

WARREN MONTHLY NJ

WARREN'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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THE AMERICAN HEART CHALLENGE AT WMS

Warren Township Schools

The Warren Middle School (WMS) Student Government Association (SGA) recently teamed up with the American Heart Association (AHA) to complete the American Heart Challenge to raise money for the health of all hearts.

Brandon Volosov, 7th grade student and fundraising chairperson of the SGA came up with the idea to raise money for the AHA based on personal experience and his knowledge of a beloved 6th grade math teacher at WMS who recently received a successful heart transplant. Brandon was passionate about the American Heart Challenge and wanted to share his passion with WMS.

Nurse Lisa Lontai, Principal George Villar, and Vice Principal Maria Mensinger strongly support embracing philanthropy as an integral part of the school's educational ethos, as it equips children with the values and skills they need to become responsible, compassionate, and socially conscious members of society. The additional benefit of the American Heart Challenge is that students learn valuable life-saving skills, such as Hands-Only CPR, the dangers of smoking and vaping, and how to quickly recognize and respond to someone having a stroke.

Over 200 students registered to complete the American Heart Challenge and a total of \$18,532.82 was raised. Brandon exceeded his fundraising goal and raised \$17,258.00, and Ria Rimani was also very successful in raising \$650.00. As appreciative as the students were for those who donated to their fundraising efforts, the majority of students were grateful for learning about Hands-Only CPR and how to respond in an emergency.

“Warren Middle School did an amazing job with their American Heart Challenge event and we are extremely grateful for Principal Villar, Vice Principal Mensinger, Nurse Lontai and the Student Government Association for putting together a wonderful post-challenge event where students were able to get their hearts pumping by participating in various activities such a relay races, basketball games, jump rope, and high

jumps. Students also had the amazing opportunity to learn Hands-Only CPR as part of the stations,” said AHA Representative Katie Farina.

The AHA also donated \$1300.00 in physical education equipment to WMS as a thank you for all of our efforts.

Photos by Warren Township Schools



(above) Leah Ferreira, Lily Han, Gabrielle Addvensky, Skye Battiste



(above) Brandon Volosov



(above) Audrey Liao



(above) Farrah Hassimi



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GROUNDBREAKING RIVER CLEANUP EFFORT CELEBRATED

Township of Green Brook

On Sunday, May 19, 2024, an official ceremony was held in Green Brook to celebrate the installation of the Bandalong Bandit Litter Trap in the Green Brook at the end of Jefferson Avenue. The Bandalong Bandit Litter Trap, which is the first of its kind in the State of New Jersey, catches any debris and waste that flows through the section of the brook, reducing pollution and aiding cleanup efforts. The pilot program was made possible through a grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which fully funded the project, in addition to partners including the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP) and the Borough of Dunellen.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is thrilled to see this project be implemented because it will improve aquatic habitat by way of an innovative method, with this being the first in-stream litter trap in the State of New Jersey. Removing floatable trash will benefit fish and wildlife through plastic and microplastic pollution reduction in the Green Brook and all the way out to Raritan Bay and the Atlantic Ocean,” said Fish & Wildlife Biologist Jillian Stark of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The ceremony began with remarks from

LRWP Board President and de facto Executive Director Heather Fenyk, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologist Jillian Stark, Dunellen Mayor Jason F. Cilento, and Green Brook Mayor Jim Van Arsdale. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was concluded with live demonstration of the litter trap by the Dunellen Department of Public Works (DPW), who installed the trap with Storm Water Systems. The trap will be maintained by Dunellen DPW, with assistance from Green Brook DPW. LRWP will be charting all debris cleanup data for further analysis.



