

HEAL Team Hosts Worksite Wellness Summit

The **Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) priority group** hosted its first **Worksite Wellness Summit** on April 20 at the Robert Wood Johnson Fitness Center. The event attracted nearly 65 attendees and included a keynote address by **Craig Kramer, Chair of the Global Campaign for Mental Health at Johnson & Johnson**, as well as a panel discussion and a presentation by **Carol Rickard, GMPHP CAB member**.

The Worksite Wellness committee began work on the event nearly a year ago, including a survey of 87 local business people to:

- 1) ascertain if businesses recognized the return on investment of worksite wellness programs,
- 2) if they had initiated wellness programs at work, and
- 3) if they were interested in a conference to learn more.

The survey confirmed that 65.5% surveyed did not have a wellness program in place. Issues of concern for business leaders included absenteeism, low morale, decreased productivity, and high turnover. The topics they were most interested in (36%) related to stress and mental health.

Using the survey as a guide, **CAB members Carol Rickard, Kurt Baker, Mary Jo Abbondanza, Jane Millner, Anthony Carabelli, and Courtney Nelson**, developed a three-hour morning workshop. Kramer, serving as keynote speaker, shared his goals to raise awareness, reduce stigma, improve access, promote research and ensure better patient outcomes in mental health. His key initiatives include a global leaders coalition to champion proven scalable reforms, and a CEO round table to develop “next in class” workplace mental health practices.

The keynote was followed by a very informative frank panel discussion with participants **Kim Blanda, Project Director Hunterdon County Partnership for Health; Courtney Nelson, Senior Director Community Health in NJ for American Heart Association; Brynne Stork, manager of LiveWell at ETS for 3,500 employees; and Stacey Verdino, HR Director with Amicus Therapeutics**. During the panel discussions, participants appreciated the pros and cons of efforts, and what worked and what did not in the professional environment.

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Carol Rickard Receives Prevention Award

The **Prevention Coalition of Mercer County** recognized **Carol Rickard** on June 21 for her contributions to drug and alcohol addiction treatment. **CAB member Barbara Sprechman** said that “Carol has 25 years experience working in hospital based programs and has helped thousands of people change their health habits to reclaim their lives. It has been her mission to bring her work beyond the walls of a hospital to the rest of the world.”

For those who attended the GMPHP Worksite Wellness Summit, you will recognize Carol as the closing speaker who charged up the audience with practical hands on tools to survive our stressful lives. She has published 13 books on stress and wellness, and is a featured expert in *Esperanza* and *Bi-Polar* Magazines. GMPHP extends a hearty congratulations and appreciation to our valued CAB member, Carol Rickard.

Pictured right are Barbara Sprechman, Prevention Coalition Coordinator for the Mercer Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction, awarding Carol Rickard.



Worksite Wellness Summit

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The meeting concluded with a dynamic presentation by **Carol Rickard** on tools and useful solutions that empower people and maintain mental wellbeing.

Attendees lingered afterwards, enjoying the resource tables of local organizations that can help employers develop worksite wellness programs.

Participating organizations included:

- Rutgers Cooperative Extension
- YMCA Hamilton
- Attitudes in Reverse
- Certified Mindfulness Coach
- Family Resource Network
- American Heart Association
- Kidney Foundation
- RWJ Fitness Center
- WellYouniversity.

The committee would like to sincerely thank the supportive GMPHP Board that funded this free program, and RWJ Hamilton for sponsoring the location.

Lawrence Hopewell Trail is Expanding

Construction of the new Province Line Road Segment is Underway

“Patience and a commitment to getting the job done - no matter how long it takes - are two attributes that have enabled the Lawrence Hopewell Trail trustees and our many partners to build this community amenity,” remarked **Lawrence Hopewell Trail (LHT) co-President and Transportation CAB member, Eleanor Horne.**

The long-anticipated construction of the LHT’s Province Line Road segment is underway, and when completed in about two months, it will add approximately three-quarters of a mile of trail to the biking and walking loop that runs through Lawrence and Hopewell Townships. Within a few months, we will all be able to walk or ride on the trail from ETS through BMS, down Province Line Road, over Princeton Pike and into the Maidenhead Meadows Park, staying on the trail the whole time,” explained **LHT co-President Becky Taylor.** “That’s progress.”

