



Check in on Your Friends, and Yourself

Dear Vanderbilt community,

Our "strong" friends are often seen as stoic, rarely expressing or showing emotion, and most of the people in their lives lean on them. But rarely is the level of care they give to others reciprocated. This interpretation of the word "strong" turns humans into superhumans and feeds into an unhealthy idea that to be "strong," one cannot show, have or express emotions.

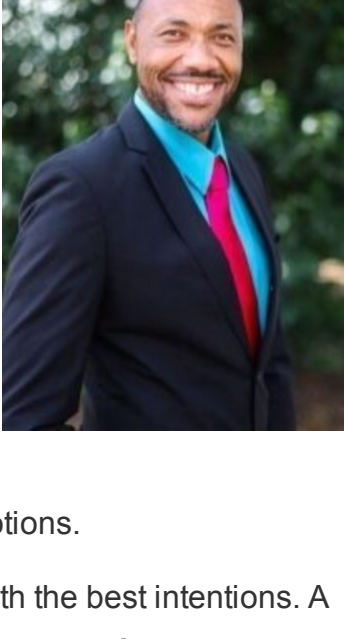
"Check on your strong friends," a phrase that leads with the best intentions. A phrase that encourages us to take the time to ask our "strong" friends how they are doing. "Check on your strong friends," a phrase that I have heard a lot lately. A phrase that I have been pondering for many reasons. Why, do you ask? Allow me to share my thoughts.

Anxiety, depression and isolation are potent forces that often can become pervasive and invasive. It is natural and normal to seek therapy to ensure that you are mentally and emotionally well. To remove the stigma surrounding mental and emotional well-being, we must normalize help-seeking behaviors around the use of mental and emotional services. For many communities, this stigma prevents people from receiving assistance that, at times, is life-saving. There is nothing wrong with choosing you regarding your mental and emotional health. Therapy is an extremely helpful resource that can be used at any point in time—not only in crisis. Consider seeing a therapist on a regular basis to learn coping skills to aid with the ebbs and flows of life.

Taking care of your mental and emotional well-being is a huge part of self-care. As we rapidly move toward the end of the semester, finals, graduation ceremonies, move out, summer internships and other life transitions, please take the time to take care of yourself. As a community, it's time we change the stigma around mental health by seeking and being open about help received. Let's support each other in improving our mental and emotional health; let us shift from checking in on our strong friends to checking in on all our friends.

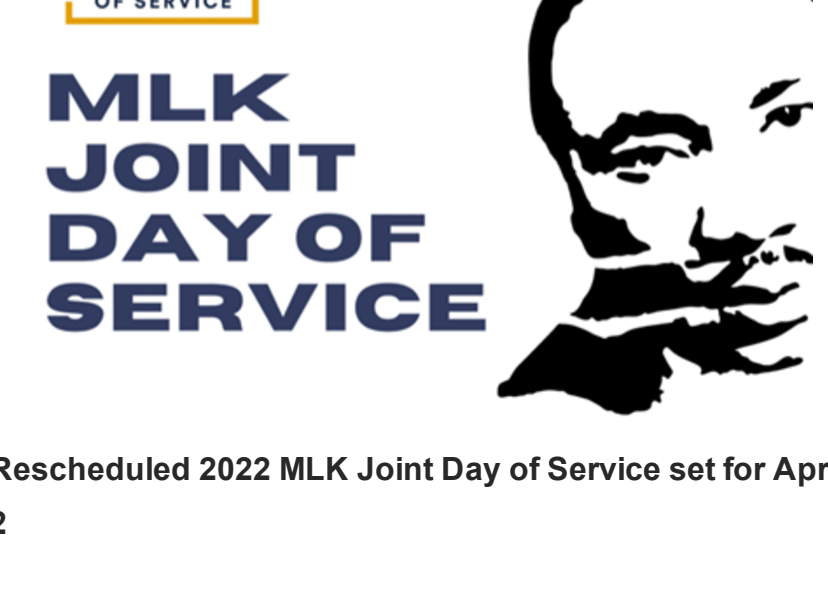
And, when someone does check in, be brave, be vulnerable and share because being aware of and taking care of your mental and emotional health and well-being should make you feel a sense of pride in yourself.

Franklin Ellis, Psy.D.
Director of Intercultural Education and Outreach



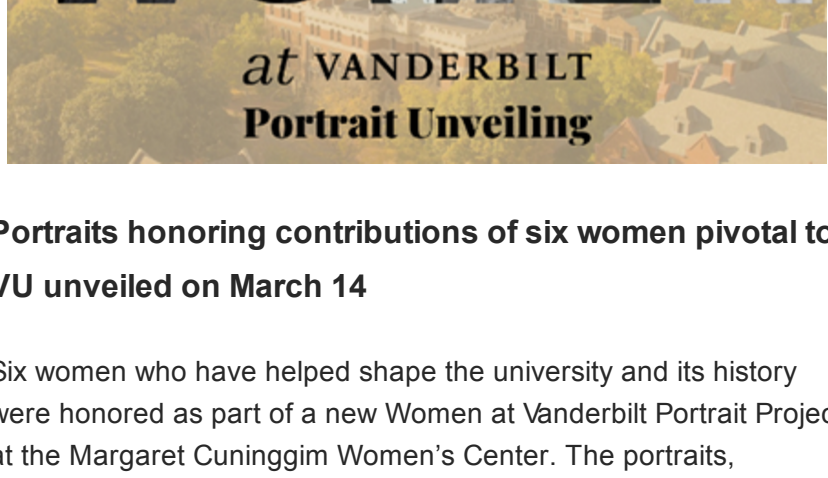
Atlanta shootings a year ago sparked AAPI communities to call for change