(above) Community members gathered to celebrate New Jersey's first Bandalong Bandit Litter Trap installation in Green Brook. Courtesy photo

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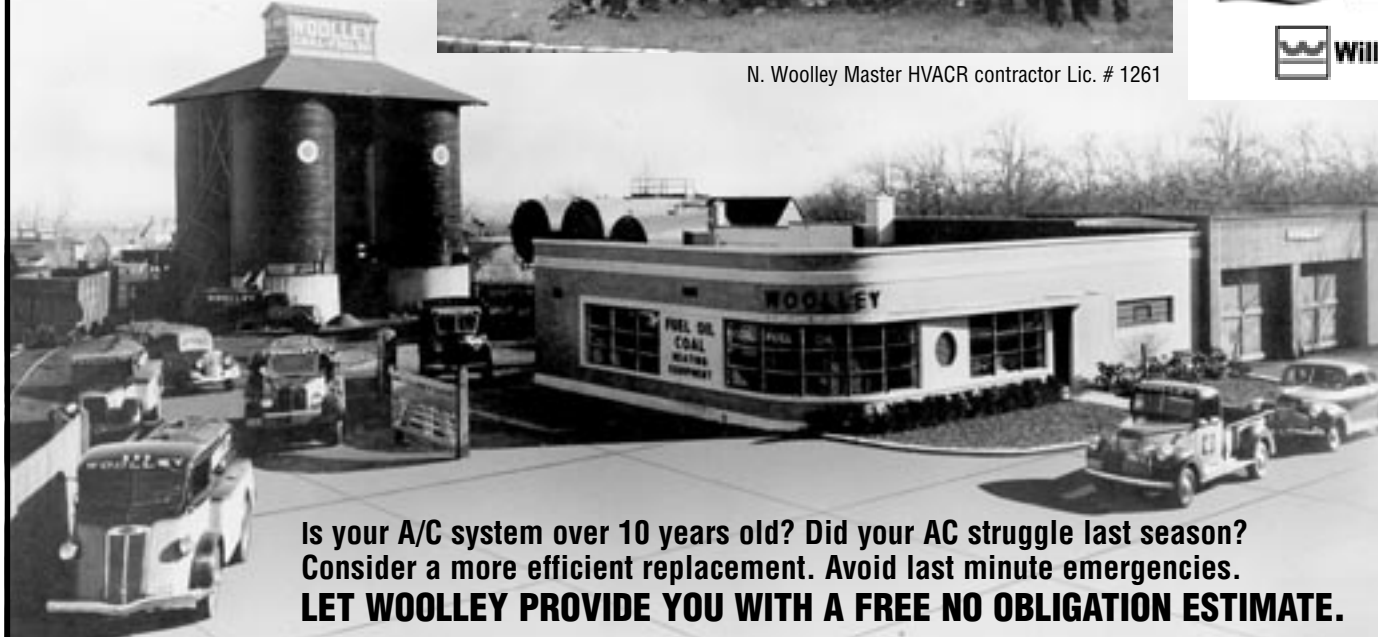
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CAREER DAY DRAWS OVER 100 VENDORS

Submitted by Anita Byk

At 15 and 16 years old, many students are thinking about what to eat for dinner, how much homework they have that night, or what video they can post on Instagram. While many also have thoughts about their future in mind, do they really know what they want to do post-high school? What their ideal job is or what they will



Photo by Warren Hills Regional High School

study in college or as an apprentice?

On May 29, 10th and 11th grade students at Watchung Hills Regional High School experienced a Career Day that gave them exposure to a diversified number of professions, allowed them to practice communication skills, and opened up their world to new ideas, careers, and people. Over 100 vendors participated in Watchung Hills Career Fair, bringing their expertise and memorabilia from their companies with the sole goal of sharing their job descriptions and advice to over 850 students.

Taking their scavenger hunt cards to different vendors (putting them in the running for the raffle for tricky tray baskets donated by the vendors), students learned about occupations they were both interested in as well as those they had little prior frame of reference for - finding out the best paths to take to get to where they want to be in their future. Many made valuable connections or obtained internships and summer jobs.

Vendors included law, finance, environmental, plumbing, construction, arts/music, armed services, police, fire, healthcare, engineering, architecture, retail, real estate, autobody, pharmaceuticals, career planning, among others.

