

Insights

SPRING 2022

The Friends of West Bergen



Present Third Annual Move for Mental Health 5K Virtual Walk/Run

Did you know that movement can be a useful tool to improve your mood and help you become more mentally fit? This May, we're encouraging you to Move for Mental Health by joining our 3rd Annual Virtual 5K. You'll be improving your own physical and mental wellness, and helping us raise funds to ensure that affordable and accessible mental health treatment for children, adults and families is available to all.

SPECIAL KICK OFF EVENT

Saturday,
May 7th, 9am - Noon

West Bergen has joined forces with the Ramsey Public School District for a special Stigma Free Walk and Talk-a-thon at the Ramsey High School track. Here's what you can expect at this free, family event:

- Register in person for West Bergen's Fundraiser 5K (you can also register online or use the QR code)
- Complete your 5K (3.1 miles) by walking around the Ramsey High School Track
- Enjoy Games and Giveaways, and meet some of our Wellness Sponsors
- Learn more about fostering a stigma free environment, free from judgement, where everyone can get the help they need

CAN'T MAKE THE KICKOFF? NO PROBLEM!

Our Virtual format means you can complete your 5K anytime during the month of May. Standard registration is \$25. Register at the \$50 level and get a special tee shirt with artwork designed by one of West Bergen's group home residents! Most importantly, thanks to our sponsors, **100% of funds raised go directly to West Bergen and our Center for Children & Youth.**

OUR GOAL IS TO AISE \$50,000.

Thanks to the generosity of three major donors, your registration fee and support can double the difference. **Total donations up to \$25,000 will be matched in full!**

That means if we succeed in raising \$25,000, our donors will gift us an additional \$25,000!

Whether you run, walk, or support us with a financial gift, your participation will make a difference.



Scan or register at westbergen.org

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF WEST BERGEN FOR BEAUTY, FASHION & FUNDRAISING

PLUS WINE AND NIBBLES!

Thursday
**June 16th, 2022
6PM - 8PM**

Pamela Etzin, personal stylist and wardrobe consultant, and owner of An Eye for Detail



Diana Dolling Ross, Clinique Executive and Skin Care and Make-Up Specialist

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT WEST BERGEN MENTAL HEALTH
Details and Ticket Information will be available shortly



WEST BERGEN IN THE NEWS

How to talk to kids about nuclear war? NJ experts offer tips as Ukraine spurs anxiety

RECENTLY, NORTHJERSEY.COM FEATURED CEO MICHAEL TOZZOLI IN AN ARTICLE BY JOURNALIST GENE MYERS. HERE IS AN EDITED VERSION OF THE MARCH 21, 2022 ARTICLE.

After two years of pandemic, masks, lockdowns, racial strife and political insurrection, stress among American kids was already at crisis proportions.

Then Russia invaded Ukraine and "World War III" was suddenly a trending topic.

Mental health counselors say the news on TV and social media has reignited Cold War fears among some of their young patients, including prospects of nuclear annihilation that harken back to a time when students were told to hide under their desks in case of a Soviet attack.

"We are definitely seeing kids struggle with anxiety", said Michael Tozzoli, CEO of Ridgewood-based West Bergen Mental Healthcare. "I had a kid in my practice the other night who said he kept hearing that COVID was a once-in-a-lifetime thing and now you're telling me that's a possible nuclear war?"

Event before the Russian invasion, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy warned in December of the "devastating" effects on children's mental health of the last two years.

Hospitals in New Jersey and elsewhere have seen a rise in adolescents and young adults experiencing depression, panic attacks and suicide attempts.

Tozzoli's organization, which includes three Bergen County offices, held an online seminar in partnership with the Fort Lee Library last week on "recognizing signs of mental health

struggles in children." How to help kids cope with notions of war – including nuclear war – came up often, he said.

"They may not say, 'I fear war', Tozzoli said. "But you may all of a sudden have a teenager who is scared to drive or you will have a younger child who is afraid to be left alone in the house when in the past mom may have been able to run to the store. I think that's partly due to what we are seeing on TV."

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT WAR

How can a parent help when a topic is this huge? Experts recommend breaking it down into smaller conversations that take place in casual settings, while making sure to let the child lead.

"Some kids can only handle a certain amount and then it's time to move on. Don't try to resolve everything in one conversation," Tozzoli said. "Don't put that pressure on yourself."

