

Time



TEENS

Peer to Peer

Livingston Youth & Community Services

Spring 2010

CYBER-BULLYING, TEEN DEPRESSION & SUICIDE

As a follow-up to the highly successful "In Real Life" presentation by George Street Playhouse last year (December 2009) to middle school students at MPE and Heritage School which included a parent workshop, LYCS and LMAC are co-sponsoring John Halligan's presentation on cyber-bullying. "In Real Life" was based on several experiences of children being cyber-bullied, including Ryan Halligan.

"Ryan's Story" was born out of the tragic consequence of cyber-bullying. John Halligan's son, Ryan died by suicide on Oct 7, 2003 after being bullied by classmates at school and online. He was only 13 years of old.

This presentation will cover the lessons learned too late for his family regarding how to deal with bullying, cyber-bullying and teen depression. In addition, LYCS will be sponsoring a series of video podcasts on Internet Safety 101, Social Media 101 and Cell Phones 101 to offer practical tips to parents on the use of technology and keeping children safe.

John Halligan has devoted his life to making sure that another family does not suffer the fate that befell his own family. For more information about *Ryan's Story* visit his website: www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org.



John Halligan
Cyber-bullying,
Teen Depression
& Suicide

"Ryan's Story"

April 12, 2010

*Heritage Middle School
Media Center: 7:30 pm*

**FREE Program for
Middle & High School
Students and Parents**

**RSVP attendance to
lycs@livingston.org**

Inside This Issue

Letter from the Editor	1
Elementary My Dear!	2
Mirror Project	3
Safely Surfing the Internet	4
Safety Net for The Internet	5
Teen Depression	6
Listening Skills	7
Ask Syd	8
Community Updates	9

Livingston Youth & Community Services



Celebrating A Drug Free Life
Through Leadership

Department of Senior, Youth
and Leisure Services



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Readers,

Welcome to the Spring issue of Time 4 Teens. Inside this newsletter are articles on Cyber-bullying, tips on internet safety as well as suggested guidelines on keeping children safe as they surf the world-wide-web.

In addition, we have included helpful articles to raise awareness of teen depression with a list of resources for those in need of support. Listening skills are highlighted as well as updates on upcoming community events.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Time 4 Teens newsletter. Feel free to send in articles you would like in the newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, please email: lycs@livingston.org, or write to:

Time 4 Teens - LYCS,
PO Box 822,
Livingston, NJ 07039.

Please feel free to comment.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Sincerely,

The Editor

ELEMENTARY MY DEAR!

Bullying

Why people bully is unclear. People mainly think bullying is caused by hormones, a cell that enables growth. People of opposite genders have different ways of argument. When boys argue and bully, it is usually overt. A punch is thrown and shouts erupt from around the circle. For boys, bullying is fighting each other.

Cyber-bullying

What do you think about when you hear the word Cyber-bullying? Cyber-bullying means bullying on the web. Cyber means web and you know what bullying means. People send things like "U suck" through the internet. Kids surfing the internet is bad because one, you don't really know who you are talking to. It could be a friend, or just someone trying to hurt you. Some people send threats in kind messages, like "U Rock so tremendously under pressure in darkness." See? The 1st letter of each word spells "U R Stupid." Even if you do know who you are talking to, the messages they send may be hurtful and you might not like it. These words can hurt you mentally, even though not physically. You should tell a grown-up.

Why bullies want power and "popularity?"

There is no possible answer for this one. One thought is because the bully wants to be popular. What most people think is popular is being pretty, having lots of people willing to do things for you and being rich. What popularity really is needs a kind heart and confidence. Someone brave enough to stand up to a bully no matter what size is called confidence. Another reason bullies might want power is to impress others. Like the popularity part, it is a kind heart to impress others, not being all rich and having "servants."

by Melody Xiao

If you're being bullied you might feel like taking revenge, but revenge is also being mean. So if you're being bullied say "stop" the first time and if they continue tell an adult. If you don't tell an adult the bully will keep bullying you. In school, everyone has a guidance counselor because if there is a problem with friendship, a guidance counselor can help. The counselor would have mini lessons and conferences with you and the bully to find out the problem and fix it. After that if the bully keeps bullying you, try to fix the problems the way you learned how, and if needed, ask an adult again for help.

