



*Warren County
Stigma Free Newsletter*



STIGMA TIMES

FEBRUARY 2024 | VOL 8

The Warren County Stigma-Free Communities Initiative is a county-wide program which aims to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. We are dedicated to bringing people together to be stigma-free in order to facilitate inclusive communities and individual healing by bringing awareness, building knowledge and fostering compassion through advocacy.

**WARREN COUNTY
PROUD TO BE
STIGMA FREE**

**Mental
health
matters**

For more information on the
Warren County Stigma Free Initiative,
please email humanservices@co.warren.nj.us

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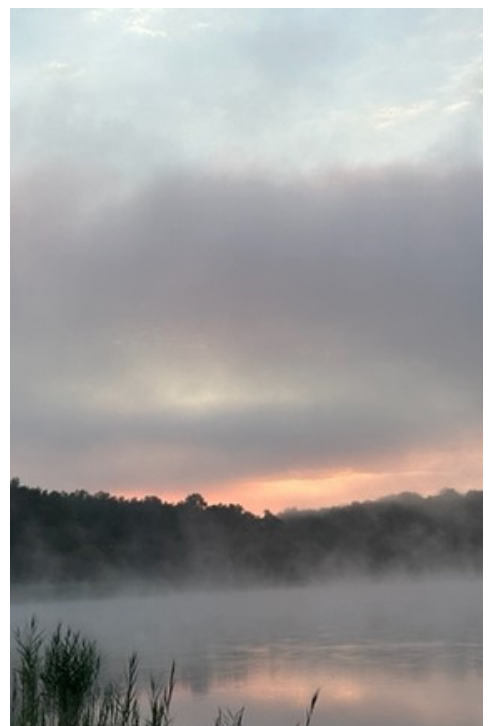
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Agency Spotlight



Lessons from a Tree



by Jennifer Correa-Kruegel, Warren County Park Naturalist

Since the Winter Solstice on December 21, 2023, we have subtly been given more light. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to appreciate if you work inside all day. Compounded by the fact that holiday decorations are usually packed away by now, this time of year can make it ever more challenging on our mental health. The lessons we can learn from nature can help us get through difficult times. There is still a great deal of life this time of year that show us that short periods of rest can yield amazing bounties later on.

Deciduous trees are a great example.

Deciduous trees are our oaks, maples and other trees that lost their leaves in the fall for a few reasons. One, the leaves are what take in the sunlight and convert it into energy. Since there's less sunlight this time of year, it can actually cost them more energy to produce their leaves.

Doing what needs to be done to help conserve energy is essential.

Second, leaves are made with energy taken in and stored as sap. Sap is a combination of sugar and water that runs up and down the trees when the temperature is right. When water freezes, it expands. If this happens before the sap goes down to the roots and below the freeze line, it can split the bark of the tree, exposing it to bugs and disease.

Thirdly, if our broad-leafed trees such as our maple or oaks were to retain their leaves, and it were to snow, it would add weight to the branches that are not meant to handle the extra burden. We have seen what can happen during early snowstorms before the leaves have had a chance to shed. Branches break under the extra load, causing a great deal of damage to the tree and sometimes, surrounding trees.

I encourage anyone to take these lessons from the trees this season. Conserve your energy, rest your body before it forces you to rest from illness and take care of yourself so you can better care for those around.

Beginning in February, Jennifer will be hosting Free Wellness Walks at various Warren County Parks beginning at 10 AM on Sundays:

2/25/24- Florence Kuipers

3/17/24- Oxford Mountain

4/28/24- White Lake Natural Resource Area

5/19/24- Bread Lock Park

6/9/24- Bilby Road

7/??/24- Marble Hill

The length and time-frame will vary for each. Please Jennifer Correa-Kruegel for registration at jkruegel@co.warren.nj.us or 908-763-8013.

Hackettstown Library

First Friday Series



The Hackettstown Public Library

is hosting a First Friday Series throughout 2024.

These events are free, no registration necessary and presented by the Warren County Department of Human Services.

March 1 @ 3:30 - SNAP
April 5 @ 3:30 - DHS Medicaid
May 3 @ 3:30 - Aging Services
June 7 @ 3:30 - Mental Health
July Date TBD - Health Department
August 2 @ 3:30 - Addiction Services
September 6 @ 3:30 - Homeless Services
October 4 @ 3:30 - Children's Services
November 1 @ 3:30 - Veterans Services
December 6 @ 3:30 - Volunteer Opportunities

The Hackettstown Library is located at 110
Church Street, Hackettstown NJ 07840.

You can the events on the Hackettstown Library's website
<https://hackettstownlibrary.org/calendar/category/adult/2024-02/>



Spring Awareness Months



February

American Heart Month

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. February has been designated American Heart Month to raise awareness about cardiovascular health.

According to the American Heart Association, the head-heart connection is an important part of patient care. Mental health conditions, like depression, anxiety and stress, can impact our heart health. Additionally, heart disease or stroke can cause mental health conditions, like anxiety and depression. Talking to our health care providers about how we're feeling can help them direct us to the most appropriate care or where to start. Don't delay, start today for a healthier you! Heart-health living includes understanding your risk, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce the chances of heart disease.

