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*********ECRWSSEDDM**** POS

MICHAEL SARREAL ADVANCES TO REPRESENT THE U.S.

Michael Sarreal, a resident of Millington and student of the Wushu-Kung Fu Fitness Center in Basking Ridge, participated in the 9th US International Wushu-Kungfu Tournament and 2018 USAWKF National Traditional Wushu Team Trials held at Atlantic City on Sunday, May 27th 2018.

Mikey's performance has awarded him a spot on the Kungfu team which will allow him to compete and represent the United States in the 8th World Kungfu Championships in China, and the 3rd Pan American Kungfu and Taijiquan Championships in Argentina. Both of which will take place in 2019.

Mikey won gold medals in all six of his events at the 9th US International Wushu-Kungfu Tournament held at the Sheraton hotel in Atlantic City. The events that Michael participated in were as follows: Long Fist San Lu Form – Gold Medal, Broadsword Form – Gold Medal, Staff Form – Gold Medal, Xing Yi Ouan Form – Gold Medal, Double Daggers Form – Gold Medal, Nunchaku Form – Gold Medal









FREE SUMMER SING A CAPPELLA!

The Hickory Tree Chorus chapter of Sweet Adelines International invites women singers to register for its free Summer Sing A Cappella Series of vocal workshops on Wednesday August 8 at 7:15 p.m. at The Shrine of St Joseph,

1050 Long Hill Road, Stirling, NJ. Participants will learn to sing chord-ringing, fun-filled, four-part a cappella music in the barbershop style! For more info or to register call 908-377-1399 or email info@hickorytreechorus.org.



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PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

Community service organizations and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos on recent events.

Organizations
who are interested
in submitting
content can
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or call 908-858-4012



LONG HILL LIBRARY SUMMER PROGRAMS AUGUST PROGRAMS

Located at 917 Valley Rd, Gillette, NJ 07933 Tel: 908 647-2088 • www.longhillibrary.org

Looking for ways to beat the heat in August?

Stop by the Long Hill Township Library for exciting
Children's Programs!

Little AI the Dinosaur

Saturday August 4 at 11 a.m.

Meet "Little AL" the Allosaurus and touch real dinosaur eggs, teeth and bones. Ages 3 to adults.

Mad Science: Science of Magic Workshop

Tuesday, August 7 at 6:30 p.m.

Learn the secrets behind famous magic tricks.

Mother Nature has some tricks of her own, and we'd like to show you what's up her sleeve! For ages 4-8 with parent/guardian.

Pinkalicious Tea Party

Thursday August 9 at 1:30 p.m.

Enjoy Tea Time with refreshments and crafts. Wear your favorite pink ensemble.

Lee's Circus Extravaganza

Saturday August 11 at 11 a.m.

Enjoy a kaleidoscope of juggling, plate spinning, unicycling, audience interaction and magic.

ALL ages.

Rhyme Time

Wednesdays at 10:30 am August 8, 15

Join us for 20 minutes of songs, fingerplays, and simple stories. For babies from birth through age 2 with caregiver. No registration required.

Mad Science

Monday August 6 at 10:30 a.m.

Participate in some hands-on science experiments like creating slime!! For ages 4 and up.

Camp Crafts

Friday Aug 10 at 1:30 p.m.

Make camp crafts with Miss Jess in the afternoon. For ages 4 and up.



Creative Stories

Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Aug 9, 16 Listen to stories and make a craft. For ages 2-6 with parent/caregiver.

Food Fun with Miss Michelle

Wednesdays August 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Join us for stories and a healthy food activity with Miss Michelle, Registered Dietitian from StopRite.

Snacks included!

For ages 2-6 with parent/caregiver. Please notify Miss Jess of any food allergies when registering.

LEGO Challenge Club

Tuesdays, Aug 14 at 6:00 p.m.

Build with Legos around a challenge or just for fun. Leave your LEGOs at home and come play with ours. For ages 5 – 12 with parent/caregiver. Beginners welcome! No registration required.



(left & above) Children were treated to a 'Super Fun Bubble Time' show at the Long Hill Township Library in June.



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STUDENTS JOIN JENNA BUSH HAGER ON THE TODAY SHOW

Submitted by Vikki Lesser

Several children from Long Hill Township were invited to be on the TODAY show on Monday, July 2, 2018 as part of their "Read Today" and Book Club programs and to help kick off NYC's Summer Reading Programs.

They had fun on the plaza for almost an hour while Jenna Bush Hager read them a story, along with librarians from the New York City Public Library.