I've gone through some of these problems before because no one's life is perfect. Even as an adult you can face these things and there may be things out there that you are scared of or have worries about. Life can be tough sometimes and there's nothing you can do about it, but you have to face things sometimes and take risks and live life as you dreamed. Don't let anyone give you a red light but if there is, let's hope for green. Do what you want to do and don't let ANYONE STOP YOU from living your life.

by John Paoello

LIVINGSTON MIRROR PROJECT

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
 @ Monmouth Court Community Center



During last year's Youth Appreciation week, Montclair State shared with us their wonderful Mirror Project that was exhibited at the Livingston Public Library, Livingston Town Center and at Livingston High School. The Mirror Project focused on body image and asked students, faculty, and staff: "What do you see when you look in the mirror?" The responses were funny, sad, shocking, and everything in between. Using diverse mediums, these self-proclaimed statements were put onto mirrors of different sizes, shapes and ages; some are cracked and flawed, some seem perfect.

This year, Livingston Youth and Community Services (LYCS) program, in collaboration with Montclair State, the Coordinated School Health Committee (CSHC) and HCHY Youth Appreciation Committee, plan on creating our own Livingston Mirror project on **April 24, 2010**. We invite Livingston Middle School and High School students as well as parents to create their own mirrors around the question "Who Am I?"

Identity is a core issue for youth as they grow into adulthood. Identity is linked to values and is an important factor in decision making. Help us to explore this fascinating topic as well as connect to your own sense of self. To participate, email RSVP to Susan Ridley at lycs@livingston.org by April 21. Mirrors and art materials will be provided as well as snacks and refreshments. If you have a mirror that you would like to use, please let me know. Participation is voluntary and anonymous, and you may withdraw at any time or choose not to exhibit your mirror.

Once completed, the Livingston Mirrors will be exhibited during Youth Appreciation Week at various locations around town including the Livingston Public Library, Livingston Town Center and at Livingston High School. This exhibit will challenge people to think about how they perceive themselves. For more information about the Livingston Mirror Project contact Susan Ridley at lycs@livingston.org or call: 973-535-2646.

ADOPT-A-PET

Saturday, MAY 29, 2010
 @ The Oval
 10:00 am—3:00 pm



In this country, there is a great, on-going need to rescue millions of unwanted animals who will otherwise be euthanized due to overpopulation. The ASPCA estimates that between 5 and 7 million dogs and cats enter the shelter system each year. Of those, only 1 to 3 million are adopted, but that leaves little hope for the millions of other companion animals who enter the doors of shelters across the country.

Here at the Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter (MPAS), through adoptions and education to the public we seek to save as many of those dogs and cats as possible and eventually find ourselves in a community in which there are no abused, abandoned or neglected animals.

The MPAS mission is threefold: to provide care for homeless companion animals; to promote spaying/neutering, microchipping and humane education about animal welfare; and to place homeless cats and dogs in loving, permanent homes. And while they are with us, we see our job as to not only provide the roof over their heads they need to survive, but also the consistent, exceptional care and compassion they need to thrive.

For more information about our programs or adoptable animals, visit us at www.njshelter.org or call 973-386-0590.



SAFELY SURFING THE INTERNET

We live in a global neighborhood where, with one click of the mouse takes you to distant countries, into peoples lives through social media networks, to gossip factories that examine the glory and trash of celebrities, to learning about the universe, history, and more. Unfortunately, that same click of the mouse can transport you into a world of hatred, abuse, violence, exploitation and crime.



The Internet has infinite possibilities but must be navigated safely to avoid its many pitfalls. With freedom comes responsibility and the following are some guidelines that may come in handy as you surf the net:

- Never give out your full name, address, or phone number to anyone online without first consulting a parent.
- Never arrange a meeting in person with anyone you met online without your parent being present.
- Be aware that people may not be who they appear to be online. Someone who claims to be a teen aged girl could be a forty year old man.
- Never send out photos of yourself to anyone on-line, especially in response to a direct request. Consult with a parent before posting photos of yourself anywhere online especially on social networking sites like Facebook.
- Once pictures are posted, they live in cyberspace forever regardless if you delete them from your page. So be very aware of what you post. Think about the future, college, work etc...
- Trust your instincts. If someone is sending you email or chat requests that make you feel uncomfortable, listen to your feelings. You don't have to respond to someone or do anything that you don't want to. If someone contacts you online that makes you feel uncomfortable tell your parents immediately.
- If someone cyber-bullies you, tell your parents, teacher or trusted adult. Do not respond to cyber-bullies. Instead, talk to your parents about changing your email address, internet account, user-name, or cell phone number. You may also be able to block cyber-bullying messages. Print out copies of the cyber-bullying from Web sites, IMs or emails. Save any text messages from the cyber-bully. Don't delete anything as they can be use to trace the bully and may be use in evidence against them.

