

# 2018-2019

## Youth Mental Health IMPACT REPORT



**we need to** *talk*  
a youth mental health initiative  
of the detroit jewish community

[WN2T.org](http://WN2T.org)

 Jewish Federation  
OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT

**jhelp**

## 2018-2019 Recap



A December 2016 community-wide health and social welfare needs assessment conducted by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in partnership with The Jewish Fund revealed a deeply troubling statistic:

***About half of all youth said that they or someone they know struggle with anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or sadness.***

Jewish Detroit is not alone. Communities all across the country are facing an alarming youth mental health crisis. A *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* study revealed that in the past 10 years the suicide rate among 10 to 17-year-olds increased by more than 70%, and the *National Alliance on Mental Health* reports that suicide is now the second-leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24.

In response to the crisis, Federation established a workgroup comprised of staff from schools, youth groups, camps, social service agencies and synagogues to develop a plan of action. Following a study of community models around the world, input from teens and consultations with mental health professionals, including experts from the University of Michigan and Stanford University, the workgroup developed a plan with three core pillars: Training, Interventional Supports and Education/Awareness. The goals of the program are to:

- Reduce the stigma associated with youth mental illness.
- Make young Jewish Detroiters comfortable talking about mental illness and more likely to seek help when needed.
- Promote healthier parenting styles that increase youth mental wellness.
- Increase and promote the availability of mental health support services throughout the Jewish community.

Statistics prove that such efforts can have a profound impact. A 2017 study by the *Child Mind Institute* noted that 81% of teens with anxiety and 71% of teens with depression get better with treatment, and that education and anti-stigma programs improve mental health attitudes by almost 70%.

In collaboration with our many partners in the Jewish and general community, and with the support of so many generous funders, Federation is working hard to change the way we think and act when it comes to youth mental illness.

This past year more than **2,000** community members attended educational events, more than **700** Jewish professionals have completed suicide awareness and prevention training, an entirely new youth mental health focused website has been developed, a b'nai mitzvah enhancement curriculum has been created and we have secured additional mental health workers to support our community.

However, there is still a tremendous amount of work to do. Our goal of reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and advancing the community conversation about this issue will take time, dedication and financial resources. A coordinated network of professionals serving as a support system for youth and their families will be needed for many years.

# Training

**A critical component of the Youth Mental Health Initiative is to ensure that professionals engaging with the youth in our community are trained to identify those who may be in crisis and intervene.**



## safeTALK Trainings

A half-day program used in more than 20 countries, safeTALK was designed to train anyone 15 years of age or older to become suicide alert. Through safe (Suicide Alertness For Everyone) TALK (Tell, Ask, Listen, Keep Safe), participants also learn how to connect anyone who may be suicidal to resources that can provide more extensive help. To date, **more than 700 community leaders and professionals have been trained through safeTALK.**

After training:

**96%**

of professionals are comfortable engaging and starting a conversation with someone who may be suicidal.

After training:

**94%**

of professionals are comfortable asking someone if they are considering suicide.

After training:

**98%**

of professionals can recognize invitations from another person for help to stay alive.

**More than 700 Jewish communal professionals have completed suicide awareness and prevention training.**



## Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a five-step action plan that covers topics including anxiety, substance use, ADHD and eating disorders. The first class took place in June and additional sessions will take place throughout 2019.



## ASIST Trainings

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day interactive workshop that teaches participants how to help create a safety plan for anyone considering suicide. Thus far, **60** professionals throughout the community have participated in ASIST.



## Kognito

Kognito is an online, interactive simulation tool that allows participants to choose how they would respond to various student situations with a mental health component and then receive feedback and guidance. Kognito has been made available to all Jewish agency professionals throughout Metro Detroit.

After ASIST training:

**95%**

of participants stated they feel confident they could help a person at-risk of suicide.

Only 28% said they would have felt confident that they could help a person at-risk of suicide before the training.

# Interventional Supports

**Another focus area of the Youth Mental Health Initiative is to increase the availability of school social workers and make it easier for youth to access a psychiatric professional.**



## Psychiatric Care

A 2018 study by the *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* reported that virtually every state, including Michigan, was experiencing a “severe shortage” in the number of practicing psychiatrists who specialize in treating youth.

