



Healthy Times

A publication of the Jericho Wellness Coalition

Winter 2012 Edition

Jericho Wellness Coalition Celebrates First Anniversary

The Jericho Wellness Coalition was formed in January 2011 as a solution-focused task force, centering on substance abuse and other at-risk youth behaviors.

High School Social Worker Todd Benjamin and Jericho parent Randi Pergament co-chair the coalition, which is comprised of professionals, school and community leaders, parents and students, all working together to promote safety and wellness for children and families within the Jericho community.

The kickoff event for the coalition was a showing of the film *Race To Nowhere*, which is a close-up look at the pressures on today's students, offering an intimate view of lives packed with activities, leaving little room for down-time or family time.

Other events that the coalition offered include a presentation by drug and alcohol addiction specialist Tim Rader, The Red Watch Program, and a Don't Text and Drive campaign.

This is the first issue of the Coalition's Newsletter *Healthy Times*, which will be distributed to update the community on the Coalition and wellness related news in Jericho.

"The Coalition will serve to identify specific issues within Jericho and help unify our diverse community into a positive force for change," said Mr. Benjamin.

The coalition is currently working on a spring event and appreciates feedback from the community. Please contact Todd Benjamin at TBenjamin@jerichoschools.org for more information.

What Is The "Mindful Parent?"

By Todd Benjamin

Mindfulness is an activity in which a person becomes intentionally aware of his or her thoughts and actions in the present moment, and tries to regulate their emotions in a healthy way.

Mindful parenting is a lifelong practice, where one tries to focus their attention on desired outcomes, while simultaneously being mindful of the circumstances and emotions that are present in your child's life. Mindful parenting is about being present in the moment and understanding your child's particular strengths and current limitations.

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, one of the founding fathers of Mindful Parenting, there are Five Core Principles of Mindful Parenting. They include:

1. Listening to our children with full attention
2. Maintaining emotional awareness of oneself and one's child during parenting interactions
3. Practicing nonjudgmental openness and receptivity when children share their thoughts and feelings
4. Regulating one's own automatic reactivity to our child's behavior
5. Adopting compassion towards oneself as a parent

Tips For Mindful Parenting

- *Determine your own feelings and opinions before you initiate a discussion, especially if this discussion is about a sensitive issue.
- *Remember that there may be more than one solution to the issue at hand.
- *Trust your intuition. You have a lifetime of experience behind you, use it!
- *Find the balance between love and discipline. Set clear boundaries, but be sure

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Important Document - Please Translate

중요하니 번역요망
重要文件請翻譯

Documento Importante - Traduce Por Favor

Coalition Receives Grant From JEF

The Jericho Educational Foundation (JEF) recently presented the Wellness Coalition with a \$1,000 grant to financially support their efforts.

The JEF is a non-profit fundraising organization whose goal is to enhance and enrich the excellence of education at the Jericho School district and within the community through various types of initiatives.

Jericho Students Participate In Red Watch Program

In June of 2008, a Stony Brook University faculty member lost her son to acute alcohol overdose while he was finishing his freshman year away at college. To further prevent this type of tragedy, alcohol, and other drug specialists, and student leaders at Stony Brook developed a comprehensive bystander intervention program offered to all students known as the Red Watch Program.

Jericho High School social worker Todd Benjamin coordinated the program for Jericho High School students on the recommendation of student Jake Gantman, with sponsorship from the Jericho Wellness Coalition and the Jericho School District.

During the first part of the training, a total of 30 students were trained and certified in CPR by Beth Adams, a nurse at Jackson Elementary School.

The second part of the training involves Alcohol Emergency Training by Mr. Benjamin and Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds from the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (LICADD), for students to learn when someone has been drinking too much and when to take action and call for emergency help.

The red watches, which students receive when they join the program, symbolize a “band” of students who are trained to “watch” over one another when “every second counts.”



The students “slap” on the watches and offer words of encouragement during the training exercise.