(above, l-r) Long Hill students pose with librarians from NYC Public Library. Lexi Clark, Ava Giafaglione, Madeline Falvey, Julianna Falvey, Michael Giafaglione, Ellie Clark and Cole Lesser.



(above) Summer Reading programs kick-off on The TODAY Show with Jenna Bush Hager.

HOW TO AVOID TICK BITES FROM THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Information from the New Jersey Department of Health

Ticks can become infected with diseases when feeding on white-footed mice and other small mammals. An infected tick can then spread disease to a person through a tick bite. You can reduce the risk of getting diseases from ticks by taking steps to avoid tick bites.

Know where ticks are: ticks live in or near wooded or grassy areas. Always walk in the center of trails to avoid contact with ticks.

Keep your yard clean: mow lawns, clear brush and remove leaf litter.

Repel ticks: use EPA-registered repellent with DEET picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon

Eucalyptus (OLE), or 2- undecanone on skin and permethrin on clothing, boots and gear. Most repellents can be used on children older than 2 months. Products containing OLE should not be used on children under 3 years. Always follow product label instructions.

Inspect: check your entire body—and your children's— for ticks after being outside. Remove attached ticks with tweezers. Be sure to check these parts of your body and use a handheld or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body: inside belly button, back of the knees, under the arms, in/around the hair, between the of Health's website at state.nj.us/health/.

legs, around the waist, in/around the ears, on the scalp.

Cover up: wear long sleeves and pants tucked into socks to prevent ticks from getting under clothes.

Shower: showering within two hours after being outside (ideally, as soon as possible) can help find and wash off unattached ticks.

Protect pets: keep pets safe by checking for ticks daily and using tick control products as recommended by your veterinarian.

For more information, visit the NJ Department

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MEMORIAL AWARDS, PTO AND COMMUNITY RECOGNITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Memorial Awards, PTO Scholarships, and Community and School Recognition Scholarships were presented to Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Class of 2018 graduating seniors at the annual Scholarship Ceremony held on June 13, 2018 in the schools Performing Arts Center (PAC).

Senior Daniel Zimmer led the audience of student recipients and their families in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to begin the evening, and Principal George Alexis welcomed everyone to WHRHS.

Memorial Scholarships recipients: Scott Andersen Memorial Scholarship:

Jennifer Walpow, and Shaun Cagnetta.

Bob Beckert Scholarship:

Clara Citarella, Matteo Baeyens, Frederick Hayeck, Joe Wagner, Alyssa Galdi, and Brittany Keller.

Sandra Blumberg Memorial Scholarship:

Olivia Starr.

Anthony Bottoni Memorial Scholarship:

Daniel Pilsbury. **Dawn Gayle Coury Memorial Scholarship:**

Sarah Wilson.

Juan Carlos Cruz Memorial Scholarship:Shaun Cagnetta and Alexis Pinzon.

Chris Drewry Memorial Scholarship (Baseball and Softball):

Joseph Blajsa and Genna Cicchetti.

Maija Golden Creative Writing Memorial Scholarship:

Avery Noerr.

Joe Heath Memorial Scholarship:

Clare Gallic.

John Herdman Memorial Scholarship:

Emma Carlson.

Christopher Noble Ingrassia Memorial Scholarship (Scholar Athletes):

Daniel Pilsbury and Julia Cunningham.

Matthew Kantor Memorial Scholarship:

Jaison Desai.

Aaron Christopher Karol Scholarship:

Michael Brady, Shaun Cagnetta, Megan Ekert, Emma Gaffney, Matthew Piccirilli and Michael Tobin.

L. Suzanne Kenney Memorial Scholarship:

Sarah Wilson and Olivia Xu.

Matthew Kieffer Memorial Scholarship (Most School Spirit):

Ashil Jhaveri and Emma Gaffney.

Anthony Mascia Memorial Scholarship:

Jonathan Fessock.

Ed Meltzer Memorial Scholarship:

Matthew King.

Jerry Mobus Memorial Scholarship:

Jonathan Fessock.

Dr. William Peiffer Memorial Scholarship:

Matt Canary and Sarah McCracken.

Peter C. Rovtar Memorial Scholarship:

Sam Sinnott.

James J. Straine Jr. Memorial Scholarship:

Julia Grieco.

Ernst Wessel Scholarship:

Keerthi Adusumilli, and Helen Yang.

PTO Scholarships

Green Brook Township PTO:

Matthew Piccirilli (Academic) and Michelle Yang (Community Service).