The internet is a fun place. You can look up information, talk to your friends online through instant messaging, set up your own Web page for your friends to see and more... You can write about anything... or anyone. Sitting alone at the computer at home or in the library, it's easy to let your thoughts run wild because no-one will know. It's all in good fun, right? Wrong!

Once you put something out on the Internet, anybody can see it. Words and images can be pretty powerful. Once they're out there they take on a life of their own and can come back to haunt you. So be careful what you say, what you post and the sites that you visit. The Internet is similar to the rest of the world. You should use the same common sense there as you would on the street or in the mall.



A SAFETY NET FOR THE INTERNET



A Parent's Guide

"Blogging," "friending," "tagging," and "Googling" are all part of the new language of cyberspace. These are verbs children use every day to talk about what they do online. It is important that parents understand this new language and provide their children with guidance in navigating the Internet. The Internet is a wonderful tool for children to do research, play games, and communicate with family and friends. Unfortunately, just as people can be rude, obnoxious, and exploitative in person, the anonymity of the Internet can sometimes amplify poor behavior and create an environment that is not always appropriate for children.

Get Involved

The best way to ensure your child's safety on the Internet is by getting involved and setting rules for your child's use of the Internet.

- If you don't know how to access the Internet, ask at your local library to find out whether they offer free classes on how to use the Internet.
- Spend time with your child when he/she is online.
- Ask your child to share his/her blogs or online profiles with you.
- Monitor the amount of time your child spends online. Excessive use of online services, especially late at night, may signal a potential problem. The same parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply online.

Set Rules

- **Privacy.** Educate your child about the importance of keeping personal information private. Familiarize yourself with how your child's information is being used online. Read the privacy policies of the websites your child visits regularly.
- **Social Networking.** Encourage your child to be honest about his/her age when signing up for social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Second Life, and MySpace) or blogs. These sites and services often have minimum age requirements and may not be appropriate for all children.
- **Posting Images/Videos.** Discourage your child from posting photos or videos online without your approval.
- **Inappropriate Messages.** Discourage your child from responding to messages that are suggestive, obscene, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate.
- **Meeting Strangers.** Don't allow your child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone he/she met over the Internet without your approval. Remember that people online may not be who they say they are.
- **Advertising and Inaccurate Information.** Teach your child to be a critical consumer of information. Make sure your child knows that not everything he/she reads on the Internet is true.
- **Communication.** Talk with your child about his/her favorite websites, how much time he/she should spend online, what information he/she can share with online friends and what kinds of sites you want him/her to visit.

For more tips, please go to the following website:

<http://www.internetsafety101.org/InternetSafetyrules.htm>

TEEN DEPRESSION

Teenage depression isn't just bad moods and occasional melancholy. Depression is a serious problem that impacts every aspect of a teen's life. Left untreated, teen depression can lead to problems at home and school, drug abuse, self-loathing—even irreversible tragedy such as homicidal violence or suicide.

Teens face a host of pressures, physical changes to who they are and where they fit in. The natural transition from child to adult can also bring parental conflict as teens start to assert their independence. With all this drama, it isn't always easy to identify which is normal teen behavior, and which is depression. To make matters more complicated, some teens do not necessarily appear sad or withdrawn. Instead, some may exhibit symptoms of irritability, aggression and rage.

Signs and Symptoms

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Also consider how long the symptoms have been present, how severe they are, and how behavior patterns have changed. While some “growing pains” are to be expected, dramatic, long-lasting changes in personality, mood or behavior are red flags of a deeper problem.

If you see depression warning signs in yourself or your teen seek professional help from your doctor, psychologist or a mental health professional. Don't leave it until its too late. Depression is treatable!

Adapted from: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm



RESOURCES

National HopeLine

1-800-SUICIDE

1-800-784-2433

24 hours a day—7 days a week

National Suicide Prevention LifeLine

1-800-273-TALK

1-800-273-8255

24 hours a day—7 days a week

National Addictions Hotline

1- 800-238-2333

A first stop for addiction resource information in New Jersey.

Al-ateens

1-800-352-9996

Alateen is part of *Al-Anon*, which helps families and friends of alcoholics recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking of a relative.

Essex County Mental Health Association

1-973-509-9777

LISTENING SKILLS

How often have you heard or said “Are you listening to me?”