March 16 marked the one-year anniversary of the day a 21-year-old man went on a shooting rampage at three spas in the Atlanta area, killing eight people—six of them women of Asian descent. The shootings stoked outrage and fear among Asian Americans, who were already experiencing discrimination, racism and hate crimes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The act of violence led to dialogue at Vanderbilt and college campuses across the country and resulted in calls to create more inclusive spaces for AAPI populations. [Read More +](#)



Rescheduled 2022 MLK Joint Day of Service set for April 2

The annual MLK Joint Day of Service brings together hundreds of student volunteers from Nashville-area colleges and universities to continue the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through service. This year's event will be on Saturday, April 2, beginning at 10 a.m. at Tennessee State University's Gentry Center. Following the opening program, volunteers will go to different service sites. Lunch will be provided. [Read More +](#)



Portraits honoring contributions of six women pivotal to VU unveiled on March 14

Six women who have helped shape the university and its history were honored as part of a new Women at Vanderbilt Portrait Project at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. The portraits, commemorating women from the 19th century through today, were unveiled at an event on Monday, March 14. [Read More +](#)



Vanderbilt announces updates to Freedom of Expression policy in Student Handbook

Vanderbilt University has updated its Freedom of Expression policy—a vital part of the university's commitment to open discourse, discovery and learning—to strengthen civil and respectful discussion and debate of challenging ideas and beliefs among the campus community. The revised policy and guidelines, which are in the "Student Engagement" section of the university's [Student Handbook](#), also clarify the university's policy on various forms of free expression such as demonstrations, dissents and protests. [Read More +](#)



Kimberly Welch awarded Mellon Foundation's New Directions Fellowship

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has selected Kimberly Welch, a Vanderbilt scholar of American slavery, race and law, for a New Directions Fellowship that will expand her interdisciplinary research on African Americans and the history of finance. [Read More +](#)



Heard Libraries acquire collection of jazz, world music master Yusef Lateef

The Heard Libraries are now home to a rich collection of research materials from the life and career of Grammy-winning musician Yusef A. Lateef. This latest music-related acquisition is helping Vanderbilt build a world-class archive of African American music in partnership with the National Museum of African American Music. [Read More +](#)



Vanderbilt to participate in SEC Emerging Scholars Program

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs C. Cybele Raver has joined her peers at institutions within the Southeastern Conference to establish the SEC Emerging Scholars Program for doctoral and postdoctoral students. The program serves as a pathway and source of mentorship for historically underrepresented graduate students across the SEC to prepare for tenured faculty positions in higher education. [Read More +](#)



Vanderbilt School of Nursing leaders tour Blanchfield Army Community Hospital to deepen academic partnership

School of Nursing leaders visited the Blanchfield Army Community Hospital at Fort Campbell Feb. 24 to discuss training opportunities and student placements for those interested in military medicine. [Read More +](#)



Nominations open for Spring Staff Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2022 Spring Staff Awards, which recognize the many contributions of university staff to Vanderbilt's core goals and mission. The winners will be announced at the second annual Spring Staff Assembly on May 23. [Read More +](#)

Get Connected: Upcoming Events

[HR Employee Learning & Engagement experiences for 2022](#)

[3/16 - 2023: Engine for Art, Democracy and Justice hosts panels on power of artistic activism](#)

[3/30: Forté Webinar: Women Leading on Campus](#)

[3/30: Carpenter Program Women's History Month Lecture with Elizabeth Schrader](#)

[3/31: Center for Effective Lawmaking hosts "Race and Political Representation: Inside and Outside of Congress"](#)

[4/5: VUSN Diversity & Inclusion Committee: "Interrogating the Status Quo and Elevating Marginalized Experiences"](#)

[4/9: ASU's Black Girl Fest](#)

[4/13: Racial and Social Justice Institute](#)

[4/13: Kitchen Table Series: Period Poverty on College Campuses](#)

[5/4: Inclusive Book Group will discuss "Hamnet"](#)

[Wednesdays: For faculty and staff — Mindful Stretch Break](#)

[COVID-19 vaccination leave available for employees accompanying children to get vaccinated](#)

[For employees and staff — Access televideo counseling services](#)

Continuing the Conversation



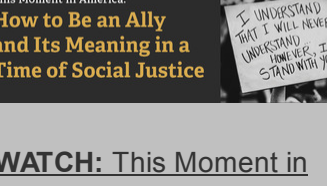
WATCH: Reform for Redemption: [Cyntoia Brown Long](#) and Gov. [Bill Haslam](#) call for criminal justice reform



WATCH: MLK Commemorative Event keynote: Poet and author [Nikky Finney](#)



WATCH: Afro-Latinx in the Academy



WATCH: This Moment in America: [How to Be an Ally and Its Meaning in a Time of Social Justice](#)



WATCH: 'Dores in Dialogue: A conversation on the past, present and future Black experience at Vanderbilt

Resources

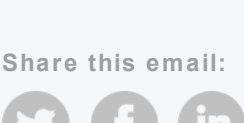
Heritage Month

Workshops

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