if the resolution was not approved. School Board member Jeff Hohrman cast the only dissenting nay vote...

HOHRMAN SCHOOL LUNCH INCREASE 30 SEC

OUTCUE: "...that's what I think of that, NAY."

In other school board meeting highlights, the retiring Athletic Director Gary Schuler gave his last report to the board with a spring and fall sports update. A resolution was also approved for some sidewalk work in conjunction with the City of Fergus Falls, with the same contractor Quality Construction.

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## **State of America's Fathers**

06-18-16

Just ahead of Father's Day, a new state-by-state study shows Minnesota tops the nation for working dads, but there's still work to do. The first-ever State of America's Fathers report suggests there are two fatherhood experiences in the U-S: one where higher-income dads are praised for being more involved than ever in their kids' lives; the other is where low-income fathers are stigmatized for their lack of resources. While Minnesota already provides up to six weeks of leave for new parents, report co-author Gary Barker says the state could make several other changes, including paid family leave, to help close that gap...

..."being an employee." :13

The Minnesota Family Leave Act failed this past legislative session, but lawmakers say it's likely to come up again next year. Some business groups have opposed the idea, saying it would put an undue financial burden on small-business owners. The report also shows that if men are able to take on at least 40-percent of care-giving responsibilities, their children do better in school and have healthier social interactions. Barker says the U-S could take cues from other countries that have national leave policies...

..."and more productive." :11

Other findings in the report include that if men were able to take more time for caregiving, women would be able to participate in the labor market at the same rate as men, which could in turn add billions of dollars to the U-S economy.

## **Farm To Schools Grants To Be Awarded**

06-17-16

In a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, a grant has been announced for local schools and day care providers around the state. The 2017 AGRI Farm to School Grant Program anticipates awarding up to \$500,000 in competitive grants to increase sales of locally grown and raised foods to K-12 institutions and child care providers. Mary Hanks Director of Marketing and Development...

MARY HANKS MDA 32 SEC

OUTCUE: "...print out an application and submit it through the mail."

Two categories of grants will be considered for the purchase of equipment, physical improvements or plans that will allow schools to purchase, prepare, and serve more locally grown and raised food. As part of the grant, the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is providing up to \$125,000 to help schools and child care providers meet the requirement for matching funds. All applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 2, 2016.

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