We have all been guilty at one time or another of not listening, or pretending to listen when someone is talking to us. The reasons are varied, from lack of interest to not wanting to hear the other person’s opinion. We often pay lip service to others and then do exactly what we want to do. But if we only take the time to listen, we could actually learn something or at the very least, hear another point of view before making decisions.



Good listening skills are crucial not only for academic success, but for social interaction, too. By sharpening their receptive language skills, kids can prevent misunderstandings, get clear information, and maximize time. Teach them the following components and characteristics of a good listener:

Set your purpose. Why are you listening to this person, anyway? Is it a teacher giving a lecture to a class? A person giving you directions to a party? Someone who is angry because they think you have slighted them? Knowing the purpose of the communication helps you know what cues to listen for, and helps you determine which parts of the communication are most important to remember.

Remembering. Depending on the topic and situation, you might need to take notes. This can range to jotting down a phone number or a couple sets of instructions to taking lengthy notes during a lecture. Isolate the key parts, and make sure you write them down somewhere that you can access later. Reread your notes occasionally while you’re taking them to ensure that they make sense.

Body language. Your body language lets the speaker know that you are attending to them. Make sure you are facing the speaker, maintaining eye contact, and focusing your attention. Show your understanding by nodding your head at appropriate times. Don’t fiddle with your materials, clothes, or other distracting items; you may miss important points, and you are likely to send the message that you aren’t listening. Try to focus your concentration on the speaker and what they are saying. Likewise, use cues about the speaker’s body language to gauge things like mood and content importance.

Questioning. Ask related or follow up questions at the proper time. Get clarification on things you don’t understand. You can make subject-related comments, but only if it’s appropriate to the situation. Steer clear of off-topic remarks; they signal disinterest or an attempt to change the subject at an unsuitable time. Proper questioning helps you make sure you have the information correct, and reinforces to the speaker that they’ve been successful at getting their message across.

Ending. What cues signal that the speaker is finished? Look for phrases that signal a natural stopping point, such as “in closing,” “that’s all,” or “we’re done.” Resist the urge to stop attending before you’re sure that all of the information has been given.

Summarizing. Develop the ability to sum up what was said in a few sentences. Focus on what you perceive as the most important parts. If a lot of information was given, try to verbalize one or two key things that you heard. If you’re unsure, try reframing the content of the communication back to the speaker for verification.

Active listening is a skill that will be of value throughout your life!

Dear Syd,

For some reason I am not happy at school. I was bullied last year by a group of girls who used to be my friends and now most of them have left. I still have the feeling that I'm being left out of things, and that they don't really like me. What can I do? I don't want to confront them and I've told my mom, but it hasn't helped.

- Out in the Cold

Dear Out in the Cold,

Bullying is a national problem and one that many different groups are working on, including schools and community organizations. So you are not alone!

Here's what you do: First you must tell someone. You did the right thing in telling your mom. Now tell a new friend, a teacher, or someone trusted at school. This will help them be on the lookout and hopefully, catch the bullies in the act.

Second, keep in safe, well-lit areas. If you take the bus, sit near the bus driver, for example and try to walk with a friend or another student to and from home and classes.

Third, join a school club or participate in other school social activities so that you can meet other students and have a better chance to make new friends.

Fourth, if you are having trouble coping, talk to your school guidance counselor or another mental health specialist (like a psychologist or social worker). Your doctor should be able to help you with a referral.

Finally, you can find more ideas and support on the following website:

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/>

- Syd

Dear Syd,

My parents are always telling me not to give in to peer pressure and not to just follow the crowd. If I hear them say one more time, "If one of your friends jumped off a bridge would you jump too?" I am going to scream! Isn't it OK to go along with your friends some of the time?

- Pressured by Friends

Dear Pressured by Friends,

When we think of peer pressure we always think of it in terms of "bad." We think in terms of pressured to; smoke, do drugs, drink alcohol, engage in criminal behavior, violence etc.... We rarely think of the many "good" ways that peer pressure can influence us.

Peer Pressure is not all bad, in fact, it is essential to proper social development that we do learn to "follow the crowd" (acceptable social behavior) and when NOT to "follow the crowd" (leading to the consequences for unacceptable social behavior). It takes character, self confidence and good judgment to work peer pressure the right way!

Follow your instincts: If peer pressure is telling you to do something without questioning why, to do something you know is wrong, or to do something you feel uncomfortable doing, it is safe to say "don't give in to peer pressure." If peer pressure is telling you to act in a generally appropriate way, or to do the right thing when you may not otherwise, it is safe to say "its OK to follow the crowd."

