



THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ SPECIAL ISSUE

**Bringing the Mental Health Conversation
to New Jersey's Schools!**

**SAGE DAY IN-DISTRICT PROGRAMS - BERGEN BASKETBALL LIMEOUT - QUICKLINKS -
NJ HS DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMS - RAMSEY SUPERINTENDENT TWEETS STIGMA FREE**

**We report on a volunteer initiative of healthcare and peer organizations, nonprofits, schools
and houses of worship working with local government to make NJ free from the stigma of
mental illness. Anyone can form a SFZ Task Force to educate locally and take action.**

NAMI STATEMENT ON THE PARKLAND SCHOOL SHOOTING

BCASA OPEN LETTER ON SCHOOL SHOOTINGS



THE STUDENTS OF SAGE DAY SCHOOL ARE FIGHTING THE STIGMA OF THE SHORT BUS

By Cynthia Chazen

Every day as they enter the Rochelle Park Campus, students at Sage Day School pass under an arch inscribed "*Here you will do what others say you cannot*." But do they believe it? After all, campus is situated right across from a public school, and the Sage students made clear they deeply feel, and struggle with, the stigma of attending a day school for students with mental illness. As principal Rob Friedland put it, "they know the shame of getting off the short bus." But students also said stigma is more of an issue for their parents and they find younger generations much more accepting of mental illness. And they want to talk about it.

But sometimes, the worst stigma people face is within themselves.

I met with Ms. Jelly's 12th grade class to discuss what stigma is and how it and mental illness should be defined, along with plans for creating a Stigma Free Zone for the school. The students impressed me as mature, well-informed and thoughtful, but still struggling to accept their illnesses and create positive self-definitions in spite of challenges. Some of the first remarks (only half-seriously thrown out) were "this is where the crazies go", and "we're psychopaths." Some kids couldn't look me in the eye at first. But as the conversation continued, personal truths emerged.

Wren said "Sage is kinda like family - we didn't have that [attending school] in-district." Francesca noted every student has an IEP (Individualized Education Program) so "if you need it, you can get help." Matt, certainly an advocate in the making, remarked "A lot of public high schools fight and don't want to send kids here because of the money. It's not healthy. It took me being hospitalized to get here." He was glad his mom pushed as hard as she did to have him sent to Sage. Griffith agreed and added that Sage had "in a weird way saved my life." He felt he was safe in a place where he could simply say, "I need help."

The administrators and board members at Sage RP (there are 4 Sage campuses across NJ) have real enthusiasm for what they are accomplishing. I wish I had space to include all their thoughts on social media and other mental health challenges to today's kids.

Especially notable is the Sage program providing therapeutic services *inside individual NJ districts*, in addition to their bricks and mortar campuses. These programs meet district needs to support students on the cusp of being placed out of district and provide transition back for out of district students now thriving, along with supporting students with a mental health IEP at their school location in a way most districts can afford.

Sage students very much wanted our readers to know that they believe mental health must take precedence over funding and while they are ill, they are definitely *not crazy*. As we finished up plans for "A Green League" the atmosphere in the classroom had noticeably warmed. Just a simple chance to talk about stigma changed the way these kids were talking about themselves. The focus was off limitations and on to leadership. I couldn't help but hope the last thing NJ educators would want is for any students to be harsh on themselves while facing serious illness. Inviting a public mental health conversation at school is a first step towards personal progress for so many kids.

Students deserve our respect, and to be taught above all, they deserve their own.



[VISIT THE SAGE IN-DISTRICT WEBSITE](#)



LIME OUT FOR BERGEN BASKETBALL !

By Cynthia Chazen

Collaborative efforts between Stigma Free Zone groups across Bergen County sponsored February "Lime Out" basketball to educate students about mental illness.

"Lime Out" refers to the Stigma Free Zone's official logo color. SFZ volunteers decorated gyms with huge green ribbons on the backboards and stands, and mascots, coaches and spectators sported signature SFZ tees. The players and cheerleaders showed spirit by donning green laces and headbands. Players and cheerleaders were also given SFZ spirit towels and lime green stress balls.