A Community Response To Adolescent Substance Abuse

As part of our ongoing commitment to reduce adolescent at-risk behaviors, the Jericho Wellness Coalition invited Mr. Barry Wilansky M.A., CASAC, CPP to present at our November 1, 2011 Parent Forum. Mr. Wilansky is the Executive Director of Tempo Group, one of the finest community-based substance abuse centers in Nassau County. Mr. Wilansky’s speech was so well received that we decided to publish it in our first issue of *Healthy Times*.

Understanding Substance Abuse By Barry Wilansky

1. Substance use is a chronic, progressive and often fatal illness that develops in some people and not others.
2. The disorder results from repeated exposure of the brain to substances that enter brain cells and influence the chemistry of the cell. Repeated exposure results in changes in brain function.
3. We live in a culture that expects people to use drugs, markets drugs directly to them and generates extraordinary amounts of money through the distribution and sale of drugs.
4. Neuro-imaging techniques have afforded invaluable information about the development of children’s brains and the impact of drug use on the brain. We can understand children’s impulsive behavior and poor decision making in part as a function of the limitations of the juvenile/adolescent brain. The tobacco industry and the alcohol distillers industry take advantage of this science by marketing substances in forms that appeal to youth.
5. Retrospective biographies of individuals who develop this illness overwhelmingly demonstrate that their use began in their childhood and became a problem in later years. What it looks like at onset is not what it looks like three years later. For those with the illness it may have begun with innocent social use but it ends with tragic, yet predictable outcomes.
6. Unfortunately, we live in an era of lim-

ited understanding and acceptance of this illness. There is a body of science that deepens our understanding of the tragic path of this illness, yet the dominant thinking in our culture does not reflect the science. In fact, even thinking that alcohol is a beverage and not a drug is a distortion of truth. Similarly, attaching the word “medical” to marijuana sets a form in motion that troubles me for my grandchildren.

7. Our children are being raised in a peer culture that is saturated with stress. It often begins as early as kindergarten and finds its way into our lives throughout the school years. Parents feel it, children feel it, and schools feel it! Unfortunately, today’s youth culture is short on delaying gratification, but quick on self medicating their stress.

The more successful we are in delaying the age of onset; the more successful we can be in minimizing the number of children who develop the disease of addiction.

8. The vast majority of young people attempt drug use, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and marijuana in an innocent way. They do not think or believe that the substances will be a problem for them. However, for almost half who try, there will be a significant consequence. The drift into peer groups that use a range of

substances and the abuse of substances all begins with the innocent first attempt. There is little way of knowing with certainty who will move forward to a tragic outcome and who will be spared.

9. Once we step back from the bizarre notion of drug use as recreation or experiment and understand that drug use from the onset is always about altering brain chemistry, which for some will set in motion a chronic and progressive illness, then we can begin to embrace strategies that promote a no use message until age 21 (brain maturation).

10. Working together offers us the best opportunity to create a community where parents are active participants in helping children find new ways to cope with stress and avoid the deadly pitfalls of underage alcohol and drug use.

Car Teaches Students Dangers Of Texting And Driving



This car, which was involved in an accident as a result of the driver texting and driving, was on display outside of the High School for a week in November. The students and parents said that the car had a great impact on teaching the dangers of texting and driving. The sign read "Warning: Friends don't let friends drink, smoke or text while driving." Special thanks to Detective Lynch for coordinating the delivery of the car.

Mindful Parent

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you praise good behavior and healthy values that you observe in your child.

*Be open to listen and hear your child's feelings and opinions (even if they are rolling their eyes and pacing).

*Allow enough time to be patient and to give your full attention to your child's feelings and opinions. Do not start a discussion just before you get in your car to go to work.

*Listen openly and communicate honestly. That does not mean that you have to share everything with your child. Keep in mind the age and developmental stage.

*Ask questions that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no.' Avoid probing too deeply; you do not want to sound like a police detective.

*Ask for solutions to the issue. Many times a child will be harsher than the parent will. If their solution is appropriate, agree with it and try to set it into motion.

*Practice mindful listening. Listen to your child as if you're listening to a great piece of music. Listen with full attentiveness and respond as necessary.

*Be lighthearted. If you make a mistake in your parenting, don't beat yourself up, instead see if you can laugh or at least smile about it. You're human after all, and so is your child.