So the answer to your question is Yes, it is OK to "follow the crowd" from time to time. What you need to do is learn to recognize when following the crowd is doing more harm—either to you or others—than good. But, if you find that you can't stand up for your beliefs or are losing the ability to judge right from wrong, you may have a problem. You must NEVER let "following the crowd" take precedence over "following your conscience." Listen to your instincts, and if in doubt ask your parents, teacher, guidance counselor or trusted adult.

- Syd

Dear
Syd



COMMUNITY UPDATES



Peer to Peer (Grades 9-12) students will debate the Pro's and Con's of Technology with residents at CareOne Nursing home on **Thursday, April 22, 2010**. The debate is part of a series of programs by students that introduces podcasting as a way to reach a wider audience. Peer to Peer students are committed to being Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Free (ATOD). As positive role models in the community, they are countering the false assumption that all high school students do alcohol and drugs. Audio and Video Podcasts are available on our website: www.livingstonlycs.org

- **Cyber-bullying**, an interview with Officer Gary Mankowitz, Livingston Community Policing.
- **Drugs Don't Work in NJ!** An interview with Gerry Marini and Chris Barton of Drug-Free NJ.
- **Teen Dating Abuse Project**, an interview with Diane Beni, a volunteer with NCJW Teen Dating Abuse Project.
- **DETOUR: My Rocky Road Back to [Mental] Health**, a video podcast of Lizzie Simon presenting on her experiences after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder at the age of 17.

Technology 101

Join us at Livingston Public Library to improve your technology skills. Robert Allan will be providing practical tips on how to monitor and control access to the internet, how to keep children safe on social media sites like Facebook and how to use the many features of cell phones including restricting access to texting and photo files. These presentations will be video podcast and posted on our website: www.livingstonlycs.org

- **APRIL 26, 2010:** Internet 101 with Robert Allan @ Livingston Library (7:30 pm).
- **MAY 3, 2010:** Social Media 101 with Robert Allan @ Livingston Library (7:30 pm).
- **MAY 10, 2010:** Cell Phones 101 with Robert Allan @ Livingston Library (7:30 pm).

Chinese New Year Celebrations: APRIL 10, 2010

Livingston High School, 4:30 – 9:30 pm



Livingston Chinese Community will be celebrating **Chinese New Year 2010**, the Year of the Tiger, on **April 10, 2010** at **Livingston High School** (4:00-9:30 pm). Join us for Chinese cultural performances, exhibits, Chinese Arts workshops, children's games and fun activities for seniors. There will also be a food court available. Tickets are required for food court and evening performance.

This wonderful program is brought to you by the Livingston Chinese Association (LCA), the Livingston Huaxia Chinese School (LHXCS), Livingston Chinese School (LCS), Living Stone Christian Church and Livingston High School (LHS), and co-sponsored by the Livingston Youth and Community Services Program (LYCS). Don't miss out on all the fun!

For more information, call Xiaole Shen (LCA) on 973-994-0355, Email: xlshen99@hotmail.com or visit our website: www.livingstonchineseculture.org.

Livingston Youth & Community Services



**Celebrating A Drug Free Life
Through Leadership**

PO Box 822, Livingston NJ 07039

Phone: 973-535-2646

Fax: 973-992-9318

E-mail: lycs@livingston.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.LIVINGSTONLYCS.ORG

The Livingston Youth and Community Services program (LYCS) is a program of the Township of Livingston: Department of Senior, Youth and Leisure Services.

LYCS is a drug prevention program that teaches healthy life choices to Grades 3 to 12 after-school in the Livingston school district. The primary goal of LYCS is to be a community based mental health resource that identifies and implements Wellness programs.

Our program is designed to:

- To reduce the incidence of substance abuse among the adolescent population and to have Livingston's youth make healthier life choices
- Train Leaders and provide opportunities to practice leadership by participating in community service activities
- Empower parents with tools they need to communicate effectively with their children
- Provide opportunities for Livingston youth to engage in healthy social interactions
- Build stronger healthy families through workshops and programs

No one can make you feel inferior, without your consent

Eleanor Roosevelt

The only way to have a friend is to be one.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friendship... is not something you learn in school.

But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything.

Muhammad Ali

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

M. K. Gandhi

*Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that,
but the really great make you feel great.*

Mark Twain

My friends have made the story of my life. In a thousand ways they have turned my limitations into beautiful privileges, and enabled me to walk serene and happy in the shadow cast by my deprivation.

Helen Keller

Famous Quotes