



STILLWATER PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREVENTION & WELLNESS FAMILY NEWSLETTER

September 2025

Visit: StillwaterSchools.com/StudentSupport

ANGEL TREE APPLICATIONS ARE COMING SOON!



Payne & Noble Counties
IN-PERSON SIGNUPS ONLY
September 29th - October 3rd
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

The Salvation Army will begin taking in-person applications for the Angel Tree Christmas Assistance Program 2025.

Location: 1101 S. Lowry Street, Stillwater, OK 74074

Office: 405-372-1554

Please note:

No virtual appointments will be offered this year.

All applications must be completed in person during the listed dates and times.

To apply, you will need to bring:

- ✓ Photo ID (Driver's License or State ID)
- ✓ Proof of Residence (utility bill, rental agreement, etc.)
- ✓ Proof of Children (birth certificate or legal document showing guardianship)
- ✓ Proof of all Household Income (1 month paystubs, unemployment, SSI, food stamps, child support, etc.)
- ✓ Proof of all Household Expenses (rent/mortgage, utilities, car payment, insurance, etc.)

Angel Tree serves children ages 0–12 in Payne & Noble Counties. If you are outside of these counties, you will need to contact The Salvation Army in your area for assistance (dates may vary).



Vaping & Youth: What Families Need to Know

Vaping—using e-cigarettes or “vape pens”—has become increasingly popular among teens and even younger children. While often marketed as a safer alternative to smoking, vaping poses real risks to a young person’s health, brain development, and emotional well-being.

What is Vaping & Why is it Harmful?

Vaping devices heat up a liquid (often flavored) that contains nicotine, chemicals, and sometimes even THC (the psychoactive part of marijuana). Many youth are drawn to it for the flavors, social aspect, or because they believe it’s harmless.

The Facts Tell a Different Story

Most vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm brain development (especially before age 25). Vaping is linked to increased anxiety, mood swings, and poor concentration. Some vape products contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals that can damage lungs. Many teens who vape may eventually start smoking traditional cigarettes.

How to Talk to Your Child About Vaping

Honest, calm conversations are more effective than scare tactics. Start by asking questions like: “What have you heard about vaping at school or online?” “Do you know what’s in a vape?” “Why do you think some teens try it?” Then share facts and your concerns. Emphasize that you’re there to listen with out judgement and support their health and choices.

What Families Can Do

Stay informed about current trends, slang terms, and devices. Set clear expectations about not using nicotine or vaping products. Be a role model - children notice adult behaviors. Encourage healthy coping tools for stress, anxiety, or peer pressure. If you suspect your child is vaping, approach them with curiosity, not punishment. Focus on understanding the “why” and helping them make healthier decisions.

Vaping Is Not Harmless

Vaping might seem common, but it is not harmless. The more we educate and connect with our kids, the better equipped they are to make safe, informed choices. Your voice matters, Keep the conversation going - at the dinner table, in the car, or whenever a natural moment arises.

Sleep . . . Why it Matters

Sleep is vital for kids—not just for rest, but for emotional and mental health. While we often emphasize diet and learning, sleep plays a major role in brain development and mood regulation.

Why Sleep Matters:

- Helps process emotions and build memory
- Regulates mood and stress
- Recharges focus and attention

Kids with enough sleep are more likely to:

- Handle stress well
- Stay focused in school
- Maintain emotional balance
- Build healthy social connections

Too Little Sleep Can Lead To:

- Anxiety, irritability, mood swings
- Trouble concentrating
- Behavioral problems

Even missing 1–2 hours can make a big difference.

How Much Sleep Is Enough?

- Ages 6–12: 9–12 hours
- Ages 13–18: 8–10 hours

Tips for Better Sleep:

- Keep a consistent bedtime
- Limit screens an hour before bed
- Make the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- Skip caffeine and heavy snacks at night

Bottom Line:

Sleep is essential for your child's mental health. Prioritizing healthy sleep habits is a simple, powerful way to support their overall well-being.



Talking to Kids About School Safety

As kids head back to school, safety is on everyone's mind. Honest, calm conversations at home can help children feel more confident and secure.

Keep It Calm & Age-Appropriate:

- Speak calmly—kids take emotional cues from adults
- Use simple, age-appropriate language
- Focus on safety plans, not scary scenarios

Try saying:

"Drills at school are just like fire drills—they help everyone stay safe."

Encourage Questions & Share Safety Tips:

- Let kids know it's okay to ask questions
- Remind them trusted adults are always there to help
- Review basic safety rules like staying with a group and reporting anything unusual

Final Thought:

The goal is to build trust, not fear. When kids know the adults around them are prepared, they feel safer and more supported.



JOHNNY STACK FOUNDATION TO VISIT STILLWATER HIGH SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH ON SEPTEMBER 18TH

The Johnny Stack Foundation: Protecting Youth from Marijuana Harms

Rachel May, SPS Substance Abuse Counselor, and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma have scheduled special assemblies for Stillwater Junior High School and Stillwater High School students to hear Laura Stack, Johnny's mother, speak on the dangers of today's THC. She combines hard data with deeply personal experience. She addresses real-world risks of modern THC products. Her message is not just a warning but a movement toward informed, protected youth. Her presentation is designed to leave an impression that encourages dialogue and action.

The Johnny Stack Foundation (also known as Johnny's Ambassadors) was created in memory of Johnny Stack, a bright 19-year-old who died by suicide in 2019 after struggling with cannabis-induced psychosis. His mother, Laura Stack, turned her family's tragedy into a mission to educate parents and teens about the dangers of high-THC marijuana.