The Youth Mental Health Initiative sought to make care more accessible to the many young people who need it through a highly qualified and licensed child psychiatrist at Jewish Family Service. This goal was achieved by extending the hours of Kathleen Michelle Brazzle, M.D., who for more than 30 years has worked with young people experiencing depression, attention deficit disorder, bipolar disorder and general behavioral problems.

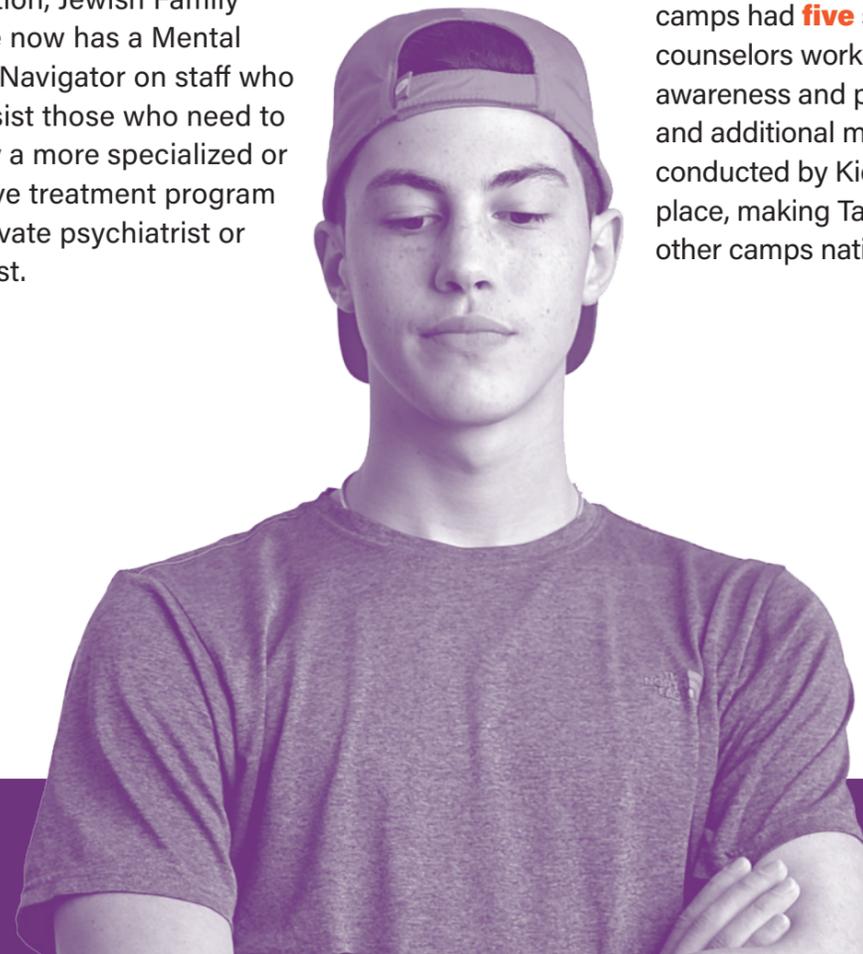
In addition, Jewish Family Service now has a Mental Health Navigator on staff who can assist those who need to identify a more specialized or intensive treatment program or a private psychiatrist or therapist.

## Social Worker Assistance

Social workers are the link between home, school and community, and they play a critical role in helping to promote and support students’ mental wellness.