Long Hill PTO:

Katherine Morris, Alison Hoffmann and, Jessica Hoffmann.

Warren Township Middle Schools PTO Scholarship:

Robert Saum and Clara Citarella.

WHRHS PTO Scholarship:

Michael Erickson, Brady Pilsbury, Neha Saju, Sarah Wilson and Julia Waldman.

Merit:

Michelle Yang, Helen Yang, and Alison Hoffmann.

WHRHS PTO Service Scholarship:

Jessica Hoffmann, Katherine Morris, Diana Sarrico, Julia Waldman, Olivia Xu and Brady Pilsbury.

WHRHS Education Association (WHREA) Scholarship:

William Johnson; and Camryn Murphy.

Community and School Recognition Scholarships CarusoThompson Accounting Award:

Ella Walsh.

AXA Achievement Scholarship:

Sam Sinnott.

Coccia Foundation:

Peter Bosco, Tanner Hogan, Camryn Murphy and Kevin Wittmaack.

Garabaldi Award-Silvio Lacetti Foundation:

Charles Dardis and Adam Fogarty.

Dunellen-Green Brook Rotary Club Scholarship:

Matthew Piccirilli and Kevin Tan.

Evans Scholarship Foundation:

Wyatt Mejia.

GBEAF (Green Brook Education and Athletic Foundation):

Matthew Piccirilli and Allison Huresky.

Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Service Award: Sarah Wilson.

Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park:

Demetra Chang.

Warren Township Lions Club:

Clara Citarella, Robert Niemeyer, Brady Pilsbury, Andrew Roth, Robert Saum, Jeffrey Stickler, Angelia Seda, David Cantone and Carter Rosen.

Warren-Watchung Rotary Club Memorial Scholarship:

Matthew King, and Freddie Hayeck.

Warren Township Republican Committee:

Reid Baltuch.

Warren Township Rescue Squad:

Sarah Wilson.

Watchung Hills BPOE 2252:

Michael Erickson and Angelia Seda.

Watchung Fire Department Artie Jacot Family Scholarship:

Matthew King.

Watchung Fire Department Exempt Firemen's Association:

Freddie Hayeck.

Watchung Fire Department Kenneth Schmidt Scholarship:

Sarah Wilson.

Watchung Lions Club:

Sarah Wilson and Helen Yang.

WHRHS Marching Band Parent Association:

Alexandria Logan, Emma Marszalek and Jack Horan.

WHRHS Soccer Association:

David Cantone and Jennifer Walpow.

WHRHS Wrestling Booster Club Academic Scholarship:

Shane Checko.



(above) Senior Daniel Zimmer led the audience of student recipients and their families in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to begin the evening.











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CLASS OF 2018 RECOGNIZED AT ANNUAL SENIOR AWARDS CEREMONY

Five State Championships by athletic teams, 15 National Merit Finalists, hundreds and even thousands of community service hours contributed, scores of subject matter excellence awards, 15 Eagle Scouts and 3 Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, and one New Jersey Governor's Award in Arts Education recipient were just some of the Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Class of 2018 accomplishments recognized at the annual Senior Awards Ceremony, on Thursday Morning, June 14 2018, in the Performing Arts Center (PAC).

To start the ceremony, Senior Dan Zimmer led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Class Salutatorian Kevin Tan welcomed and celebrated achievements of the class.

Principal George Alexis welcomed students, students, faculty, administrators and Board of Education members.

"I've had the privilege of attending two reunions over the last month, one for high school and one for college," he said. "Both were reminders of how quickly time moves, but also of how important our formative years are. As you sit here today, I want you to consider your high school days: the experiences you've had and the people you've come to know. I also want you to keep in mind that though the awards go to individuals, they arise from the richness of your entire class and are evidence of the collective success you have achieved over the last four years."

Salutatorian Tan said, "The Class of 2018 is among the most accomplished that Watchung Hills has ever seen. We are a class of wrestling champions, decorated gymnasts, and basketball stars. We are a class of Regeneron Science Talent Search winners and a record number of National Merit Semifinalists, award-winning writers and all-state musicians. The selfless volunteers and passionate activists of our class have brought positive changes to our local and state communities. Our GLC pioneered Skylr the Hypnotist and Dancing with the Teachers, events that are now considered school year staples. From athletics, academics, to the arts, there is nothing our class cannot do. I can say with confidence that we have made our mark, and will continue to do so as we reflect upon what it took to attain these exceptional achievements."