Spirited half-time entertainment followed a Stigma Free Zone Mental Health Awareness Pledge. Both boy's and girl's teams from Franklin Lakes, Oakland and Wyckoff competed. Ridgewood and Oradell also teamed up to promote Stigma Free at a varsity game at Riverdell High School. This event was promoted by Dawn Cetrulo from the Ridgewood Board of Health and town and school SFZ volunteers.

Ramapo Indian Hills Board of Education, along with town health boards, Christian Healthcare Center, Faith Community Church of Wyckoff and various Stigma-Free committees collaborated on the events.

Funding was provided by Bergen and Franklin Lakes Municipal Alliances.



QUICKLINKS TO NEWS

[THE NY TIMES: The Mental Health System Can't Stop Mass Shooters](#)

[Ridgewood Daily Voice: Mahwah Schools Chief Apologizes for Timing of Shooting Threat Notice](#)

[NJ Herald: Budget undercuts Trump focus on mental health, school safety](#)

[Become a HealthCare Voter! Sign Up Today](#)

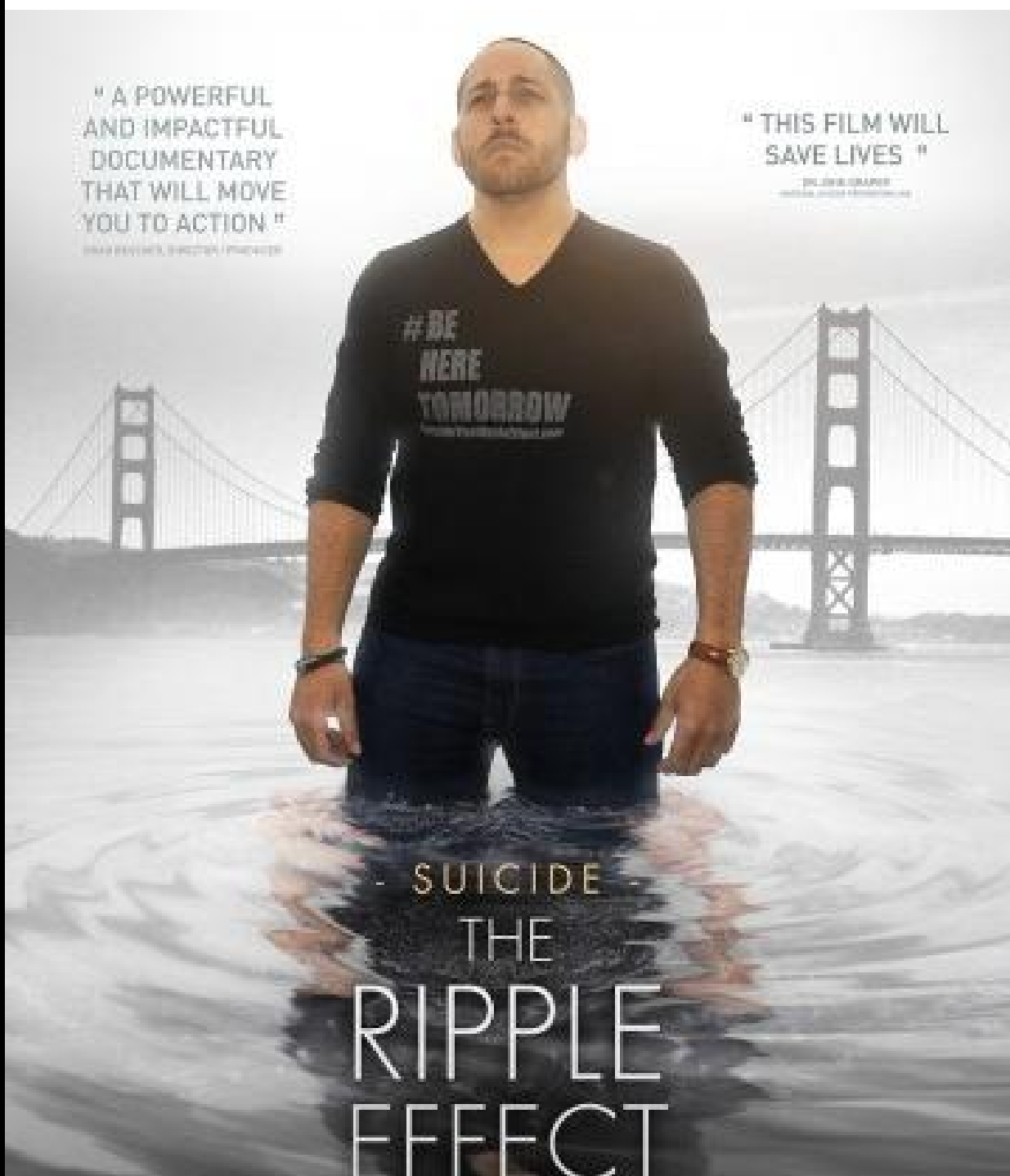
[Teaneck Patch: Bergen County Academies Student Nominated for Neuroscience Prize](#)