To learn more about the steps you can take to live a heart-healthy lifestyle, please visit: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living>.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Dating violence is more common than you may think, especially among teens and young adults: 1 in 3 U.S. teens will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with before becoming adults. And nearly half (43%) of U.S. college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors. According to the CDC, teens who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression, engage in unhealthy behaviors such as substance use, exhibit antisocial behaviors, and think about suicide.

Each February, young adults and their loved ones nationwide raise awareness about teen dating violence through Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. This annual, month-long effort focuses on advocacy and education to stop dating abuse before it starts.

For more information on how to get help for yourself or someone you love, or to become involved, please reach out to the Warren County Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center at dasacc.org or by calling 908-453-4181.



Spring Awareness Months (con.)



April

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual Assault Awareness Month calls attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and impacts every person in the community. According to Mental Health America, victims of sexual assault are at increased risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, eating disorders, and anxiety. SAAM aims to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it.

The theme of Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2024 is Building Connected Communities, a campaign that helps us reduce the likelihood of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment in our communities. We must strive to create strong, connected communities that take care of one another. Communities that make decisions to ensure the safety and well-being of all members are critical to ending sexual violence worldwide. For more information on how to get help for yourself or someone you love, or to become involved, please reach out to the Warren County Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center at dasacc.org or by calling 908-453-4181.

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Child Abuse Prevention Month was established in 1983. It recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Protective factors increase the well-being of children and families, and reduce the likelihood of abuse and/or neglect. Identifying protective factors helps parents find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively. The 6 protective factors include nurturing & attachment, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports for parents, and social and emotional competence of children. For more information about Child Abuse Prevention Month, & protective factors, please visit: <https://preventionmonth.childwelfare.gov>.

Autism Awareness Month

Research indicates that people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have an increased risk of developing a mental health disorder, also known as comorbidity or co-occurring disorder. The most common co-occurring disorders with ASD are anxiety and mood disorders. Warren County ASD resources and programs: Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc, Lee Services, Branching Out, Jewish Family Services of Hunterdon/Warren/Somerset Counties, The Arc Of Warren County, and The Dawn Center for ILP. The largest statewide network for parents and professionals in Autism New Jersey. For more resources and information go to TriCounty Resource Net at www.tricountyresourcenet.org. To determine if your child is eligible for Development Disability Services, contact the NJ Children's System of Care- PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624.



Upcoming Events



February

Addiction & Recovery Program

Thursday, February 15th 7pm

Trinity House (212 E Moore Street Hackettstown, NJ 07840)

- No prior registration required. If you have questions, please reach out to Kerry Mullins at Kerry.Mullins@CentenaryUniversity.edu.

Adult Mental Health First Aid Training

Thursday, February 22nd from 9:30am-4pm (Virtual)

- This training is being offered as a part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign Mental Health Initiative. Participants are required to completed 2 hours of online pre-work prior to the start of class. To register, please email your name, title, and cell phone number to Katie Bisaha at kbisaha@njhcqi.org.
- The Warren County Stigma Free Committee encourages other municipalities to participate in the Mayors Wellness Campaign. To learn more information about the Mayors Wellness Campaign, please visit <https://www.njhcqi.org/mayors-wellness-campaign/>, including an updated Mental Health Toolkit.

March

Teen Summit

Friday, March 1st 8:30am-1:30pm

Centenary University (400 Jefferson Street Hackettstown, NJ 07840)

- Intended for Warren County 8th-12th grade students only. If you have questions, please reach out to your school principal about registration & permission slips.



Upcoming Events (con.)



March

Save The Date!

Wednesday, March 13th Time TBD

Belvidere Community Center (301 2nd St. Belvidere, NJ 07823)

- There will be a Stigma Free Community Night for interested municipalities on March 13th. Additional details will be forthcoming.

April

Autism Acceptance Event

Wednesday, April 10 5:30-8:30pm

Early Childhood Learning Center (459 Center Street Phillipsburg, NJ 08865)

- Hosted by Warren County DD-ID CIACC Subcommittee, Tri County CMO, Branching-Out, & Greenwich Autism Alliance. Presentations by Cpt. Gerald Turning Jr. of Blue Bridge Autism Training & Tri County CMO.

FYC Boutique

Saturday, April 6 11am-1pm

Firth Youth Center (108 Fleming Drive Phillipsburg, NJ 08865)

- Phillipsburg students are invited to come shop for formal wear for Graduation, Senior Banquet, Prom, 8th Grade Promotion, and other end-of-year celebrations! Sizes 0-28 available. \$10 Per Dress. \$1-\$5 Items.



Who Can You Call for Help?



Center for Family Services
Family Crisis Intervention
Services

24 hour hotline

908-454-5141

Parent to Parent
Recovery Support Services

908-223-1951

New Hope IBHC
Withdrawal Management,
Short-Term Residential

732-946-3030

Children's Mobile Response
and Stabilization Services
24 hours, 7 days a week

1-877-652-7624

Domestic Abuse & Sexual
Assault Crisis Center of
Warren County Hotline
24 hours, 7 days a week

908-453-4181

Center for Family Services
Intensive Outpatient
Services

908-689-1000

GET HELP 24/7:



THE TREVOR PROJECT
Saving Young LGBTQ Lives



2NDFLOOR
888-222-2228
YOUTH HELPLINE

www.2NDFLOOR.org