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The first award of the ceremony called DR. THOMAS F. DIGANCI ASC AWARD, attention to the fact that Health Educator Jill Gleeson had been named the WHRHS 2018 Teacher of the Year, which drew a loud applause from students.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

ENGLISH: Excellence in English, Sophia Su; Excellence in Creative Writing, Neha Saju; Excellence in Journalism, Michelle Du; Excellence in Expository Writing, Michael Raman.

MATHEMATICS: Clifford A. Warren Excellence in Mathematics, Sean Coleman; Excellence in Calculus, Alison Hoffmann; Excellence in Statistics, Jeffrey Stickler; Excellence in Computer Science, Kevin Huang.

SCIENCE: Excellence in Biology, Olivia Xu; Excellence in Chemistry, Kevin Tan; Excellence in Environmental Science, Sean Boniakowski; Excellence in Physics, Vincent Dai.

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY:

Stephen Bartlett Excellence in Social Studies/History, Helen Yang; DAR Excellence in History Award, Caitlyn Park; DAR Good Citizens Award, Alanna Margulies.

WORLD LANGUAGES: Excellence in Chinese, Daniel Hold; Excellence in French, Linda Ye; Excellence in German, Jessica Hoffmann; Excellence in Italian, Vincent Tartaro; Excellence in Spanish, Audrey Azeez.

BUSINESS: Excellence in Accounting and Business, Ella Walsh.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE:

Excellence in Child Development, Meredith Giegerich; Excellence in Culinary Arts, Amanda Kumor.

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS;

Nancy O'Reilly Excellence in Art, Natalie Zurek; Excellence in Ceramics, Lucy Longobardi; Excellence in Acting, Sam Sinnott; Excellence in Photography, Emily Snead; Excellence in Video Production, Neil Yang; Band Director Award, Emma Marszalek; Choral Award, William Johnson; John Philip Sousa Award, Jack Horan.

ATHLETICS

NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION SCHOLAR-ATHLETE: Alexis Tekin.

SKYLAND CONFERENCE SCHOLAR-ATHLETES:

Michael Brady and Marlene Tartaro.

SOMERSET COUNTY SCHOLAR-ATHLETES:

Daniel Pilsbury and Julia Cunningham.

EXCELLENCE IN ATHLETICS AND LEADERSHIP:

Spencer Bokach and Marlise Moesch.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RECOGNITION:

The five athletic state championships are the Girls' Tennis Team and Girls' Track and Field Team, and the Boys' Golf Team, Boys' Lacrosse Team and Boys' Wrestling Team.

CO-CURRICULAR

MARCHING BAND AWARD, Carl Peterson. EXCELLENCE IN U.S. F.I.R.S.T. ROBOTICS,

Nicole Regimbal.

Julia Waldman.

ASC AWARDS: Sahil Patel, Tesse Unke, Emma Gaffney, Eris Ulaj, Tristen Chau, Rachel Lee, and Julia Waldman.

SENIOR GLC AWARDS: Freddie Hayeck, Emma Sonta, Caitlyn Park, Michael Raginsky, Michael Stein, and Ashil Jhaveri.

INTERACT COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB AWARDS:

Julia Waldman, Interact President; Alison Hoffmann, "More for Matheny" Chair; Keerthi Adusumilli, "More for Matheny" Chair; Rachel Lehner, 2,492 Hours of Community Service; Annamaria Newmark, 2,492 Hours; Sarah Wilson, 2,492 Hours; Pramath Kalelkar, 910 Hours; Foram Vaidya, 569 Hours; Annika Surapaneni, 541 Hours; and Kevin Tan, 436 Hours.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL RECOGNITION

AIR FORCE ROTC SCHOLARSHIP: Sean Coleman;

EAGLE SCOUT RECOGNITION: Matteo Baeyens, David Brewster, David Cantone, John Dempsey, Michael Duncan, Michael Erickson, Robert Fippinger, Freddie Hayeck, Pramath Kalelkar, Matthew King, Michael Maloney, Brady Pilsbury, Andrew Roth, Christopher Strona, and Joseph William Wagner.

GIRL SCOUTS GOLD AWARD RECOGNITION:

Rachel Lee and Danae Churchhill and Katherine Van Arsdale.

COURIER NEWS ACADEMIC ALL-STAR PROGRAM: Linda Ye.

NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS: Kevin Huang, Calvin Li, Rachel Lu, Emma Marszalek, Carl Peterson, Michael Raman, Lindsey Shi, Jeffrey Stickler, Kevin Tan, Craig Vergilio, Olivia Xu, Helen Yang, Linda Ye, Carrie Zhang, and Cherlin Zhu.