With the completion of this project, 88% - a total of 19 miles - of the 22-mile trail will be completed by summer of 2017. Funding totaling approximately \$500,000 for this leg of the trail comes from federal highway funds, administered through the N.J. Department of Transportation. The LHT is a 22-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail through public and private land in Lawrence and Hopewell Townships in Mercer County, N.J. Visit www.lhtrail.org to plan your trip.

Conversation of a Lifetime

Have you wondered why you are seeing so many libraries and churches viewing “The Bucket List” lately? It’s in thanks to the outreach of **CAB member Deborah Levine of the NJ Health Care Quality Institute**, who is trying to help people start the sometimes-difficult conversation about end-of-life decisions.

Levine organized the wonderful lecture by acclaimed author Dr. Angelo Volandes at the West Windsor Library on April 18. Participants heard real-life decisions and restrictions a doctor can face with critically ill patients, sometimes heart-wrenching. Attendees also learned that the optimal least-invasive path could not always be followed if the patient had not spelled things out before their demise. Dr. Angelo Volandes brought humor, compassion, and reality to The Conversation of a Lifetime.

Statistics show:

- 61% of New Jersey adult residents are comfortable with the idea of aging and have thought about their wishes for medical treatment near the end of their life.
- 6 out of 10 New Jersey adult residents have no written documents expressing their wishes for end-of-life care.
- 38% of New Jersey adult residents have not had conversations about advanced care planning.
- Only 3 out of 10 New Jersey adult residents who are 65 years and older are aware about Five Wishes or POLST.

Conversation of Your Life is a Mayors’ Wellness Campaign program that focuses on engaging communities in fruitful dialogue to let individuals’ family, friends, or doctors understand and respect their end-of-life wishes through advance care planning. It is generously supported by **The Horizon Foundation of New Jersey**. If you would like to learn more, call Deborah at 609-452-5980 or dlevine@njhcqi.org.



From Left: Librarian Rina Banerjee, MCHS Marygrace Billek, Dr. Angelo Volandes, and Health Officer Carol Chamberlain.

New Bike Tool Station in Hamilton

Fixing your bike in Hamilton just got a little easier, thanks to a new bike tool station purchased by **Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA)** and recently installed by NJ Transit at the Hamilton Rail Station.

Conveniently located at the station near the bike lockers and racks, the tool station enables cyclists to easily fill their tires and make quick fixes to their bikes, such as changing a flat tire or adjusting the brakes.

“Hamilton Township adopted a Complete Streets policy in recent years, which encourages bike and pedestrian friendly infrastructure be included in road design,” said **Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of GMTMA and a CAB member**. “We wanted to show our support for Hamilton’s policy and encourage more people to choose biking as a way to access the train.”

Kastrenakes added that the presence of bicycling infrastructure makes it easier for people to choose biking as a way to get around.

“We are delighted that Greater Mercer TMA was able to use its resources for the tool station and are looking forward to working together to make Hamilton a better biking community,” said Mayor Kelly Yaede.

Greater Mercer TMA is a non-profit, public-private partnership dedicated to reducing traffic and improving mobility in and around Mercer and Ocean counties.



From Left: Jerry Foster, Martin Flynn (Director of Technology and Economic Development), Mayor Kelly Yaede, Cheryl Kastrenakes, Jennifer Buisson and Mike Viscardi (both from NJ Transit)

Spotlight: Women's Heart Health

Did you know cardiovascular disease is the #1 killer of women? Do you know the signs and symptoms of heart disease for women?



Clinical programs coordinator and Chronic Disease

CAB member Cookie McCulley-Breustedt spreads this life-saving message throughout Mercer and Bucks Counties. "I have met many women who are not aware of cardiac event symptoms and have held off going to the emergency room, resulting in damage to their heart," says Cookie. "A friend of mine went to the dentist due to jaw pain. It turns out her teeth were just fine. A thoughtful dentist referred her to a cardiologist and she ended up with a five vessel cardiac bypass. This was a lady who did a lot of swimming and bowling. Who would have thought?"

Women, if you do not know your risk for heart disease, consider a free Women's Heart Health Screening at Mercer Bucks Cardiology (no obligation and no cost to your insurance). The 40-minute screening includes checks for cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, pulse, BMI, waist measurement, history of activity, nutrition, family history, and symptoms. You'll receive a two-page print-out and a booklet on women and heart disease. Call 609-482-2939 for information.