Students also listened to distinguished guests during a panel discussion, including the

following:

- Bill Spadea: Morning show host of 101.5
- Joel Katz: Morning show host of 98.3
- Liz Scherer: HR Director of Novartis
- Mike Krupsky: Award winning plumber
- Chuck Carro: Municipal Judge
- Chris Battiloro: Westfield police chief

An extensive brunch was provided for our vendors and speakers, donated by numerous local businesses - everything from meatballs to sandwiches, to danishes and bagels. In addition, the Watchung Hills PTO was overly generous in their time and donations to provide a wonderful opportunity for our students. All left-over food was donated to the VA Hospital.

Donors included: A&G Deli, Acme Warren, Aroma Indian Restaurant, BJs Watchung, Ms. Mary Sok, Mrs. Lisa Martins, Ms. Amanda Bonnell and Culinary Arts Class, Ciro's, Costco North Plainfield, Country Squire, DAK Korean Fried Chicken, Dunkin Stirling, Biagios, Burger King Stirling, Panera Bread Stirling, Panera Bread Watchung, Wendys, Chick Fil-A Watchung, Wawa, Honey Baked Ham, Just Subs Greenbrook, Duck Donuts, Shop Rite Stirling, Marcy's Kitchen, Starbucks Stirling, Starbucks Warren, Stirling House Diner, Haisch's Bakery, Warren Deli, Trader Joes, Blimpies Stirling



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- Safe Schools/IPM/Lawn Care: Owner
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WATCHUNG HILLS REGIONAL HS CLASS OF 2024 PROJECT GRADUATION

Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Warren Monthly page on facebook.com
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The Watchung Hills Regional High School held its 33rd Project Graduation event on Thursday, June 13th at Iron Peak Sports & Entertainment in Hillsborough, NJ. Graduates from the Class of 2024 enjoyed a full night of fun, including a silent disco, basketball, spikeball, an arcade, and so much more. Food and drinks were also available throughout the night.

Project Graduation is funded completely through donations. The ability to provide all the events throughout the year is only possible through generous donations from our families & community. A volunteer team of parents of WHRHS seniors comes together to plan events for the graduating class throughout the year that lead up to a safe and fun graduation celebration for the entire class. Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



WATCHUNG HILLS REGIONAL HS CLASS OF 2024 PROJECT GRADUATION

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GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD TAKE ACTION PROJECT

I, Navya Venkatesh, a girl scout and a junior at Watchung Hills Regional High School, have recently completed a Take Action project in order to complete the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor a girl scout can earn.

The Gold Award is a Take Action project meaning that it goes beyond community service because it must have a long lasting impact. The



(above) Watchung Hills junior Navya Venkatesh

Courtesy photo

project must address the root cause of an issue, have a national and/or global link, demonstrate leadership, and have a sustainable and measurable impact.

I looked at my community to find an issue that needed a solution. I noticed that my peers were very concerned about school and the future in general. Things like staying up past midnight and studying during lunch are commonplace. That's why for my Gold Award Take Action project, I wanted to focus on stress management.

My Take Action project began in December of 2022 when I first began brainstorming and finding a team of volunteers to help with the project. Emma Giantisco, a student assistance counselor at Watchung Hills, was my project advisor who had the task of guiding me throughout the process. Active Minds, a student organization at Watchung Hills, will sustain the project for many years to come. Other members of the team include Premini Thanasegaran, my troop leader; Jason Sabino, the head of the guidance department at Watchung Hills; and Dr. Savitha Puttaiah, a psychiatrist.

My project consisted of three workshops that were planned around students' most stressful times of the year including December, March, and late April. These periods occur around the end of the first semester, the month of the year with the most school days, and right before AP exams, respectively.

The first workshop was in December of 2023 and focused on time management skills. Students learned about the pomodoro technique and how to avoid procrastination. To end the workshop, students made a schedule for themselves which

is a key component of managing time. For this workshop, 93% of participants reported that they learned something new.

The second workshop was in March of 2024 and focused on ways to de-stress where students learned about the effects of cortisol, the stress hormone, and how to lower cortisol levels by doing arts and crafts, journaling, and self-care. For this workshop, 96% of participants reported that they learned more.