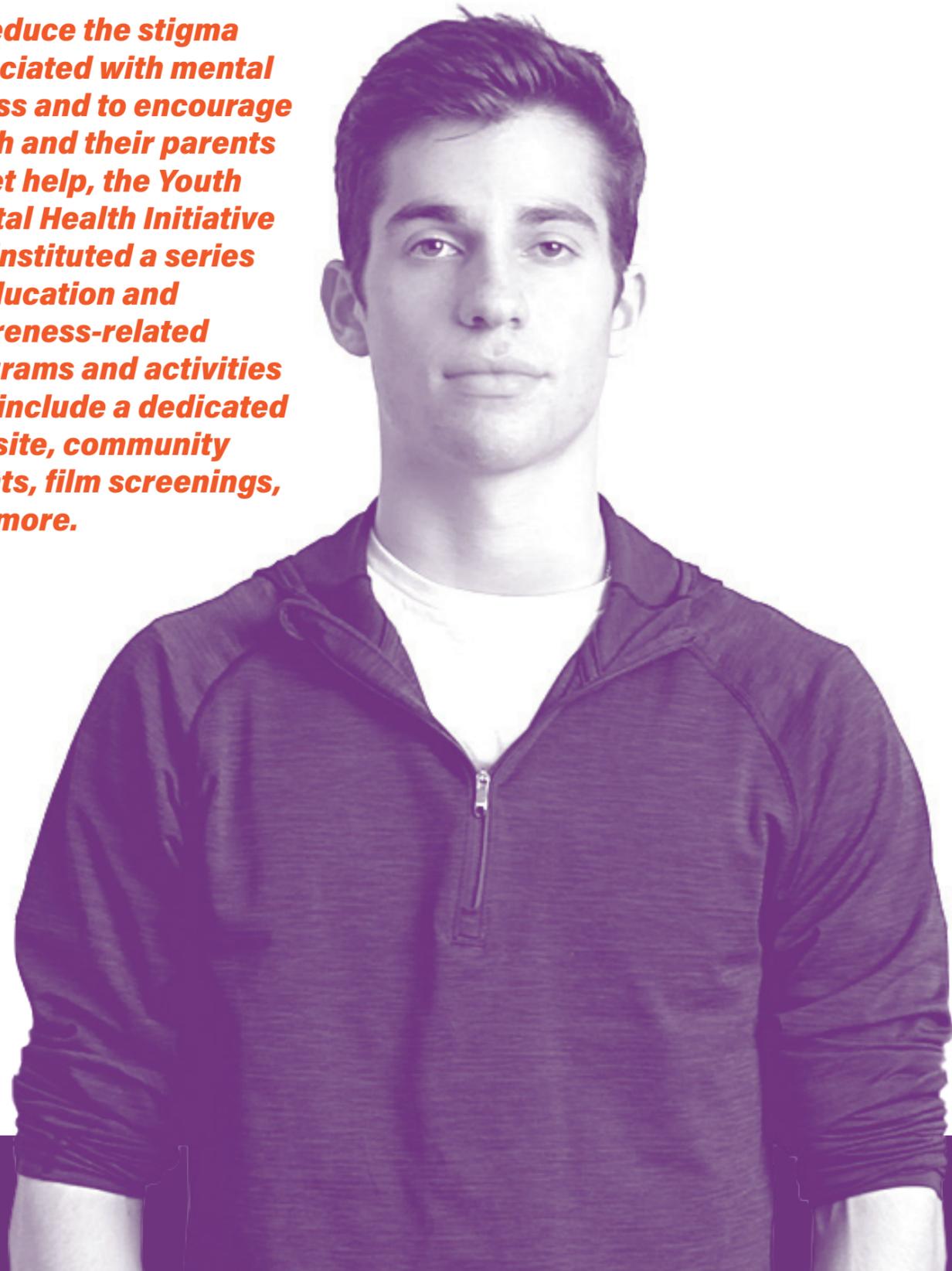
Before the Youth Mental Health Initiative, many local Jewish day schools did not have the social worker support that they needed. This meant that many social workers were constantly in crisis intervention mode with little time to address day-to-day concerns. Today, capacity has expanded with additional social workers supporting our area day schools.

Thanks to the generous support of the William Davidson Foundation, this summer Tamarack camps had **five** social workers and **22** support counselors working with campers. Suicide awareness and prevention trainings for staff and additional mental health-related trainings conducted by Kids Kicking Cancer also took place, making Tamarack Camps a model for other camps nationwide.



# Education & Awareness

**To reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to encourage youth and their parents to get help, the Youth Mental Health Initiative has instituted a series of education and awareness-related programs and activities that include a dedicated website, community events, film screenings, and more.**



## WN2T.org

The We Need to Talk website (WN2T.org), which launched in June 2018, features resources for youth and parents along with videos of community professionals and teens who have either faced mental health challenges or have important advice to share.

Through these videos, visitors are inspired by the stories of young people who are overcoming mental health challenges and some of the professionals whose agencies provide support. The site also includes resources and opportunities to connect.

