

**February
2026**

PHONE

507-333-5840

Friendship House Voice

10 County Activities Spring 2026!

- February 4th—Game Day in St. Peter—board games and card games—lunch will be Hot Turkey Sandwiches
- February 17-Garden Group
- February 23- Freezer Meals
- March 26- Day on the Hill
- April 9th—MSU Play: Willy Wonka
- April 12-Sing Democracy 250, Orchestra Hall
- May— Stakeholders & May is Mental Health Month

Walks and Open Houses

Valentine's Day and Self-Love: Nurturing Your Mental Health

Valentine's Day, often celebrated as a season of romance, roses, and candlelit dinners, can be a source of joy for some and a challenge for others. While the focus on romantic relationships dominates a lot of media, it's easy to overlook the most important relationship of all—the one you have with yourself. In a society that emphasizes external validation, cultivating self-love and self-care is essential for maintaining mental health, especially during a time when comparisons and expectations can feel heightened. (cont.)

CON



Horizon Homes, Inc.

Mobile Crisis Services

South Central Crisis
Center

**Call: Crisis Services,
at 877-399-3040**



February Fun Facts



For more than 40 years, February has been Black History Month. The precursor to Black History Month, however, is a lot older. Black leaders in 1926 dedicated the second week in February to the recognizing the history of African-Americans—a week chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and Frederick Douglass (Feb. 14).

It's the month for a lot of other causes, too. February also marks American Heart Month, along with some other "months" you might not recognize: Canned Food Month, Grapefruit Month, Hot Breakfast Month, and our favorite, Return Shopping Carts to the Supermarket Month

Dr. Rick Hanson has spent decades gathering research, information, practices, and other resources to help people just like you turn everyday experiences into a powerful sense of *lasting well-being that stays with you even amidst life's many challenges.*



Who's left off your gift list?

The Practice:
Gift yourself.

Why?

Can you remember a time when you offered a gift to someone? Perhaps a holiday present, or a treat to a child, or taking time for a friend – or anything at all. How did this feel? Researchers have found that giving stimulates the same neural networks that light up when we feel physical pleasure, such as eating a cookie or running warm water over cold hands. Long ago, the Buddha said that generosity makes one happy before, during, and after the giving.

Then there is *receiving*. Can you remember a different time, when someone was giving toward you? Maybe it was tangible, something you could hold in your hands, or perhaps it was something like a moment of warmth, or an apology, or some kind of restraint. Whatever it was, how did it feel? Probably pretty good.

Well, if you are giving . . . toward yourself . . . it's a two-for-one deal! And besides the benefits noted above, there are the implicit rewards of taking action rather than being passive (which helps reduce any sense of learned helplessness, to which mammals like us are very vulnerable), and of treating yourself like you matter, which is especially important if you haven't felt like you mattered enough to others.

Further, when you give more to yourself, you have more to offer others when your own cup runneth over. Studies show that as people experience greater well-being, they are usually more inclined toward kindness, patience, altruism, and other kinds of "prosocial" behavior. As Bertrand Russell wrote: *The good life is a happy life. I do not mean that if you are good you will be happy; I mean that if you are happy you will be good.*

How?

Gifting yourself comes in many forms, most of them in small moments in everyday life. For example, as I write this, the gift is to lean back from the keyboard, take a breath, look out the window, and relax. It's a do-able gift.

Less tangibly, earlier this week I was getting wrapped up mentally in wanting a friend to succeed in his business, so I gave myself the "treat" of letting go of my over-investment in things beyond my control. Sitting in a meeting earlier today and thinking about this practice, I took in the gift of appreciating how fortunate I was to learn from the other people in the room.

Not doing can also be an important gift to yourself: Not having that third beer, not interrupting a friend's irritated account of a hassle at work, not bugging a lover who wants some space right now, not staying up late watching TV, not rushing about while you drive . . .

You can see how many opportunities there are each day to offer yourself simple yet beautiful and powerful gifts. Routinely ask yourself: What could I give myself right now? Or: What do I long for – that's in my power to give myself? Then try to actually do it.

Focusing on a longer time frame, ask yourself: What's the gift I want to offer myself today? This week? This year? Even: This life? Try to stay with the listening to the answers, letting them ring and ring again in the open space of awareness.

You could also imagine a deeply nurturing being and see what this one gives you – and then open to giving this to yourself.

Knowing your own giving heart – which is usually offered to others – can you extend that heart to yourself? Out of kindness and wisdom, cherishing and support, let your gifts flow to that one being in this world over whom you have the most power and therefore to whom you have the highest duty of care – the one who has your name

The Importance of Self-Love

Self-love is more than pampering yourself or indulging in fleeting pleasures. It's an ongoing practice of self-acceptance, respect, and kindness. Research has shown that individuals who cultivate self-love experience higher levels of happiness, reduced anxiety, and improved overall well-being. It acts as a buffer against the societal pressures that can make us feel unworthy or inadequate.

On Valentine's Day, these pressures often manifest as an emphasis on romantic relationships, leaving those who are single or struggling in their relationships feeling left out or unworthy. However, by prioritizing self-love, you can reclaim this day as an opportunity to focus on your mental and emotional health, reminding yourself that your worth is not contingent on your relationship status.

How Valentine's Day Can Impact Mental Health

The season's heightened focus on love and relationships can amplify feelings of loneliness, inadequacy, or even grief for those navigating breakups, unrequited love, or the loss of a partner. Social media feeds filled with picture-perfect couples and grand gestures can further exacerbate these emotions, making it easy to fall into the trap of comparison.