Resources

Mindfulness for Dummies, Shamash Alidina, *Everyday Blessings*: Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Parenting Solutions*: Nancy Sander.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT...

Whole Foods Joins Wellness Coalition

Jericho's Whole Foods Market recently joined the Wellness Coalition and hit the ground running promoting healthy eating habits to Jericho students.

During the High School lunch periods on Fridays, Social Worker Todd Benjamin opens Café 126. The students can stop down during periods 5-8 and be treated to healthy snacks, which are provided by Whole Foods every other Friday. Socialization, communication and relaxation techniques are also taught.

During the grand opening of Café 126 in December, Luisa Wunderlin, a Healthy Eating Specialist from Jericho's Whole Foods, cooked Turkey Chili for the students and plans to make more delicious treats during future visits.

"We recognize our responsibility to be active participants in our local communities," said Chris Ivers, Marketing Team Leader for Jericho's Whole Foods Market. "We have an important message to share. The transition to eating healthy isn't only about what benefits or results it can produce now but also the tremendous effect it can have on helping to prevent future illnesses. Healthy eating is like an investment in your future health and well being."

Coalition members are excited to welcome Whole Foods aboard. "We are thrilled to be partnering with Whole Foods and teaching our students the benefits of eating healthy," said Wellness co-chair Todd Benjamin.



Luisa Wunderlin and Chris Ivers from Whole Foods distribute homemade smoothies to students in Café 126.

**WHOLE
FOODS
MARKET**

Meet The Members Of The Jericho Wellness Coalition

The Jericho Wellness Coalition is comprised of professionals, school district employees, community leaders, local business officials, clergy, parents, and students.

Members include: **Adam Winnick, Allyson Edelman, Barbara Kessler, Bruce Pergament, Chris Ivers, Denise Nash, Denise Romano, Detective Mike Lynch, Donald Gately, Henry Grishman, Ilene Joachim, Jane Zwilling, Jeff Reynolds, Joanne Verdino, John Mankowich, Jon Delman, Karen Gantman, Mary Marks, Pat Bany, Rabbi Michael Katz, Randi Pergament, Rev. Clerkin, Sheree Levy and Todd Benjamin.**

Todd Benjamin serves as the coalition's school co-chair and Randi Pergament as parent co-chair

The group meets on a monthly basis and works together to promote safety and wellness for children and families within the Jericho community.

Want to Contact Us?

Have an idea that you'd like to share with the Wellness Coalition?

Contact School Co-Chair Todd Benjamin at 516-203-3600 ext. 3264 or email Mr. Benjamin at TBenjamin@jerichoschools.org.

Calling All Knitters

Do you or someone you know like to knit or crochet? Jane Zwilling, a member of the Jericho Wellness Coalition, is working on a project to further increase awareness of the dangers of texting while driving.

Jane, along with a group of volunteers, is knitting thumb socks that will be distributed to the senior class to remind them how dangerous it is to text and drive.

If interested, please contact Jane Zwilling at hzwilling@aol.com.

National Presenter Tim Rader Addresses Jericho Students & Parents

On Nov. 1, the Jericho Wellness Coalition held an assembly for national presenter Tim Rader and his program Live To Tell at Jericho High School.

Tim grew up in Pennsylvania and was the quarterback for his high school football team, as well as a good student. After being diagnosed with cancer the age of 17, he began taking pre-

scription medication to manage his pain. This was the start of his addiction, although it didn't surface until after college.

Rader spoke to Jericho's 10th and 11th graders about addiction and the importance of abstaining from all chemical substances. He took the students through the horrors he suffered

and stressed that he did this to show them how drug addiction can rip apart your family and ruin your life.

Rader met with several Jericho students after his presentation with the hope that they will take his message and continue to spread it throughout the school year.

"Tim did a great job connecting with our students," said High School Principal Joseph Prisinzano. "They listened intently and continued the conversation even after he left."

Rader returned that evening to talk to parents. "Be a parent to your children and discuss the dangers of drugs and alcohol," said Rader. "Don't be a friend to them. They have enough friends. They need a parent."

The presentation was sponsored by the Caron Foundation, The Tempo Group and Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD).



Tim Rader (back row, third from right) meets with Jericho High School students.