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS: Olivia Xu, Linda Ye, and Cherlin Zhu.

NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR'S AWARD IN ARTS EDUCATION:

Ethan Marmolejos.

ELMER BIELER AWARD:

Giovanni Colatruglio and Shelagh Wickey.

Principal Alexis closed the ceremony, saying "Before we close the ceremony, I would like to take a brief moment to recognize Ms. Jewett and the board of education and the faculty, staff, and administration for supporting this wonderful celebration. Thank you to the gracious Project Graduation volunteers for a lovely breakfast. And a heartfelt thank you to Mrs. Vargo and of course Ms. Obuch, who paid attention to the smallest details. Together, they helped make this fifth annual awards ceremony dignified and memorable.

Alexis continued, "Class of 2018, individual accomplishments arise from a collective effort, and these awards recognize the strength of your entire class. Your diverse talents and perspectives have formed an impressive group that is now part of the Watchung Hills legacy. Thank you for reaching new heights. It's been a great four years. Let's finish strong."

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PLANNING FROM FEMA

Information presented by FEMA

Though the national hurricane season normally runs from June 1 through November 30, the peak potential for hurricane and tropical storm activity in New Jersey runs from mid-August through the end of October.

Planning ahead can help you feel better prepared for the hurricane season. Get your family prepared in three key steps:

1 - Build a Kit

Consider you family specific needs to ensure you have at least 10 days of supplies.

- Store a gallon of water per person per day. In case your supply runs out, pre-identify safe sources of water, use water filters or boil water.
- Gather a 10-day supply of non-perishable foods for each person. Pay particular attention to individuals with special diets and allergies, babies, toddlers, and the elderly. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula.
- Canned dietetic foods, juices, and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.
- Have hand sanitizer, antibiotic ointment, hygienic products, diapers and wipes for children and older adults.
- Get food, water and a collar with identification tags for yoru pet.
- Have at hand a favorite toy, books, and coloring books and crayons for the children,

2. Make a Family Plan

Identify alternate ways to stay in touch with loved ones.

- Choose an out of town friend or relative as a point of contact.
- Decide on a meeting place in case you cannot return home.
- Keep important documents and phone numbers with you at all times.
- Include children in preparedness conversations and make sure they have emergency contacts memorized or saved in a secure place.
- Identify the closest shelter in case you are ordered to leave your home, and let your family know its location.
- 3. Stay Informed

Listen for up-to-date information before, during and after a disaster.

- Local media will provide evacuation details and shelter locations.
- Make sure your battery powered radio is working and you have extra batteries.
- Download the FEMA App to receive severe weather alerts, safety tips, and much more.

If you or someone in your family is experiencing issues with disaster-related stress, call Linea PAS at 800-981-0023, TTY 888-672-7622

For more information on hurricane season preparedness and Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane Maria, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339.

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ST. HUBERT'S EARNS 4-STAR RATING FOR FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Submitted by Nora Parker

St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center's strong financial health and commitment accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. This is the fifth consecutive year that the Center has earned this top distinction. Only 9% of the charities evaluated have received at least 5 consecutive 4star evaluations, indicating that St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center outperforms most other charities in America.

"The confidence that our donors have in St. Hubert's is so important," said President & CEO Heather Cammisa. "Consistently achieving the highest rating, 4 Stars, from Charity Navigator demonstrates to our supporters our good governance and financial accountability."

Charity Navigator is the nation's largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities. Since 2002, using objective analysis, it has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a 4-star rating. It's well developed Accountability & Transparency metrics reveal which charities operate in accordance with industry best practices and whether they are open with their donors and stakeholders.

"St. Hubert' Animal Welfare Center's exceptional 4-star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public," according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. "Only a quarter of charities rated by Charity Navigator receive the distinction of our 4-star rating. This adds St. Hubert's to a preeminent group of charities working to overcome our world's most pressing challenges. Based on its 4-star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support St. Hubert's."

