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Final State of Mind Conference Scheduled for Issaquah High

Swedish Medical Center Issaquah, the Issaquah Schools Foundation Healthy Youth Initiative and Influence the Choice – Drug Prevention Alliance for Youth, the city of Issaquah’s Youth Advisory Board, and the Issaquah PTSA Council are sponsoring a third State of Mind conference at Issaquah High School on Saturday, April 29th from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The first conference was held at Mary Queen of Peace Church in Sammamish on February 4th and the second held at Liberty High School on March 11. About 120 people attended the first two events.

The State of Mind conference is free and open to students, parents, school staff members and community members. The conference focuses on youth mental health issues.



Anna-Lena Ball, student co-chair for this year's conferences, says, "Today's students experience high levels of stress, anxiety and depression. State of Mind conferences address many youth mental health issues and provide information, skill development and resources for those who need them. This is one of the most important ways for teens to help teens."

The keynote speaker for the April 29th conference is Megan Chiarelli, MD, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist for Swedish Medical Center Issaquah. Dr. Chiarelli will discuss "Awareness and Stigma – the Impacts on Youth Mental Health." Dr. Chiarelli is an expert in the treatment of ADHD, and in youth suicide prevention, as well as a frequent speaker about child and adolescent development. She received her medical degree from American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine.

Other speakers for the April 29th conference include Jerry Blackburn, Friends of Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Services Director for Friends of Youth, on the topic of "Drug Abuse and Identity," Jocelyn Skillman, a counselor in private practice, discussing compassionate communications practices; a student panel discussing how teens can talk to parents about drugs; and a parent panel representing the Issaquah School District's Equity Committee discussing "Understanding Cultural Differences." In total, twelve sessions will be presented.

Although the conference is free, organizers would greatly appreciate attendees registering so they can plan for materials, seating and food. To learn more, to view a complete Issaquah High program, or to register, go to www.healthyouthinitiative.org and click on the State of Mind tab. Questions can be directed to Barbara de Michele, barb@isdn.org or 206-898-5210.

Attendees are welcome to drop in for a single break-out session of interest to them. Attendees do not need to live within the Issaquah School District boundaries to participate – all are welcome.

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