## Videos have been viewed more than 100,000 times

"One Thing I Wish You Knew," a youth testimonial, has had more than

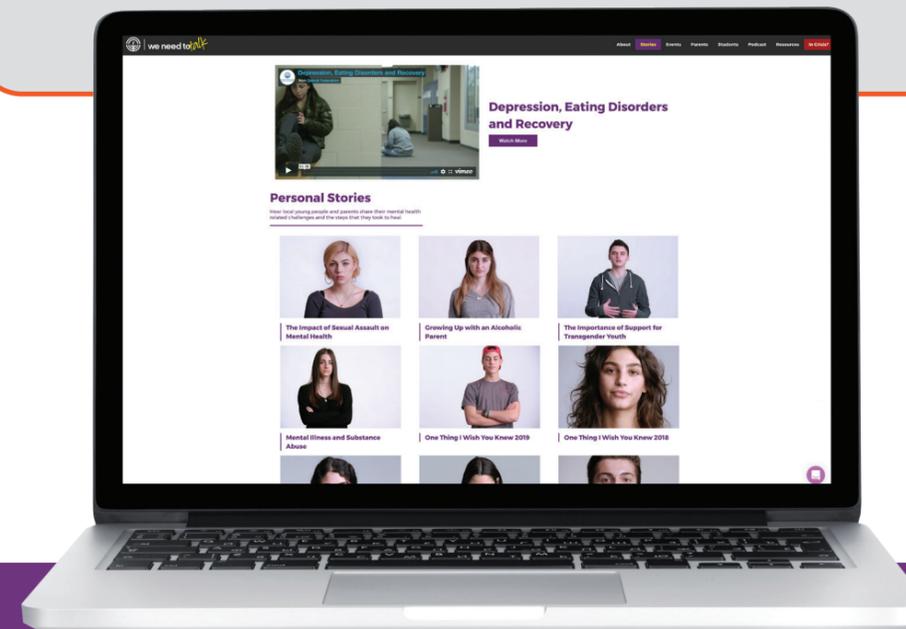
**22,000 views**

A video describing how a teen overcame her eating disorder has more than

**16,000 views**

A video featuring Rabbi Shmuel Zimmerman from NOAM Detroit (the social services division of the Council of Orthodox Rabbis) has more than

**7,500 views**



# Guest Speakers

## Frank Bruni

Best-selling author and New York Times writer Frank Bruni discussed his book *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*. His talk was aimed at helping to reduce the anxiety that often occurs when young people go through the college application process. More than **650** people attended the presentation.



## Kevin Hines

Golden Gate Bridge suicide attempt survivor and award-winning author and filmmaker Kevin Hines shared his inspirational story with nearly **500** attendees, in addition to a screening of his film *Suicide: The Ripple Effect*. Kevin's talk and film focused on the devastating effects of suicide and the tremendous positive ripple effects that advocacy, inspiration and hope can have. Ninety-seven percent of those who participated in a post-event survey said after hearing the talk and watching the film they are more likely to reach out to someone when they notice signs of mental health distress.

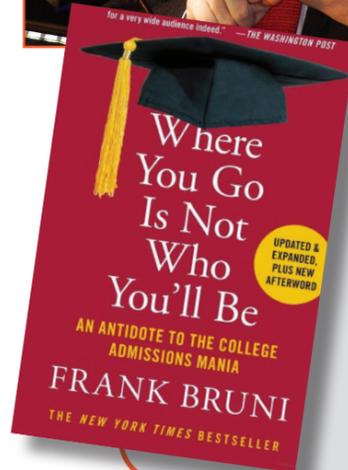
## Frank Bruni Event

**96%**

of attendees said they now understand that getting into a particular college is not the ultimate predictor of success.

**91%**

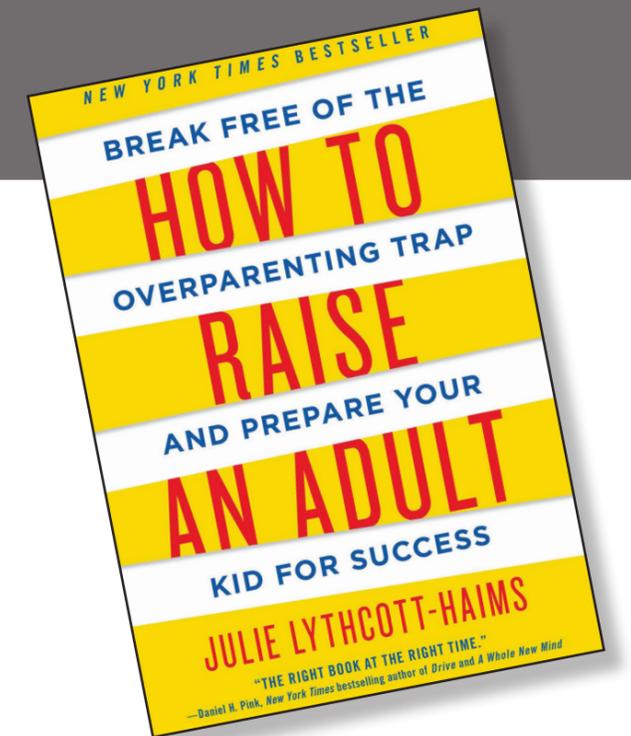
of attendees said the talk helped them realize they need to stop pressuring their children to attend a particular university.