Important Heart Health Facts for Women:

- Women have unique risk factors for heart disease.
- Women may present with atypical symptoms of heart disease.
- Because symptoms are atypical, diagnosis can be difficult.
- Diagnostic testing in women and men may have different accuracies.
- Hardening of the heart arteries in women develops differently.
- Women have different responses to some medications.
- Women are less likely to receive the appropriate heart-saving therapies.

It's Official! GMPHP granted 501(c)3 status

The Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership, marking five years in operation, has been granted 501(c)3 status, officially making it a non-profit organization. As part of the year-long application process, the GMPHP crafted new by-laws for its governance. The GMPHP Board meets monthly to review the work of the four priority groups, and to develop the core guiding principles of the partnership.

The GMPHP Board is pictured here.

Back Row: Carol Nicholas, Jeff Grosser, Jeremy Cohen, Lauren Stabinsky, Mary Jo Abbondonza, Jane Millner, Peter Crowley, Ann Dorocki, Theresa Leinker. Front Row: Diane Grillo, Jill Swanson, Carol Chamberlain, Darlene Hanley, Barbara Johnson.



Do Not Ignore the Following Symptoms:

- Chest tightness, fullness, indigestion discomfort
- Jaw pain
- Pain in left shoulder with radiation to back
- Left neck pain with radiation
- Abdominal pain, vomiting
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Upper back pain
- Shortness of breath
- Unusual fatigue
- Feeling dizzy or ightheaded.

Call 911 with these symptoms.

Sustainable Jersey for Schools Health & Wellness Grants

CAB member Kristen Schiro, with EmPoWER Somerset, has been active on the Healthy Eating/Living priority group. Collaborating with the Department of Health (DOH), she recently helped organize the “Celebrating Success: Working Together for Healthy Schools” summit on May 4 at RWJ Fitness Center. Students and faculty from around the state presented positive evidence-based programs that have had effective results in their schools this year.

Last fall, EmPoWER Somerset, in partnership with *Sustainable Jersey for Schools* awarded ten Central New Jersey public middle and high schools small grants of up to \$4,000 for the 2016-2017 school year to complete specific *Sustainable Jersey for Schools* health and wellness actions. Two out of the 10 schools are in Mercer County: Joyce Kilmer Middle School and Luis Munoz Rivera Community School. Both Trenton schools chose projects to improve their schools’ culture and climate through the **Center for Supportive Schools Campaign Connect Program**. These schools are among 30 schools in New Jersey to receive a *Sustainable Jersey for Schools* Small Grant funded by the New Jersey Department of Health in this funding cycle.

EmPoWER Somerset is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health to coordinate the School Health program in seven Central Jersey counties. In this capacity, EmPoWER Somerset will provide the ten funded schools in this region with guidance and technical support to ensure that their selected school health actions are successful.

“Our vision is that New Jersey youth are healthy and ready to learn in a school environment that supports wellness and other opportunities for healthy choices,” said Kristen Schiro, Director of Health & Wellness at EmPoWER Somerset. “We now know that health impacts academic achievement, and that education impacts our long-term health. We are so excited to be a part of an initiative that will have lifelong positive effects on the youth in this state.”

Healing the Divide: Eliminating the Stigma of Mental Illness

Thanks to author David Lee White and *Passage Theatre Company*, guests at a May 3 event were treated to an evening of story-telling and frank discussion about the complex topic of mental illness. Several panelists contributed to the discussion: Kimme Carlos (Urban Mental Health Alliance), Ray Fisher (Council for Relationships), Bonnie Williams (National Alliance on Mental Illness), **CAB member Michele Madiou (Mercer County Human Services)**, and moderator Reverend Karen Hernandez-Granzen.

For the past two years, White, a New Jersey-based writer, performer, and educator, has been performing his autobiographical play "Panther Hollow" around the country. That play was about White's own struggle with chronic depression in his early years, and his extensive research for that play provided the foundation for "Fixed," which takes place in Trenton in both the past and the present.

The play asks a fascinating question: What would you sacrifice for the people you love? The play does not offer definite answers to that question, but it does present an interesting situation involving three long-time friends and a counselor who is trying to help one of the friends find the answers she needs to help herself. The play ran May 4-21, and they hope to take it on the road in the future.

Also in attendance with display tables were representatives from the many mental health support services available in Mercer County. It was a refreshing supportive community gathering that allowed folks to not only vent, but hear inspirational examples of success and hope. To find mental health services in your neighborhood, visit www.healthymercer.org.