The third workshop was in April of 2024 and focused on the connection between physical and mental health. 90% of participants reported that they learned more about how physical and mental health are related.

Overall, the three workshops involved more than 75 students and across the three events, 90% of students learned something new.

The project not only benefited the community at Watchung Hills, but it also benefited me. I learned more about stress management while teaching it to my peers. However, I also learned more about myself. Through the process of earning the Gold Award, I learned that I am capable of taking on a complicated, long term project with many steps that require early planning and effective communication with many people.

I am very grateful that this project was able to benefit my community and that it will continue to serve Watchung Hills students for years to come.

Additional notes: The project began in December, 2022 and ended in June, 2024. Over 80 hours of community service went into the Take Action project.

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(above) SCLSNJ Library staffer Eric Alicea displays his handmade mental health kit.

In support of Somerset County's Stigma Free mission, and to provide a safe haven for people to gather, plan for mental health safety, and access help during tough times, the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey's (SCLSNJ) Manville branch recently hosted a 'create your own mental health kit' program.

"Participants felt comfortable sharing their struggles with anxiety, anger, trepidation, and grief," said Eric Alicea. "They connected with others and shared ways to cope."

The branch offered essential items for mental well-being and crisis management, such as: eye masks, dice and decision-maker sheets, fidget toys, mindful prompts, and mental health services brochures.

If you were unable to attend the program, explore a few librarian-curated books that might help you in your wellness journey. If you would like a custom book recommendation, email ask@sclibnj.org.

- "The Anxiety First Aid Kit: Quick Tools For Extreme, Uncertain Times" by Rick Hanson
- "Are U Ok?: A Guide To Caring For Your Mental Health" by Kati Morton
- "Emotional First Aid: Practical Strategies For Treating Failure, Rejection, Guilt, and Other Everyday Psychological Injuries" by Guy


Winch

- "I Don't Want To Talk About It: Overcoming The Secret Legacy Of Male Depression" by Terrence Real
- "Self-Care For Black Men: 100 Ways To Heal And Liberate" by Jor-El Caraballo
- "Languishing: How To Feel Alive Again In A World That Wears Us Down" by Corey L. M. Keyes
- "Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto" by Tricia Hersey
- "Stress Pandemic: The Lifestyle Solution - 9 Natural Steps To Survive, Master Stress, And Live Well" by Paul Huljich
- "Hello I Want To Die Please Fix Me: Depression In The First Person" by Anna Mehler Paperny
- "A Pity Party Is Still A Party: A Feel-Good Guide To Feeling Bad" by Chelsea Harvey Garner

If you have questions or require personalized mental health support, email Somerset County's Department of Human Services staff at HumanServices@co.somerset.nj.us.

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The American Association of University women (AAUW) was established in 1881. Its original mission was focused on education for girls and women. Today, there are branches throughout the country, including our local Somerset Hills Branch. Its goals have expanded to include a vast array of women's issues such as equal pay, voting rights, women's health, to name just a few. Somerset Hills branch includes women from Somerset, Morris, Warren, Middlesex, and Hunterdon counties.

Amongst the variety of fund raising and social activities, the branch works tirelessly to host an annual used book sale. The funds are awarded in the form of scholarship to girls chosen on merit

and currently matriculating at Raritan Community College. Thousands of books of all genres are available to purchase for \$1.25. This year's book sale will be August 1 through August 3 at Bernardsville Middle School, 141 Seney Drive, Bernardsville. Volunteers and patrons are always welcome. For book sale information, or to volunteer for this impactful cause, email info@somersethillsaauw.org.

Please visit the branch website at somersethills-nj@aauw.net to become more familiar with AAUW Somerset Hills Branch. Membership is rewarding and enjoyable. If you would like membership information, contact Sharon.Hayden323@gmail.com.

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Blood Pressure Screening

July 1, 10:30 a.m.

The nurse from VNA (Visiting Nurse Association) will take your blood pressure and answer your questions.

Fair Housing, Money Management, Reverse Mortgage, and Senior Housing Options.

