

Lending a Hand

Prevention Resources is staying active and connected with the community during the pandemic

Since 1971, Prevention Resources has been an organization that all ages can turn to for guidance, information and classes on issues such as tobacco cessation, anger management, youth rehabilitation, early inter-

vention and treatment services.

The nonprofit currently plays an even more significant role given that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted in June 2020 that 40.9% of 5,470 survey respondents reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition during the pandemic.

“We’re in a society where we look for that quick fix,” said Jerri Collevechio, senior development director at Prevention Resources, about the rise in substance abuse. “There are resources out there for families, for individuals, for kids, for yourself. Everybody thinks it’s not going to happen to them.”

Prevention Resources helps individuals learn how to manage such issues. As part of the statewide New Jersey Prevention Network, their entertaining and interactive virtual programs reach into many communities allowing participants from near and far to receive support from licensed social workers and professional counselors. Outreach to the elderly is especially imperative these days.

“We can’t forget our seniors,” Collevechio said. “They are just as vulnerable to addiction as others are.”

For these older adults, the organization offers the Healthy Outlooks program, which promotes staying active and connected, but also focuses on alternatives in managing chronic pain. Mindfulness, chair yoga, nutrition, physical therapy, chiropractic, and prescription misuse and safety are some of the sessions that instructors teach. Simply moving about is a good start for many elderly.

“It’s very important that their caregivers have a good understanding of how to manage their pain as well, and be a part of the conversation with health care providers,” Collevechio said.

To spread the word about the Healthy Outlooks program to the aged homebound, the Prevention Resources staff assembled goodie bags containing ice packs, pill containers, informational cards and personal notes of encouragement and then partnered with Meals on Wheels to deliver the bags to more than 250 seniors. The local food pantry also distributed handouts about the program.

“Seniors are particularly vulnerable anyway, and at this time I think their mental health, as well as their physical health, is a bit challenged,” Collevechio said. “We want to make sure that the community knows that there are resources that are out there and available to help them get through this time of COVID. That’s one of the reasons why, that if they can connect with someone, it’s important.”

For adolescents, Prevention Resources encourages teens to join their Hunterdon County Youth Coalition. The group plans fun, incentivized peer-to-peer activities while promoting a substance-free lifestyle. There also is a mobile application designed by Prevention Resources, which provides immediate access to statewide hotlines and resources for problems such as bullying, self-harm, substance use and domestic violence. The free

app is: HELP App-Prevention Resources. Then there are the Family Success Centers, which are specifically geared toward family-centered activities, workshops and life coaching. The purpose is to enrich children’s lives by strengthening the family and help everyone involved reach their full potential. “We’re still here. We’re still doing things,” Collevechio said regarding the COVID shutdown. “It can be very stressful that (some people) can’t see their loved ones. I think it’s just important that everyone takes a moment for themselves, and does some self-care because once they feel better about themselves, or take care of themselves, they can take care of others.”

The Prevention Resources staff is working remotely but conducting virtual meetings while the office at 4 Walter E. Foran Blvd. in Flemington is closed. Visit www.njprevent.com for more information and links to helpful websites, or call 908-782-3909.

— Debra Stevko Miller



Prevention Resources is dedicated to promoting health and wellness of individuals, families and community through education, collaboration, advocacy and treatment.



UNDERAGE DRINKING IS PREVENTABLE, NOT INEVITABLE.

Parents Hold the Key

One of the easiest ways for teens to get alcohol is from the home. Safely storing alcohol can prevent underage drinking.

Find out ways to safely store alcohol in the home, visit njprevent.com/parentsholdthekey

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Prevention Resources, Inc.