## Julie Lythcott-Haims

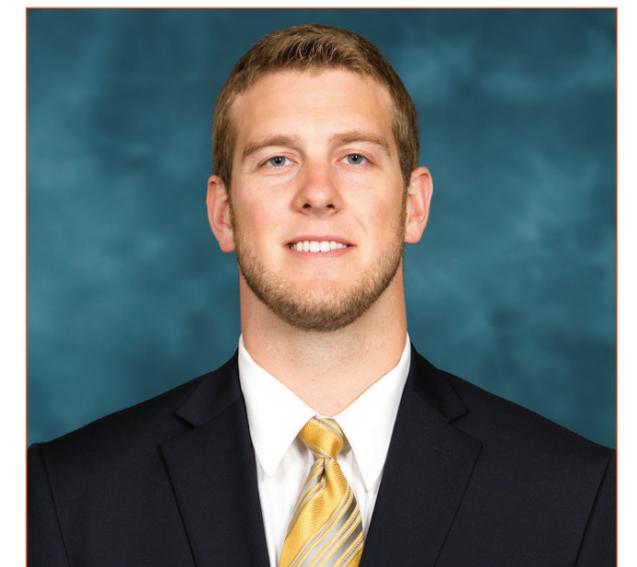
Julie Lythcott-Haims, former Dean of Freshmen at Stanford University spoke to nearly **600** community members about her New York Times bestseller *How To Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success*. She told audience members that their job is to guide children in self-discovery and not to foster anxiety by forcing kids to strive for perfection.

**Ninety-four** percent of those who participated in a post-event survey stated they learned practical tips and skills for productive parenting.



## Will Heining

Former University of Michigan football player Will Heining spoke about his struggles with depression to more than **250** teens at BBYO's Regional Convention. His talk focused on his experience and the importance of asking for help.

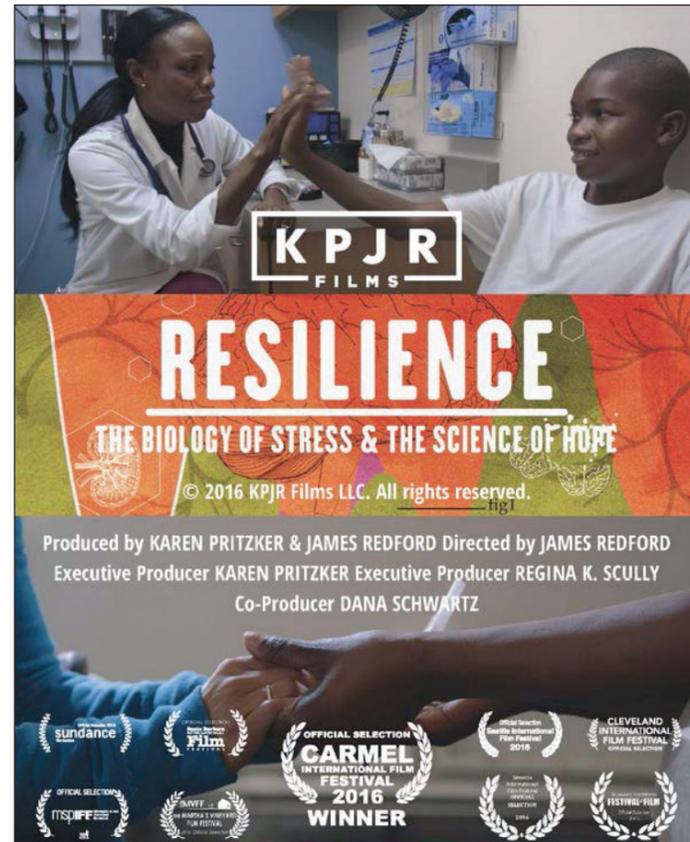


# Films and FREDTalks

## Films

During the fall of 2018, Federation's Youth Mental Health Initiative partnered with Friendship Circle on a showing of **Resilience**, a film that explores how adverse childhood experiences can result in physical and mental illness later in life.

