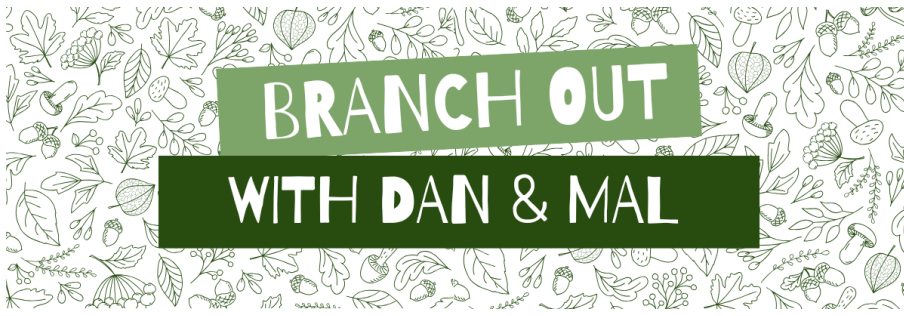




Welcome to Branch Out with Dan & Mal, a weekly newsletter on all things health, wellbeing, and wellness at Midland!

OAKay, Let's Talk...

Mallory's Report:

It seems, for the most part, that the worst of the cold cases are behind us, and students are finally seeing the light after several days of coughing, congestion, and sore throats! What a relief! The morale boost from All Saints' Day certainly helped as well.

On Tuesday morning, I had the joy of teaching yoga to a group of engaged and wonderfully goofy students, then tagged along on my first Midland hike. Our group tackled the Bowl, and I found myself tearing up at the breathtaking view—I was completely overwhelmed by the magic and beauty of this incredible landscape, and the top notch company. I'm feeling deeply grateful to be here in this position, surrounded by so many brilliant students and such caring faculty.

Dan's Report:

Slowly but surely, we're moving closer to the highly anticipated Midland Thanksgiving/Long Weekend! As we returned from October Break, it was easy to feel some dread about this being one of the longer stretches of the school year between breaks. Personally, these are the moments when I reach into my strategy toolbox to address the weight of such challenges.

Our mindset is incredibly powerful, and when we can find a way to willingly shift our perspective, it often leads to a transformation in our lived experience. Many of you (students) and I have experienced this together while looking at the two monthly calendars in my office, visually breaking down the upcoming weeks into smaller, more manageable "chunks."

Suddenly, rather than thinking "eight weeks is going to take forever," we find ourselves saying, "Thanksgiving week is only 2.5 weeks from today—I can absolutely do that! And after that, there are just under two weeks until holiday break!"

Perception is remarkably powerful, so let's work together to willingly see things from a fresh angle. Sometimes it's exactly the boost we need to shift the directional momentum of our thinking toward something more productive rather than destructive.

In a Nutshell -- Deep Dive of the Week: Mallory

Being sick or injured is truly awful, especially when it prevents you from doing the activities you love or have been eagerly anticipating. This past week, I've watched injured and sick students miss out on beloved sports, races they wanted to compete in, and events they were excited to attend. The fear of missing out and the grief that accompanies it are very real experiences.

Rather than diving deep into a specific health topic this week, I wanted to acknowledge how challenging these past few days have been for many students. Watching your friends leave for a race you desperately wanted to run, or having to stay in on a night when you know everyone else is hanging out, is genuinely difficult. Allowing yourself to feel these emotions fully is essential. Then comes the important work of finding ways to move through them—whether that's talking with a friend or someone from the Health Office, journaling, or investing in an activity that brings you joy.

I've spent much of the last two years dealing with injuries myself. From a hip flexor injury to a fractured fibula and torn meniscus, to a torn shoulder labrum—I've had only brief periods of reprieve to engage in the activities I love. I've sat with the grief of missing climbing trips, half marathons, and hikes I desperately wanted to join. The frustration and disappointment can feel overwhelming at times.

What I kept returning to was this truth: these feelings will pass, but avoiding them or constantly distracting myself wasn't a sustainable solution. I understand firsthand how challenging it can be to limit your activities due to sickness or injury. Please know that we are here for you, and you don't have to navigate these feelings alone.

Acorny Ending

Just like acorns, many students have hard, leathery shells that protect them from the elements and squirrels (other students? I may be losing the metaphor here). The Health Office is a place you can shed your shell, even in winter! We're on your team—and we're rooting for you.



Mallory McPherson-Wehan
Health Director



Dan Petrocelli
School Counselor

© Midland School | Los Olivos, California