July 1, 11 a.m.

TV Trivia

July 5, 11 a.m.

TV Trivia with questions about the TV show, actors from 1950s, 1960s, 1970s.

Bingo with Bob Mazet

July 8, 25, 11 a.m.

Drum Circle

July 8, 1:00 P.M.

Soothe the mind, body and spirit in this drumming circle. Anil will guide us through playing different tones using drums

Mindful Living – Kruti Thakore

July 10, 17, 24, 31, 11 a.m.

Stress triggers the release of hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, leading to inflammation and several health challenges. Combat stress with "Mindful Living: The Art of Restoring Inner Calm." This transformative program helps you reconnect with yourself, reduce stress, and enhance self-awareness.

Breathing techniques for mental wellness

July 11, 11 a.m.

Dr Prabha Srinivas will be teaching some practices that can be used to distract the mind and induce calm during an anxiety episode.

Brains n Games and Hand Bells with Adrienne Graubard

July 12, 26, - 11 a.m.

Join Adrienne for some mind-tingling, brain-stumping word games and a fun-filled musical workout using hand bells.

The Wheels on the Bus

July 15, 11 a.m.

Warrenbrook Seniors presents a montage of scenes depicting their daily activities. True stories will be presented by seniors to the fellow seniors which includes lively conversations, games, videos & meals.

Jeopardy

July 18, 11 a.m.

We will play interactive game of Jeopardy in which categories include NJ Celebrities, what are you eating, it's a matter of 3's, TV Times, Finish This & It Takes An Auto.

Home Safety

July 19, 11 a.m.

Nidhi Shah - Home safety is the awareness of risks and potential dangers in a home that may cause bodily harm, injury, or even death to those living there. Nidhi Shah will give you some tips to make your home safe.

Volunteer Services Presentation

July 22, 11 a.m.

Christina Panarese from Volunteer Services organization of Somerset County will be talking about the services provided by the organization for the seniors.

Vision Screening

July 22, 11 a.m.

Chaitali Shah from NJDHS -Under Project BEST (Better Eye Health Services & Treatment) and the requirements for the vision screening, each participant will be screened for distance visual acuity and glaucoma. Based on the results of the screening, the participant will be given recommendations on their specific follow-up. The Project BEST screener will also provide follow-up resources for those that are under-insured or have no insurance. These resources also include the ability for individuals to get glasses at no cost.

Picnic on the Patio

July 29, 11 a.m.

We will enjoy the morning breeze sitting on the Patio, listen to the music by Lorri Woodward sponsored by Caitlyn Meadors of Foothill Acres Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, play outdoor games like Corn Hole, Badminton, Frisbee

Besides the above program, the below programs take place on weekly basis.

Stretch

Mondays – 10:00 a.m.

Stretching keeps the muscles flexible, strong, and healthy, and we need that flexibility to maintain a range of motion in the joints. Without it, the muscles shorten and become tight. No fee for this ongoing class. Please call (908) 753-9440 for more information.

Studio 60+

1st & 3rd Mondays - 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Warrenbrook seniors will meet twice a month to plan the events they are interested in. Some examples include brainstorming the quarterly Community Service projects, craft work, musical entertainment, jeopardy. They will also practice for their quarterly musical entertainments, drama.

Mahjong for Intermediate Players

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m

If you are an intermediate mahjong player and would like to play this game of skill, strategy, and calculation, then join us on Tuesday mornings. Please call for more information.

Zumba Gold with Judith

Tuesdays, 10:15 a.m.

This class is achievable for beginners or others who need modifications to their exercise routine. Cost is \$40 for the 8-week program. Please call for more information.

Bridge Group with Ronnie

Tuesdays, 1 - 4 p.m.

New members and beginners welcome (lessons available).

Gentle Yoga with Jillian

Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m.

This class is open to all levels of skill. Hatha yoga poses can be practiced while either sitting or standing. Hatha yoga will help increase bone density, improve strength, flexibility, and balance while you are immersed in a relaxing class. Cost is \$40 for the 8-week program. Please call for more information.