In March 2019, the film **LIKE** was screened to a sold-out audience at the Maple Theater. **LIKE** focuses on the negative aspects of social media and features mental health experts as well as the co-creator of Facebook's like button. **Eighty-eight** percent of those who participated in a post-screening survey said they plan to make changes in their technology and social media use to create better balance in their lives.



## FREDTalks

FRED (Focus on Resources, Education and Dialogue) Talks, are in-home parlor meetings for groups of friends to learn from mental health experts. **Four** talks have been held for **60** community members. Subjects covered include 21st century parenting, suicide awareness and prevention, and managing relationships with teenagers. FRED Talks take place on an ongoing basis and any community member can hold one in their home. In the year ahead we look forward to conducting many more of these impactful grassroots sessions.

## Podcasts

In an effort to provide busy parents with useful information they can access quickly and easily, the Youth Mental Health Initiative developed and launched a podcast. The first nine episodes are currently live on the We Need to Talk website and feature Todd Krieger, Senior Planning Director at the Jewish Federation, along with Julie Fisher, a nationally recognized educational consultant. Todd and Mrs. Fisher discuss and offer perspectives on issues such as managing technology use, youth resiliency and the effects of helicopter parenting.

Additional podcast episodes featuring other experts and community members are in the works with the goal of creating a library of podcasts that will provide insights and tools for young people and their families struggling to achieve mental well-being.



[WN2T.org](http://WN2T.org) / Podcast

## Current podcast episodes include:

**Episode 1:** How to help youth maintain a balanced digital diet to minimize negative mental health effects

**Episode 2:** Understanding the importance of teaching youth to find the right balance to support their mental wellness

**Episode 3:** Learn the impact of gaming on youth mental health and tips to set limits

**Episode 4:** Overparenting: Helpful or harmful? Why doing less is doing more for youth

**Episode 5:** How learning what it is like to fail can help youth succeed

**Episode 6:** How to help youth learn the value of competency and feel good about it

**Episode 7:** How a growth mindset can support youth mental wellness

**Episode 8:** How parents can help youth develop strength, character and fortitude to face life's challenges head on

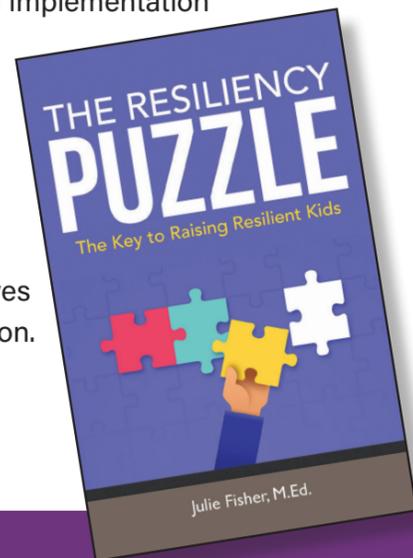
**Episode 9:** How to help youth create a healthy support network to promote their mental wellness

## The Resiliency Puzzle



In addition to its work with Mrs. Fisher on a podcast, Federation partnered with her to develop "The Resiliency Puzzle" for the Jewish community. This parent and educator curriculum provides a model

for understanding how kids can develop the skills they need to cope with adversity and persevere while gaining strength, character and the fortitude to succeed. It teaches adults what resiliency looks like and provides concrete suggestions to instill resiliency in their children. Over the course of the year, Mrs. Fisher also worked with the day schools to develop strategic plans based on each school's unique needs. These include suggestions and implementation plans to improve school community mental health and customized youth mental wellness initiatives for each institution.



## Raise the Bar

Federation also partnered with Rabbi/Dr. Jeremy Baruch and Rabbi Rachel Shere to develop Raise the Bar, a separate curriculum that brings positive mental health strategies to the b'nai mitzvah process. Using the activities outlined in the program, rabbinical staff can help usher children into adulthood with a set of mental wellness strategies they can benefit from for all of their lives.