[INSIDE HIGHER ED: Digital Toolkit for Staff to Help Support Student's Mental Health](#)

WHYY: 'Red flag' firearm-restraining legislation considered in NJ, DE

Carrier Clinic Website: Carrier Clinic® now has animal therapy

The Hill: Let's Take Steps to Improve the Science of Treating Serious Mental Illness

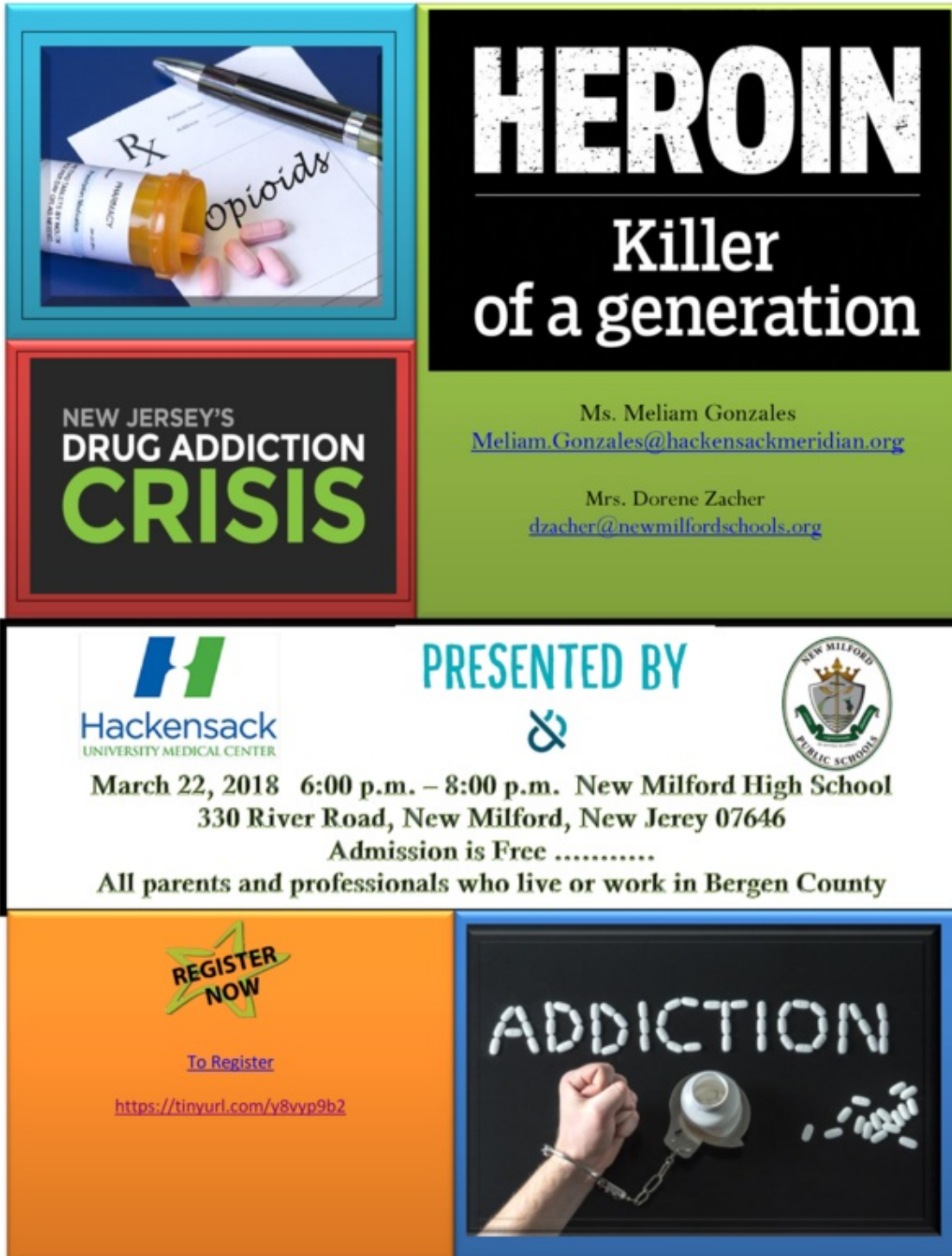


**AIR & NAMI MERCER PRESENT
RIPPLE EFFECT MOVIE PREMIERE**

AIR - Attitudes in Reverse will host the movie premiere in partnership with NAMI Mercer April 12 , 2018 at AMC Hamilton 24, Trenton, NJ. This documentary film focuses on the devastating effects of suicide and the tremendous positive ripple effects of advocacy, inspiration and hope that are

helping millions heal and stay alive. The film highlights the journey of Kevin Hines, who at age 19, attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. It chronicles Kevin's journey and the ripple effect it has on those who have been impacted by his suicide attempt and his life's work since. Today Kevin is a world-renowned mental health advocate, motivational speaker and author who is spreading a message of hope and recovery.

Click [here](#) to purchase tickets.




HEROIN
Killer
of a generation


Ms. Meliam Gonzales
Meliam.Gonzales@hackensackmeridian.org

Mrs. Dorene Zacher
dzacher@newmilfordschools.org

NEW JERSEY'S
DRUG ADDICTION
CRISIS

 **Hackensack**
UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

PRESENTED BY



March 22, 2018 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. New Milford High School
330 River Road, New Milford, New Jersey 07646
Admission is Free

All parents and professionals who live or work in Bergen County

REGISTER NOW

To Register
<https://tinyurl.com/y8vvp9b2>

ADDICTION

Want to learn how you can contribute to the mental health conversation in New Jersey?
Contact Advocacy@DBSAlliance.org