St. Hubert's four shelters sites are open seven days a week. For information about dog, cat and small animal adoption, as well as the myriad of community programs and services the Center offers locally, regionally and nationally, visit sthuberts.org





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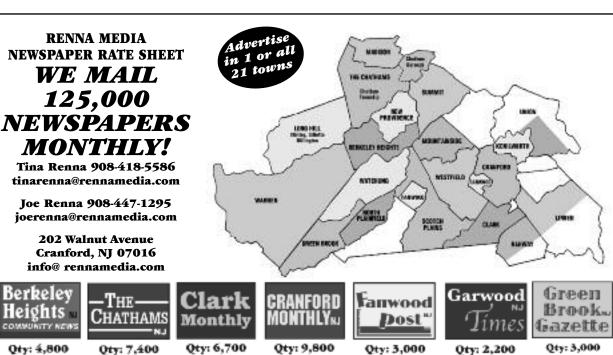
ABOUT ST. HUBERT'S ANIMAL WELFARE CENTER

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"HOW VOLUNTEERING TRANSFORMED ME:" AN INTERVIEW WITH CARING CONTACT VOLUNTEER

Each year approximately 45,000 people die by suicide in the United States, 120 people each day, one person every 12 minutes. Though this tragically large number continues to increase annually, there is work being done to reverse this trajectory.

Caring Contact is an award-winning, volunteer-staffed crisis hotline and listening community. We compassionately serve those in emotional distress and educate our communities about the power of personal connection. In 2017, our volunteers responded to over 10,000 calls through our caring and crisis line. Contact Listeners are volunteers who listen to people in crisis over the phone. They receive 52 hours of listening and suicide awareness and intervention training before assisting people in need of support. Even after this rigorous training, most listeners are surprised by how volunteering transforms them. To give you a sense of their experience, here is an interview with a current Caring Contact volunteer listener (whose name is being withheld).

What is your professional background?

I am a recent college graduate. I studied Sociology and Psychology.

How would you describe your listening skills? I would regard myself as a quiet listener. I know that probably sounds weird or maybe even obvious. But, after the training I realized how much talking I was doing when people were venting to me. Before I became a trained listener I don't think I realized how powerful the act of listening can be or how difficult it is sometimes. I used to be distracted when listening to people and I missed a lot. Through the training I've attached a real purpose to listening and listening well, which has made me better in a variety of aspects in my life.

Tell me about your training.

The training struck this balance between easing the volunteers into the material and also challenging people in ways that were a bit nerveracking. I remember my first practice session where I was acting as the Listener. All I was supposed to do was listen and reflect on a feeling or two. This, honestly, turned out to be one of the most difficult role plays because all I wanted to do was solve what seemed like an obvious problem to me, rather than just really listen to what the person was saying.

I found that the training applied to both the hotline and also my everyday life. I think everyone's family members and friends are grateful when a person takes this training. I also loved the growth of each volunteer, it is so clearly visible because of the practice sessions and utilization of the skills we learned - there is a lot of development throughout those 12 weeks.

Do you ever feel like you get a call you can't handle? How do you cope?

The first few crisis calls were really scary. I remember that I decided on those few phone calls to just be there and to sit with the person in this dark, dark hole. By the end of the call we had developed a safety plan and the person was safe in that moment. After these types of calls, I usually debrief with someone in the office or



(above) A Caring Contact volunteer shares what she's experienced on the suicide prevention and crisis hotline.

another volunteer who is working at the same time as me.

Also, there is a bell in the phone room which lets someone in the office know you need help. There was one instance when my phone call got disconnected because I was so shaken up and didn't know what to do. Janet Sarkos, the Executive Director at Caring Contact and a volunteer listener, came in and talked me through the call. It's things like that that make the overwhelming calls easier. It's really helpful to be surrounded by people who have had similar calls, speaking to them is a huge way of coping for me

What types of calls are most challenging?

Any call that involves someone being really down, feeling stuck and alone. Those are hard calls. They aren't necessarily difficult to manage, but so many of these calls stick with me and I want to do more, to change their living situations and that's just not possible. I think the most difficult calls are those that end before it seems like we have reached a safe plan, or have made enough progress - this has happened before and it's really hard to let those calls go.

Which call was really memorable for you?

One of the most memorable calls was from a college student. We talked for about 45 minutes. He told me that he's never told anyone the things that he's told me during our phone call. He disclosed that if he had not picked up the phone and talked to me, that he was planning on running in front of a truck on the highway. Knowing that someone called and just by speaking to me for an hour felt like they could go on for one more day, that's very powerful.

How did becoming a listener change you?

Being a listener has opened my eyes to how many people are struggling, how many people think about suicide but don't tell those they are close to. I now feel comfortable asking those I am close to if they are struggling or thinking of suicide. That's something I never would have done if it hadn't been for this training and experience. I now know how powerful listening can be, just listening to another person. It can change their life.

Please visit our website, www.caringcontact.org, to find out more and how you can volunteer to save a life.



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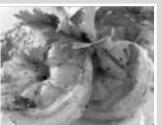
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