

OPINION: Why you should be excited about fall

Student Voices



Sophie Fitch

Sweaters. Leaves. Halloween. The pumpkin patch. All of these have one thing in common: they all relate to fall.

Everyone should be excited that autumn arrived this week. If you aren't, I am going to tell you why you should be.

First things first, everyone should be ready for the new scenery and weather. After having the very long "summer break" due to the coronavirus canceling several social events, I am excited to get some chill in the air. Some people might say that cold weather is the worst, but I disagree. Don't get me wrong, I love a hot summer day, but I love being able to wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt or maybe a cute sweater outside and be comfortable.

Another reason why fall is great is the way the outdoors change and everything will become beautiful. All the leaves turn orange, yellow, or red and make all the trees so beautiful.

My all-time favorite thing about fall is Halloween. Out of everything that happens in fall, Halloween gets me the most excited. Halloween is one of the best holidays because it gives you an excuse to dress up, go out with your friends, and get scared.

There are also multiple haunted houses around where you can go to have a great time. Haunted houses are everywhere during autumn; they are so much fun. Crying during them - but

laughing about them later - is my favorite kind of memory to make during fall with all my friends. Crying, screaming and running frantically pushing your friends to get through the scary mazes and house are memories that will last a lifetime.

Another amazing thing about fall is all of the activities you can do with family and friends. One thing that you can only do during fall is going to the pumpkin patch. Growing up going to the pumpkin patch was

the best time ever. You can go down the slides, jump on the huge trampoline, and even pick your very own pumpkin to bring back home with you.

After hearing all of the reasons why fall is extraordinary, you should all be as excited as I am for fall.

Sophie Fitch is a junior at Doniphan-Trumbull Public School. We will be sharing a number of columns from D-T Journalism students in The Chirp this year.

Changes made to parent-teacher conferences to keep families healthy

"I appreciate how the school gave us parents the option on how we wanted to hear feedback from our kids."

Taren Baxter

D-T parent



Courtesy Photo

D-T Librarian Julie Hendricks stands in front of her massage therapy business in downtown Doniphan. Hendricks opened her local massage therapy business two years ago.

D-T Librarian Julie Hendricks also has Doniphan massage therapy business

By Katrina Caraway
D-T Journalism

DONIPHAN – Teachers and students know D-T librarian Julie Hendricks from working at the school, but this woman does other amazing things. Hendricks happens to own her own massage parlor, which has been a passion project of hers for years.

"I began doing massage therapy in 2000 because I was attracted to setting my own hours," Hendricks said. "I felt having control of my schedule would work well for me since I was starting a family. I also received a massage and found the relaxing muscle relief to be extremely beneficial. I wanted to help others relieve stress and muscle tension."

Hendricks went to massage school at the Universal College of Healing Arts in Omaha. She attended school

"There is such a fantastic physical and spiritual side to massage therapy."

Julie Hendricks

Owner, Julie's Massage Therapy
Librarian at D-T School

in the evenings because during the day she would be working hard at her job with the U.S. Postal Service. She spent one year studying; she also had to get in some clinical hours along the way. Students at this college get a natural balance between academics and hands-on experiences.

"I found it difficult, but challenging in a good way when I had to juggle work, school and family," Hendricks said.

Massage therapy has always been a side job for Hendricks, but anyone with eyes can tell that Hendricks really loves what she does. Hendricks opened her business, Julie's Massage Therapy, at 125 Plum Street in downtown Doniphan two years ago. She had a home business in Louisville, Neb., prior to moving to Cardinal Country. She usually gives around 20 massages a month, but just like everyone else, sadly, business has slowed since COVID-19 hit.

"I love massage therapy because giving a massage is as relaxing as receiving a massage," Hendricks said. "There is such a fantastic physical and spiritual side to massage therapy."

COVID-19: Mental health aftershocks

By Raegan Saylor
D-T Journalism

DONIPHAN – Whether it's basic stress or deep depression, COVID-19 has negatively affected many peoples mental health. At Doniphan-Trumbull High School 60.3 percent of students say they have felt some type of mental effect from COVID-19.