For those in relationships, Valentine's Day can bring its own set of stressors, such as unmet expectations or the pressure to create an idealized romantic experience. Recognizing these potential challenges and reframing the day as an opportunity for self-care can be a powerful way to protect and nurture your mental health.

Tips for Practicing Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is the foundation of self-love. It involves treating yourself with the same kindness and understanding that you would offer a close friend. Here are some ways to practice self-compassion this Valentine's Day:

- **Acknowledge Your Feelings**

It's okay to feel sad, lonely, or stressed. Avoid suppressing these emotions. Instead, acknowledge them with kindness and curiosity. Journaling or talking to a trusted friend can help you process your feelings.

- **Challenge Negative Self-Talk**

Pay attention to your inner dialogue. If you catch yourself engaging in self-criticism or comparison, pause and reframe those thoughts. Replace "I'm not good enough" with "I am deserving of love and respect."

- **Celebrate Your Achievements**

Take time to reflect on your personal growth and accomplishments, no matter how small they may seem. Acknowledging your progress can boost your self-esteem and remind you of your resilience.

- **Practice Gratitude**

Gratitude shifts your focus from what you lack to what you have. Write down three things you're grateful for each day, whether it's a supportive friend, a sunny morning, or a comforting cup of tea.

- **Engage in Activities You Enjoy**

Plan a day filled with activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's painting, hiking, cooking, or watching your favorite movie, prioritize what makes you happy.

- **Set Healthy Boundaries**

Protect your mental health by setting boundaries with people or situations that drain your energy. It's okay to decline invitations or mute social media accounts that trigger negative emotions.

Ideas for a Self-Love Valentine's Day

Reimagining Valentine's Day as a celebration of self-love can make the day fulfilling and empowering. Here are some ideas:

- **Create a Self-Care Ritual:** Treat yourself to a spa day at home, complete with a bubble bath, soothing music, and your favorite skincare products.
- **Write Yourself a Love Letter:** Reflect on your strengths, values, and qualities that make you unique. Revisit the letter whenever you need a confidence boost.
- **Spend Time in Nature:** A walk in the park or a hike can help you reconnect with yourself and reduce stress.
- **Cook a Special Meal:** Prepare your favorite dish or try a new recipe, savoring each bite as an act of mindfulness.
- **Give Back:** Volunteer or donate to a cause that resonates with you. Acts of kindness can uplift your spirit and create a sense of purpose.

The Ripple Effect of Self-Love

When you prioritize self-love, its effects extend beyond your own well-being. It enhances your ability to form healthier relationships, set boundaries, and contribute positively to your community. By modeling self-compassion, you inspire others to do the same, creating a ripple effect of kindness and acceptance.

Final Thoughts

Valentine's Day doesn't have to be a day of longing or pressure. Instead, it can be an opportunity to celebrate the relationship you have with yourself. By focusing on self-love and self-compassion, you not only nurture your mental health but also remind yourself that you are deserving of love and happiness—today and every day. This Valentine's Day, give yourself the gift of kindness, acceptance, and care. You're worth it.



February Activities

Ongoing Activities:

Clubhouse Breakfast on Sunday's

Breakfast in the community (monthly) *Bring your own money*

Board Bingo and Meal (monthly)

LAC and Meal (Quarterly)

Ceramics (monthly)

*Women's Group: Meal in the Community

*Men's Group: Fleet Farm/Bass Pro Shop

Volunteering Activities:

Furball

Meals on Wheels

****Luminary Hike Set up RBNC****

St. Vincent Food Shelf

CAC Food Shelf

Community Café

Paradise Center

New Activities:

Dundas Movie

Pool and Darts at Boxers

Walking Group in the FBO Mall

*Freezer Meals

*Pre- Superbowl Mixer with Trivia and Prizes

*Craft your own project group (bring a craft or pick one to do at the clubhouse)

*for February activities specifically

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

ARNIE S.

JUDY L.

MICHAEL M.

HEIDI C.



FEBRUARY WORD SEARCH

VALENTINE
FROST
AMETHYST
LEAP
SNOW
HEART
WINTER
ROMANCE
PRESIDENTS
AQUARIUS
PISCES
GROUNDHOG
CHOCOLATE
CUPID
CARNATION
CANDLEMAS
BLACK
HISTORY
SHORT
CHINESE



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X	H	I	N	R	O	M	A	N	C	E	N	W	H	B



windflower

MUSIC, HEALING & BEAUTY FROM LOSS

Windflower is an offering of original music, poetry, and stories shared from the heart. After the loss of their dear sister – lead vocalist, friend, and business partner, **Alisa Leonard** – Sister returns with music shaped by remembrance, love, and family.

Featuring the voices of **Kjersten Dysthe** and **Kara Millerhagen**, Windflower creates space for **reflection, healing through music, laughter, and connection**—inviting a **beautiful new way of meeting loss**.



Windflower reshapes the landscape of loss and gives space for beauty and love to bloom.

“ *Hearing Kara and Kjersten perform has truly been the most moving and inspirational music I have ever listened to! They harmonize so beautifully and their stories and songs resonate with my heart and soul. They never fail to bring tears to my eyes.*

– Lynn Koll,
Soaring Heart Ministries

FRIDAY

6 MARCH 2026 • 7PM

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EVERYONE WELCOME!

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