RAMSEY SUPERINTENDENT TWEETS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Ramsey District School Superintendent Matthew J. Murphy tweets openly- and often about anxiety, coping skills, school shootings and other mental health topics. On February 28, 2018 he participated in the first countywide symposium on student mental health, which focused on understanding the growing anxiety epidemic among young people. The Ramsey school district website offers information on opioid addiction on the *middle school web pages*. Recently, the high school held a stigma free event, and participating students were openly praised for their participation by Murphy. This is powerful stuff in a world where politics leads many to never take a firm stand on tough issues, let alone one as complex as mental illness.

Murphy won 2015's New Jersey Administrator's Association Northern Regional Superintendent of the Year Award, among many other honors.

Certainly, this lead by example approach paves the way for the many important discussions surrounding mental illness that still need to take place within schools. In some districts, the argument over whether or not students can "handle" such mature topics hearkens back to the same debate over sex ed that took place 40 years ago. Helping people to have conversations about these issues is what the Stigma Free initiative is all about. After all, the world students are inheriting is shaped by problems that they will endeavor to understand and solve.

Mr. Murphy, your district's social and civic responsibility make Ramsey education a source of distinction and pride. Your leadership team and students certainly embody your shared mission: to achieve excellence, one student at a time. Well done!

Sunday, March 4th

LOCATION:
Ramsey High School

TIME: 3:00pm - 5:00pm

DOORS OPEN: 2:30pm
Interactive Resources & refreshments

REGISTER NOW:
for more details
ramseyjuniors.com/drugpanel

Community Members
Parents &
Students (12+ yrs)



OPIOID ABUSE

If only I'd known...

