Annual Report

2017
We all have mental health, just like physical health, yet far too many families in America are isolated by the shame, blame, silence, and misunderstanding surrounding their children’s mental health. As a result, less than 20% of youth receive the treatment they need to live healthy, productive lives. Due to poor education about youth mental health, widespread stereotypes impede change. Left untreated, mental health conditions can have a devastating impact on a child’s development and future, including reduced life expectancy.

The Youth Mental Health Project exists to change this reality. We believe every child’s mental well-being needs to be nurtured, and that mental wellness and physical wellness should be equally prioritized. This shift will only happen if we empower parents and caregivers to better understand the mental health needs of youth. The Youth Mental Health Project equips communities with the tools to facilitate open, honest dialogue about youth mental health so that together, we can ensure no family suffers the consequences of undiagnosed or untreated mental health conditions.

The Problem.

Existing Efforts.

Change in the mental health space focuses on Legislative Advocacy for mental illness and addiction. Independent programs provide peer support focused on adults and their families living with mental illness. Education programs related to mental illness and services help improve the lives of people who live with a particular diagnosis. There is a growing surge of advocacy promoting understanding and supporting children with learning differences and developmental disorders, or improving school climates through social-emotional learning. Increased neuroscience research funding informs experts continually. Governmental efforts on prevention and early identification still mainly focus on families through Medicare and Medicaid Services or mental health promotion within schools.

The Revolution.

The Youth Mental Health Project focuses on the most critical stakeholders in the lives of children, their parents (caregivers)!

Families need help now to move beyond crisis and into prevention and early intervention.

We empower families and communities to act with knowledge, skills, and resources to support the social, emotional, mental, and behavioral health of youth, in order to begin reducing the incidence and severity of youth mental health conditions.

1 in 5...

... children in the U.S. have a diagnosable mental health condition.

The time for widespread education about youth mental health is NOW. With knowledge we will break down stereotypes and barriers, increasing support and decreasing the devastating impact mental health concerns.

THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT IS THE SOLUTION!
Revolutionizing the conversation about mental health means that we need to get beyond the short list of disorders that affect mood, behavior, and thinking. Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, and it needs care at every stage of life. Just like physical health, an individual’s mental health can and will change and evolve through his or her lifetime.

When our children show signs of physical illness, such as fever or intense pain, we understand that medical intervention or professional help may be necessary to improve their condition. Most symptoms of mental health conditions are often intangible or invisible. This can make it difficult to understand the difference between age-appropriate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and those that may be signs that some level of professional intervention is warranted.

The Youth Mental Health Project’s educational materials made me realize that my nine year old’s black and white thinking was typical for his age. We looked at your information together and had a good discussion on healthy developmental markers for his current age and going forward.

- C. Bozzuto, NO LETTING GO attendee
Childhood and adolescence are critical time periods in human development. We increase awareness of youth mental health needs at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

Half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14, and 75 percent are present by age 24*.

We foster connections and dialogue at the local community level to help reduce the shame, blame, silence, and misunderstanding surrounding youth mental health.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10–24.

We arm parents with resources on early recognition, prevention, and intervention.

Like conditions of the body, early detection and treatment increase positive outcomes for mental health disorders. Working alongside mental health providers and other youth advocates, we have created materials to help recognize warning signs and foster open dialogue about emotional, social and mental wellbeing, across communities at large.

We provide support for parents and caregivers who are concerned about the mental wellbeing of their children.

Safe environments when facing these challenges enable getting the support and building confidence to effectively advocate and seek treatment for their children, our Parent Support Network is transformative for both parents and children.

* ALL STATISTICS ON THIS PAGE TAKEN FROM THE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE AND THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
Our Tools.

BOOKLET
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SILVER HILL HOSPITAL

NO LETTING GO
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ILLNESS PRODUCTIONS AND VISION FILMS, INC.
SPANISH LANGUAGE SUBTITLES PROVIDED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ILLNESS PRODUCTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER OF MID-FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Our Tools.

**AWARENESS VIDEO**
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WOW FILMS

**POSTER**
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SILVER HILL HOSPITAL

**GRAPHIC**
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER OF MID-FAIRFIELD COUNTY

**DISCUSSION GUIDES**
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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SPANISH LANGUAGE
CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER OF MID-FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Our Supporters.

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Susan and Walter Berger
Christine and Gabriel Dassa
Penny and Ray Foote
Jan and Stan Goldman
Drs. Robert and Ann Laitman
David and Carina Rush
Stacy and Scott Semel
Randi Silverman
David and Wendy Ward
Jim and Erin Waterman

Grassroots Partners 2017
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Network for Good
In Memory of Essi Makelainen

Friendship Circle
Peter and Stephanie Appleby
Carina and David Rush
David and Wendy Ward
Facebook Fundraiser Friends
In Memory of Barbara Ward
In Memory of Sean Vogel

Community Builder
Susan and Walter Berger
Jan and Stan Goldman
Randi Silverman
Your interviews, your presentation, the small group dinner discussion, all brought a great deal of information and awareness to our community. You are a pro with passion and so much knowledge and empathy.
- L. Rutan, client

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