Tai Chi with Roger

Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.

Tai Chi participants will focus on shifting body weight through a series of light, controlled movements that flow rhythmically into one long gesture. This program can be practiced while either standing or sitting.

Advanced Bridge

1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m

This is a closed group and is available by invitation only.

Craft Activities with Jean

Wednesdays, 1- 4 p.m.

This quarter we feature creating Cards for our Meals on Wheels clients. All supplies will be provided.

Gentle Yoga with Jillian

Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.

This class is open to all levels of skill. Cost is \$40 for the 8-week program. Please call (908) 753-9440 for more information.

Line Dancing with Linda Hyland

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Card/Table Games

Thursdays, 1- 4 p.m.

Geri-Fit

Fridays, 10:00 a.m.

Geri-Fit is a seated (standing optional) program that requires a set of light dumbbell weights (2 lbs. to begin), a sturdy chair, a stretch band, and water to drink during the workout. PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Please call for more information.

Walk With Ease™ Self-Guided Program

Fridays, 1:00 p.m. - June 7 – July 19, 2024

Weekly Check In and Presentation with Rutgers University Doctoral Occupational Therapy Students.

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Bridge

Fridays, 1 – 4 p.m.

Please call for more information.

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FUN EVENT RAISES \$125,000 TO HELP GRIEVING CHILDREN

Experience Camps

Hundreds of people attended the “Day of Champions” event held on June 2, 2024, in Warren, NJ for a day of family-friendly fun and fierce competition. It was all tied into one glorious morning of camp-inspired challenges and activities to benefit Experience Camps.

Experience Camps is an award-winning national nonprofit that transforms the lives of grieving children through free, weeklong, summer-camp programs, and innovative, year-round initiatives. There are six million young people in the U.S. who will experience the death of a parent or sibling, and Experience Camps aims to provide as many young people as possible joy, hope and strategies for learning how to navigate their grief journey.

The “Day of Champions” event started in 2018 in Westport, CT. It grew out of the desire to host a different type of fundraiser for Experience Camps, and the idea to do a massive “Color War” (think camp Olympics) was formed. This was the second annual Day of Champions at Camp Riverbend in Warren, NJ.

For the event, 20 teams sign up for an amazing day of fun. They are each assigned a spirit color which they are encouraged to fully embrace (including tie dye, spray paint, body/hair paint, tutus...the wilder, the better). They competed in five activities to earn points. Along the way they were also tasked with fundraising for Experience Camps. A minimum of \$2,500 is expected to be raised by each team.

The day kicked off with Opening Ceremonies, which includes some words from the Event Chair and a camper speaker. The games then ran for about an hour and a half, before finishing the day with Closing Ceremonies, which included the awarding of trophies. Then everyone celebrated with treats, and there was much to celebrate!

"It was incredible to see so many families of Summit join together where the joy of friendly competition met the power of philanthropy, creating a kaleidoscope of fun and goodwill for everyone who participated," said Justine Lelchuk, Day of Champions Team Captain and Summit Resident. Added Ari Landau, Day of Champion Team Captain and Summit Resident,

Courtesy photos



"Bereavement can be a difficult topic to talk about but I felt uplifted knowing so many of us came together to support grieving children and raise critical dollars for much needed bereavement programming."

"The “Day of Champions” is a unique opportunity for friends and families of all ages to come together for an incredible cause," says Hillary Irwin, Westfield resident and event co-chair. "I was truly amazed and inspired by all of the people who showed up, dressed-up, volunteered, fund-raised and competed. I am very grateful to be a part of this event and this organization."

Jenni Hetrick, Assistant Director & Division Head of Camp Riverbend, where the event took place said, "Camp Riverbend has always believed in the magic of camp and is proud to partner with Experience Camps and other organizations that support grieving children."

In addition to a lot of smiles and community bonding, the teams raised \$125,000 that will support Experience Camps’ programming and help heal thousands of grieving teens. For those who want to get involved with Experience Camps or make use of their free grief resources, visit experiencecamps.org.



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