A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON OPIOID ADDICTION

Join us for a FREE presentation, panel discussion and Q&A session focused on the growing Opioid epidemic in our community. This program has been designed specifically for students ages 12+, parents and concerned community members. This is a mixed format event including community members sharing their experiences and stories, law enforcement sharing policies, procedures and available resources and an open panel question and answer session. Vendors will be onsite to provide valuable information regarding assistance and prevention programs.

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS:

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- **Mark Tomat:** Recovering Heroin Addict
- **Gail Cole:** Parent Advocate

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **Tim Shoemaker:** Ramsey Police Sergeant & Drug-Free Advocate
- **Sean Beamon:** Ramsey Police Patrolman & L.E.A.D. Officer
- Detective from the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office

STUDENT ADVOCATES

- **Jenica Siniscalco:** Don Bosco Student Assistance Coordinator
- **Sunni Roberts:** Ramsey High School Student Assistance Coordinator

Collaborating Organizations:



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North Jersey
FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
BUILDING SKILLS FOR PRODUCTIVE LIVES

Teaching Adolescents Skills Towards Employment, (TASTE) is a food service job training and placement program for youth 14-17.

**TASTE will run on Saturdays 10-3 for an 18 week session.
TASTE is for youth ages 14-17 who have been in the juvenile justice system.
TASTE provides training (cooking, cleaning, customer service) by industry professionals in a commercial kitchen. Sessions include groups led by vocational counselors and a job coach. Students will be provided textbooks, and kitchen apparel. Participants will receive vocational training for job placement.**

Contact NJ Friendship House to apply.
www.njfriendshiphouse.org
125 Atlantic Street Hackensack, NJ 07601
Phone 201.488.2121



BRINGS YOU

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program

Starting in March!

Family-to-Family is a 12-week program designed for caregivers having a family member, age 18 or over, diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

The program fosters learning, healing and empowerment among caregivers and has been described by some as “a journey of hope” and by many others as “a life changing experience”.

REGISTER NOW!

Location:

CBH CARE
25 East Salem Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Schedule:

Every Monday Evening
March 5 thru May 21, 2018
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Parking: On the street. In gated lot adjacent to the building on Moore Street.
In the large municipal lot on River Street (near the Ice House Skating Rink & Bowler City)

A FREE PROGRAM

Available on a first come, first served basis

*****REGISTER EARLY**

*****SPACE IS LIMITED**

To register please contact: Marie Fuchida – 201-816-3735 fuchida@yahoo.com

NAMI Bergen County 304 Valley Boulevard, Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075 201-935-(NAMI) 6262

A COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION !

CIACC LIASONS WORKSHOP ON TACKLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC
offers steps you can implement in your school, agency and community
to promote children’s emotional health and reduce risk behaviors.

Log onto: <http://www.regionv.org>

**March 23, 2018 9:00 - 3:00 at the Bergen CC, Lyndhurst Campus,
1280 Wall Street, Lyndhurst, NJ, 5th Floor Conference Center.**

This workshop features speakers addressing opioids from medical, social and emotional perspectives; the challenges, and local programs to address prevention & intervention. Bergen County resources to support your school will be featured.

Call 201-634-2745

Understanding Childhood Anxiety

Presented by Kristen Lauber, LCSW
March 28, 7:00 PM, River Edge NJ Library

- What is anxiety and what does it mean to children?
- What are some common anxiety disorders in children?
- What are some of the symptoms to look for?
- How to help anxiety in the home.
- Supports in the classroom setting.**
- Coping strategies & Interventions.

Presented by the
River Edge Stigma Free Committee

Promoting a culture of caring and concern



MEALS ON WHEELS OF NORTH JERSEY SUPPORTS SENIOR'S MENTAL HEALTH

MOW Director Jeanne Martin is looking for volunteers to make a difference in a lonely senior's mental health. Working towards wellness in conjunction with other town groups under the **Westwood for All Ages** umbrella, MOW wants to add a mental health check for their daily meal clients by "Friendly Visitors." No mental health experience is needed, just a willingness to visit, talk and listen for a couple of hours a month. Contact Jeanne to volunteer as a Friendly Visitor in northern Bergen County.

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Visit Us on FaceBook

ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE !

STAY CONNECTED