What Parents Should Know:

Today's marijuana is far more potent than in past decades, often containing 3–5 times higher THC levels. Regular teen use increases risks for mental health disorders, psychosis, addiction, and suicidal thoughts.

Parents play a critical role—open conversations, clear boundaries, and informed guidance make a difference.

The foundation provides free resources, webinars, fact sheets, and parent education programs to raise awareness and prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak.

Learn more and access parent resources: johnnysambassadors.org

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS MONTH

This is a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma and promote hope around mental health and suicide prevention.

Youth today face immense pressures—from academics and social media to identity struggles and emotional pain. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among ages 10–24, but it is preventable. Adults can make a life-saving difference by noticing warning signs, starting conversations, and offering support.

Know the Signs

Watch for:

- Talking about death or feeling like a burden
- Withdrawal from people or activities
- Mood swings, irritability, or sadness
- Drop in school performance
- Risk-taking or self-harm
- Saying goodbye or giving away possessions

Talk Openly

Talking about suicide doesn't increase risk—it can save lives. Be direct and compassionate:

- "You seem really down—want to talk?"
- "Are you feeling overwhelmed or thinking about hurting yourself?"

Listen without judgment and avoid trying to "fix" things right away.

If You're Concerned

- Stay with them and remove potential dangers
- Call/text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Connect them with a school counselor, therapist, or doctor
- Follow up—support matters beyond the crisis moment

Prevention Through Connection

Youth thrive when they feel:

- Accepted and connected to a trusted adult
- Safe to express themselves
- Empowered to ask for help

You can help by:

- Having regular check-ins
- Modeling healthy coping
- Reducing stigma around mental health
- Advocating for mental health support in schools

Build Protective Factors

Help youth build:

- Coping and problem-solving skills
- Supportive relationships
- A sense of purpose through hobbies or volunteering

Final Reminder

You don't need to be an expert—just show up, listen, and act. Together, we can create a world where every young person feels seen, supported, and safe.

Resources:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call/text 988
- Crisis Text Line – Text "HELLO" to 741741



NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
MONTH

FREE PARENTING WEBINARS

Operation Parent is a national nonprofit that offers free, evidence-based webinars geared toward empowering parents and caregivers to navigate today's complex challenges—from mental health to technology, risky behaviors, and more.

Webinar Library & Topics Covered

Beyond live sessions, Operation Parent provides a webinar library on their site, featuring topics such as:

- Substance use prevention (e.g., underage alcohol and cannabis use, vaping trends)
- Emotional & mental health (e.g., supporting youth through trauma, anxiety)
- Risky behaviors (e.g., addiction, social media, screen time, impaired driving)
- 21st-century technology (e.g., balancing screen time, understanding social media's impact) [operationparent.org](https://www.operationparent.org).

Some specific past webinars include:

- Talk Early, Talk Often: Prevent Underage Substance Use
- Helping Youth Heal: Support Through Family Addiction, Trauma & Stress
- Beyond 'Don't Do It': Real Talk About Youth Substance Use & Intervention
- Effective Strategies for Balancing Family Screen Time
- Understanding Social Media's Impact: Influencers, Body Image & Substances
- Raising and Educating Resilient, Super-Powered Tweens & Teens
- Safe Roads Ahead: How to Discuss Impaired Driving with Children and Teens with Tess Rowland (MADD) [operationparent.org](https://www.operationparent.org).

How to Participate

1. Visit the Operation Parent "Free Parenting Webinars" page to view and register for upcoming sessions [operationparent.org+1](https://www.operationparent.org+1).
2. Join live webinars (e.g., Driving It Home on Oct 7).
3. Explore the webinar library for past recordings and browse by topic.
4. Consider subscribing to their newsletter for updates on new webinars and other parenting resources [operationparent.org](https://www.operationparent.org).

Topics Covered

- ✓ Mental health & resilience 
- ✓ Substance use prevention
- ✓ Technology & social media
- ✓ Healthy family communication

Why Join?

- Free and accessible to all parents & caregivers
- Practical strategies from trusted experts
- Recordings available in the Webinar Library

Register & explore past webinars:
[operationparent.org/webinars](https://www.operationparent.org/webinars)

AUTUMN RESET & SELF-CARE: STARTING THE SEASON STRONG

As the carefree days of summer fade and the busy rhythm of fall begins—school schedules, after-school activities, earlier bedtimes—it’s easy for families to jump straight into “go mode.” But autumn is also the perfect time to pause, reset, and recommit to self-care for both parents and kids.

Why an Autumn Reset Matters

Transitions can be overwhelming, especially for children adjusting to new routines. Taking time to reset helps families feel more grounded and less stressed. It also models healthy coping skills that children carry into their own lives.

Simple Ways to Reset This Season

- Reestablish routines: Consistent mealtimes, screen limits, and sleep schedules offer comfort and structure.
- Create quiet moments: A 5-minute evening stretch or morning gratitude check-in can reset your mindset.
- Make time for joy: Even during busy weeks, carve out space for something fun—apple picking, a nature walk, or a cozy family movie night.

Don’t Forget Parent Self-Care

Your well-being shapes the energy of your home. Self-care doesn’t have to be elaborate—try stepping outside with a warm drink, saying “no” to extra commitments, or turning off your phone for 30 minutes. Small resets add up.

Final Thought

Autumn invites us to slow down and get intentional. By making space for self-care and healthy routines, you’re not only managing the season—you’re building a foundation for a calmer, more connected family life.