Sitting down to talk may also put stress on children, he added. Tozzoli suggested taking your child for a drive. In a car, they won't have to be looking at you, which can be intense, especially for teenage boys.

Start the conversation with open-ended questions such as "What do you know? How does it make you feel? Have you been worrying?" Or: "Do you have friends who are worried?"

Start the conversation with open-ended questions such as "What do you know? How does it make you feel?"

Parents often make "the tactical mistake" of going into a conversation thinking they are the first ones to broach a topic with their child, Tozzoli said.

Let silence sit in the air after your questions and your child will fill the space with their answers.

Experts said the kind of information a child needs will vary by age.

"Look at the developmental level of the child and then modify your conversation based on it," Tozzoli said. "For younger children, it's best to keep things simple and not focus on disturbing images of bombs or war. The most important priority is to let youngsters know they are safe."

COMMUNITY CORNER

WEST BERGEN 5K WELLNESS SPONSORS - THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

This year's 5K Wellness sponsors understand the importance of giving back to communities. Each one has a long history of supporting impactful community building projects that help our towns thrive. Their support of West Bergen and our mission helps ensure that affordable and accessible mental health resources are available to everyone. We are grateful for their support and mental health advocacy. Together, we can make a difference.

Poskanzer Skott Architects • Heuer & Company
Brown & Brown • Share 911 • Malesardi, Quackenbush
Orange Theory • Robin • Green Ridge Wealth Planning



Message from our CEO



Thanks to so many who generously gave "The Gift of Mental Health" this past holiday season, West Bergen was able to meet its end of year fundraising goal of \$150,000! 100% of your donations directly support our mission, which is to provide quality, affordable and accessible mental health treatment and services to our communities. Over 30% of our clients apply and qualify for a reduced fee because of income limitations. Your tax deductible gifts help to underwrite our sliding scale fee structure, ensuring that those who need treatment are able to receive it. Your support of the work we do is absolutely changing lives. On behalf of the entire West Bergen team, thank you.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Meet Matthew McGregor

Matt McGregor, a busy family practice attorney in Paramus, has always been strongly in committed to community service. As the son of two physicians, Matt understood from a young age the importance of using one's time and talent to help others.

He is particularly committed to helping those who struggle with mental health difficulties, as his family, like so many others, has been personally touched by this issue.

A family member struggled for many years with a serious mental illness, and Matt's family turned to West Bergen for help. Says Matt, "West Bergen provided my family member with the help she needed, and provided her and my family with exceptional

support. The West Bergen team always made themselves available to answer any of our family's questions and address any concerns. During this time, West Bergen became part of our family, and I am grateful to the organization to this day".

Matt's compassion for others is a valuable asset in his role as Partner at Bozarian McGregor, LLC. From the very outset, his practice has been dedicated and committed to family and matrimonial law, and his interpersonal (and litigation) skills help him navigate the diverse and complex family law cases his clients present.

Matt joined the Board of West Bergen in 2021 as a way to give back to the community that "supported and welcomed" his family. In a short amount of time, Matt has become an invaluable asset to West Bergen and we are grateful to have him on the team.



I want to ensure that all families that are experiencing difficulties with mental health have the same opportunities that I have had".

-MATTHEW MCGREGOR,
WEST BERGEN BOARD MEMBER

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

For Jessica Bush, "making personal" is not just a slogan – it's the foundation on which she has built her successful business Tutor Doctor of North Jersey. Her instinct for uncovering the unique needs and desires of students and their families is coupled with her deep commitment to helping clients achieve their dreams.

Jessica brings that sensitivity and desire to help others, particularly those who struggle with mental illness, to West Bergen's group home clients. A talented artist herself (she also launched "Beyond the Eye Art"), Jessica has been helping clients learn how to express their moods and feelings through a series of classes called "The Color of Feelings". With gentle encouragement and acceptance, Jessica is fully present to each of our clients, listening, observing and helping them identify and express how they feel through their artwork.



Jessica Bush

West Bergen Covid Warmline West Bergen has launched a free, "Warmline" support service for anyone in the community who is experiencing stress and anxiety as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Available Monday through Friday from 9am – 5pm, calls will be received by a West Bergen Access Clinician and a trained West Bergen licensed therapist will return your call within 30 minutes. 201-688-7098