Luckily, the school happens to be one of a few schools that has an onsite therapist, Liesel Hogan, to help



Liesel Hogan
ESU9 Therapist at D-T School

they might come in contact with the virus multiple times a day while walking through the halls or sitting in class. Though D-T has mandated masks as part of the dress code, which has calmed some anxieties, that doesn't mean every student is wearing and using the masks correctly. The school is doing what it can to help students manage their anxiety.

"I feel like the mask gives students a sense of security," Hogan said.

While D-T is pushing masks, not all local schools are as diligent. At Aurora Public Schools, parents have the option to sign a waiver stating their child doesn't have to wear a mask. This opt-out policy is making some students feel unsafe causing more anxious thoughts.

"It's called an opt-out waiver, and basically you get permission from your parents

that you don't have to wear a mask," said Caitlyn Enderle, an Aurora student. "There are exceptions with food and FCS classes because they involve food. If we start getting cases though it will get more strict; the fact that some kids don't wear masks just worries me since if I come in contact with COVID it not only affects me but also my family and my job at the hospital."

Enderle, like many students, is an essential worker. Studies suggest these workers are experiencing more anxiety and depression symptoms, and since many students are working at essential businesses, schools need to be increasingly concerned about their mental health.

According to a USA Today report, more than half of the essential workers polled reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health symptom, and 22 percent reported suicidal thoughts. These facts are concerning, to say the least.

"It's scary because I go to work at the hospital where I can come in contact with CO-

VID and then go home where it can affect my family, and I have school on top of that," Enderle said. "It's all very stressful. I'm doing what I can like wearing a mask and protecting myself, but that doesn't stop other people from not listening to what can keep them safe."

Since so many more people are affected by stress, anxiety, depression, and other hardships it is important to reach out. Many teens are struggling to deal with the circumstances in healthy ways.

D-T Guidance Counselor Nikki Sjuts, recommends reaching out.

"Reaching out to a trusted adult of any type is a great way to start," she said. "Any D-T teacher or staff member has training in ways to respond. Sometimes students feel that an anonymous helpline is a way to manage any fears they may have of reaching out to others. These can be a great way to start seeking assistance. A great resource is the Nebraska Family Helpline available anytime at 888-866-8660."

New Friends

More pets being adopted during coronavirus

Lacie Naden
D-T Journalism

DONIPHAN – During quarantine, a brand new trend started: more people began to adopt more pets to help them pass the time at home. Many people adopted pets during quarantine to give them some companionship and to fill the time.

"My family and I got a puppy from our neighbor because they were selling their two puppies," said sophomore Collin Jepson. "Our new puppy is a black lab and an Australian shepherd mix. 'We've had our puppy for two months.'"

The pandemic may have kept people at home, but it didn't mean they had to go it alone. At the time this article was written, a whopping 253 pets had been adopted from the Capital Humane Society in Lincoln and 112 pets from the Central Nebraska Humane Society in Grand Island found their forever homes. In Hastings, Start Over Rover had seen 29 pets adopted, while Heartland Pet Connection had 13 pets adopted so far.

According to Pet Assure,

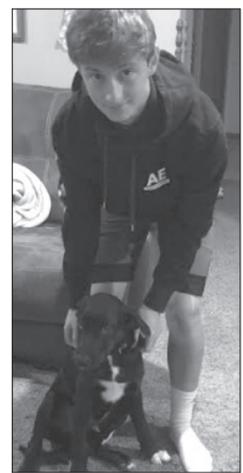
pets can help reduce stress, improve fitness and decrease blood pressure. Studies show that 80 percent of pet owners feel less lonely, so it's no wonder pet adoption rates

have gone through the roof during the quarantine. ASPCA estimates about 6.2 million shelter animals are adopted each year. According to Fox News, adoption during COVID-19 went up 700 percent.

"I adopted my dog because my other one died," said junior Emily Warford. "My new pet helped me by giving me something to take care of. I would have gone crazy during quarantine without him."

Welcoming new pets into their families has helped several D-T students deal with the stress of COVID-19. Of the 79 students polled, 12 adopted a new pet during quarantine, with seven getting a puppy pal and five taking home a feline friend.

"I wanted some new cats because my old ones ran away," said senior Aaron Bieck. "My two cats helped me be happier, and I was calmer than normal."



Courtesy Photo

D-T sophomore Collin Jepson and his new pup, Buck.

Need help? Call the Nebraska Family Helpline: 888-866-8660