



FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

**“What I Wish I Knew: Empowering our Youth and Establishing Hope”
Community Conversation: A Resounding Success**



Rumson, NJ - The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS) and WEforum celebrated the successful culmination of the “What I Wish I Knew: Empowering our Youth and Establishing Hope” Community Conversation event held on March 19th, 2024, at The Two River Theater in Red Bank. This enlightening discussion, made possible by Carolyn DeSena, founder of WEforum Group, provided attendees with an insightful exploration of personal experiences and invaluable insights from our distinguished panel of experts. Dr. Michael Snyder, Director of Student Services for the Rumson School District, was among those who extended sincere appreciation to Mrs. DeSena for her dedication and support in bringing this essential conversation to fruition, highlighting the collaborative effort behind the event's success.

Ninety attendees gathered for the event, which was made possible through the collaborative efforts of key partners. These partners included the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide, Monmouth Medical Center, RWJBarnabas Health, Tigger Stavola Foundation, Mental Health Association of Monmouth County, Shore House, Ridge Road Alliance, the Source at Red Bank Regional High School, and the Rumson School District. They came together to foster an open and constructive dialogue concerning mental health awareness among youth. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of addressing mental health challenges and supporting our youth through education, dialogue, and community engagement. The discussion, expertly moderated by Susan Tellone, Clinical Director of Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS), featured esteemed panelists Kalisha Smith, LCSW, Stacy Brief, LMSW, Steve Sefcik, and Marli J. Gelfrand, M.A. L.P.C., A.C.S. The panelists provided keen insights and personal anecdotes, shedding light on the subtle signs preceding a mental health crisis and offering valuable advice to parents and caregivers on early intervention strategies.

Dr. Michael Snyder, an official partner of this event, highlighted the paramount importance of establishing a professional and inclusive forum for discussions surrounding mental health. He emphasized the necessity of fostering an environment where open dialogue can thrive without reservation or judgment. Dr. Snyder's steadfast commitment to promoting mental wellness underscored the event's objective: to cultivate a professional community dedicated to supporting youth as they navigate the complexities of the modern world with resilience and compassion. "We believe that breaking the silence is the first step towards building a community that thrives on mental well-being," stated Carolyn DeSena, founder of WEforum Group and MMC Trustee. "By openly discussing these issues, we hope to shatter the stigma surrounding youth mental health."

The “What I Wish I Knew” Community Conversation serves as a testament to the power of collaboration and community-driven initiatives in addressing mental health challenges. SPTS, WEforum and the Rumson School District look forward to continuing their partnership and working towards a future where every young person feels supported, understood, and empowered.

For additional information and resources, please visit www.sptsusa.org.