

# Newsletter

In this Issue:

County Wide Family Council

Children's Mental Health Awareness

Child Behavioral Health Services

Calendar of Events

Community Partners



Children's Mental Health Matters

April-June 2010

## National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

May 2-8 2010



National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a time for communities to recognize and promote youth development. Each year 20% of children nationwide face diagnosable mental health conditions. While most of these conditions can be treated less than 25% of these children get the help they need. One in ten children and adolescents suffer from mental conditions severe enough to result in insignificant impairment.

Raising a child is one of life's most demanding roles. Those whose children have mental health needs can face unimaginable challenges, the least of which is simply finding out where to turn for the services that their children need.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week as its name implies, is intended to raise awareness of children's mental health needs, and to make known the availability of services and programs for children and youth with mental health needs and their families, such as Family Support Organization of Essex County (FSOEC).

Through its peer to peer approach, Family Support Organization of Essex County has helped meet the mental health needs of over 3300 children, youth, and families since its inception in 2004.

Mental Health Awareness Week focuses on delivering the following message :

- Mental Health is essential to overall health and well-being
- Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable
- Children and youth with mental health challenges and their families deserve access to services and supports that are family-driven, youth-guided, and culturally appropriate
- Values of acceptance, dignity, and social inclusion should be promoted throughout all communities for children, youth, and families.
- Family and youth voice is a valued asset in determining appropriate services and intervention.

A major part of Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is the *Green Ribbon Campaign*, an initiative to spread awareness and promote discussion in communities across the country.

In the 1800s, the color green was used to brand people insane. However, the children's mental health community has since changed the meanings behind the color, to signify new life, new beginnings, resiliency and growth.

Serious emotional, behavioral, and mental health conditions are very real, and treatable.

This year's theme for Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is "Promoting Positive Mental Health from Birth to Adulthood". A major part of the Awareness Week campaign focuses not only on celebrated successes of youth and families who are thriving in the community and highlighting the needs of children and families, but also on how to improve policy and better support families of children with behavioral health needs.



# Changing Lives





Youth Partnership of Essex county is part of a statewide initiative in youth development . Jacquelyn Oliver who is the Director of Youth and Community Relations at the Family Support Organization of Essex County, states “ This group of youth ages 13-21 is committed to reducing the stigma associated with mental health challenges. “

Youth Partnership is thriving because of the collaboration of all of the people, places, supports, opportunities and services that most of us essentially understand that young people need to be happy, healthy and successful. “Working with youth has always been a passion of mine. I can recall when I was a youth myself and then Councilman Ron Rice gave me insight on how to get the community involved in supporting my efforts to give at risk youth an outlet through sports” states Jacquelyn.

Over two decades later, Ms. Jackie as she is affectionately called by the youth, is still empowering youth .

Youth Partnership has grown to a committed group of over 20 youth who meet weekly to discuss the challenges youth face while dealing with issues such as HIV & AIDS, sex education, leadership development, life skills, self expression, values and how to develop coping and resiliency. “Since I became Director of Youth Initiatives in 2008, I have seen many of the youth take ownership of their behavior, work towards change and find their voice. “ Empowering the youth to speak up and be heard on issues that plague our communities has given them a voice in the NJ Statewide Youth Advisory Council and in local Youth Advisory Boards. “ Our Voices Will be Heard” was a slogan created by the youth.



While the mission of youth is to educate professional, families and peers on mental health issues to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues in the community, they take time out to have fun and use the arts as a tool for self expression.

Promoting Positive Youth Development “**Each One Reach One**”

## *County- Wide Family Council Launched in Essex*

On Saturday, January 23, 2010 thirty-two enthusiastic and energized parent gathered for the inaugural meeting of the Essex Family Council, a county-wide project sponsored by NJ Alliance of Family Support Organizations, Parents Anonymous and the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN).

The goal of the project is to recruit, train and support parent leaders to develop a county family council that will identify problems families face in the health/ mental health, child welfare and educational systems.

Trained Parent Leaders with experiences that cross “silos” will provide much needed expertise of families on both practice and policy in areas such as program planning, evaluation and quality improvement.

For now, the project is in place in three counties, Essex, Monmouth and Atlantic Cape May; However its sponsors hope it will become a statewide initiative.

Each sponsoring organization nominated 7- 10 parents who attended a one- day orientation and will meet every other month for County Family Council meetings.

Our long term goal is to establish meaningful parent leadership in programs and systems that impact families on the county and statewide levels.





## MAY

*\*Walk for Mental Health Awareness  
Sat. 1st 9 am Brookdale Park - Bloomfield*

**Parents Anonymous**  
*Tues. 11th, 18th 25th*

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome:**  
*What you can do to help your child*  
*Monday 10th -6 pm*

### Positive Parenting with a Plan

*May 10<sup>th</sup> 7 pm- 9 pm Nutley Public Library*  
*May 13<sup>th</sup> 7 pm- 9 pm Maplewood Public Library*  
*May 15<sup>th</sup> 7 pm- 9 pm Belleville Public Library*  
*May 17<sup>th</sup> 7 pm- 9 pm East Orange Public Library*  
*May 19<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9pm Newark Public Library ( Weequahic Branch)*  
*May 24<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9pm Livingston Public Library*  
*May 27<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9pm South Orange Public Library*

## JUNE

**Parents Anonymous**  
*Tues. 8th, 15th 22nd*

**Strengthening Families**  
*June 12th 10am- 2pm*

# Calendar of Events

## I Am Going On A Journey

I am going on a journey, won't you come along?  
I need someone to help me, a person big and strong,  
I'm walking on my journey but my feet are very small.  
Can you stand beside me, and catch me if I fall?  
At times when I can't keep up With life and all its fears,  
Can you put me on your shoulders And wipe away the tears?  
When the steps I take are not big enough and it's hard for me  
to grow

I know I can depend on you to let me take it slow.  
I'm going on a journey, please, won't you walk with me?  
I need someone who understands the place where I should  
be.  
I promise when the road is tough and you want to turn back  
home.  
I will hold your hand real tight, so you won't feel so alone.  
I'm going on a journey I don't know where it ends,  
But if we walk together, We can always be best friends.  
And when the journey's over and we find where we should  
be.

I know that you will be so glad; you took this path with me.  
I'm going on a journey, please, won't you come along?  
I need someone to guide me a parent—big & strong.

Written by Sally Meyer

## Child Behavioral Health Services

*If you or someone you know needs to  
access child behavioral health services  
contact,*

**PerformCare**  
*Behavioral Health Solutions*

**1-877-652-7624**

*or you're a parent who just need a place where  
you receive support, education,  
and learn to advocate*

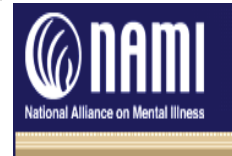


*Building on the Strengths of Families*

**973-395-1441**

# Community Partners

*"Building on the Strengths of Families"*



## What can you do?

- Support group facilitators
- Teachers
- Arts instructors
- Chaperones
- Parent Mentors
- College Students can volunteer to fulfill community service requirements



## Warm Line...

*Help is just a phone call away!*

We are here to listen! Our caring staff is here to answer your questions and provide information about resources.

973-395-1441

Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

973-395-1441