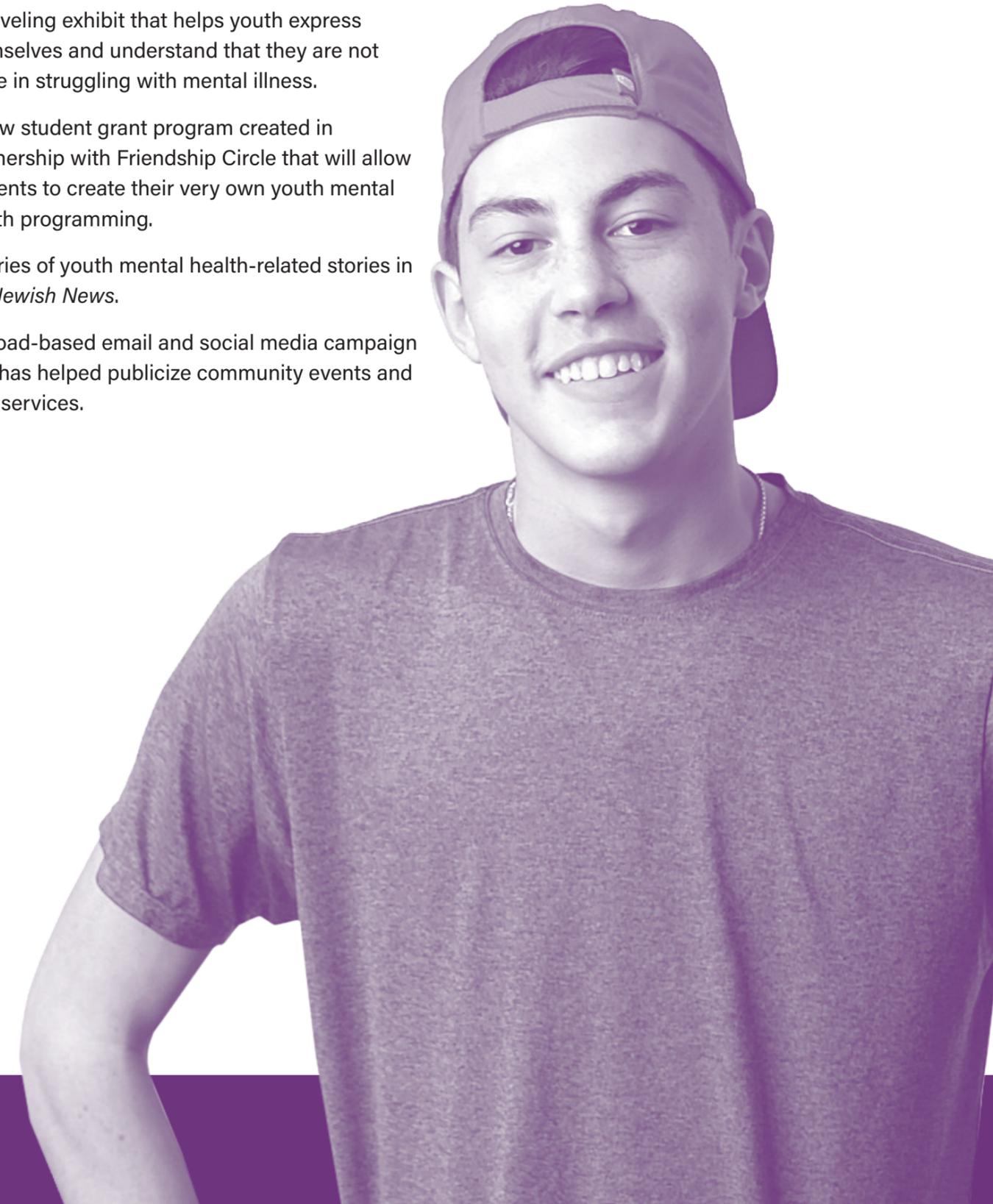


**Rabbi Dr.  
Jeremy Baruch**



**Rabbi  
Rachel Shere**

- A traveling exhibit that helps youth express themselves and understand that they are not alone in struggling with mental illness.
- A new student grant program created in partnership with Friendship Circle that will allow students to create their very own youth mental health programming.
- A series of youth mental health-related stories in *The Jewish News*.
- A broad-based email and social media campaign that has helped publicize community events and new services.



# Thank you to our wonderful donors who make the Federation's Youth Mental Health Program possible:

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