

# Youth-Led Health Promotion Initiatives

Utilizing Youth Voice in Implementing Health  
Promotion Efforts at Stamford Public Schools



# Mayor's Youth Leadership Council

Stamford Youth Services Bureau &  
Stamford Public Schools



# Our Mission

- MYLC is a student run, youth activism group. It's mission is to promote safe schools and communities, with a special emphasis on mental health awareness and suicide prevention.
- Specifically, we work to educate our peers and public about general mental health issues, work to end the stigma of mental illness, and inform people about where and how to access mental health resources. Additionally, we want to change the way we talk about mental health, the language we use, as well as promote wellness and self-care strategies.

# Organizational Foundations

*“Social justice demands that all people have the right to basic human dignity.”*

- Social Justice – It is our belief that everyone deserves equal economic, political, environmental and social rights & opportunities.
- Youth Activism – Our goal is to promote teens as consultants for community change by engaging in direct action and vigorous campaigning to bring about social and/or political change.

# Our History

- MYLC was started at Stamford High School (SHS) in 2004.
- In 2014, SPS asked Stamford YSB to start a chapter at Westhill High School (WHS).
- At WHS, we polled students about what issue to address. Mental health & suicide prevention was by far the most important issue on students' minds, especially after several recent youth suicides.
- In 2015, a third chapter was started at Stamford's Academy for Information Technology & Engineering (AITE).
- All three schools address issues related to mental health & suicide prevention.
- SHS is made up of about 110 members and WHS & AITE both have close to 80 members.

# MYLC Model

- **Public Awareness Activities** – Our public awareness activities and activism projects are designed to educate our peers and the public and sharpen our members' advocacy skills.
- **Volunteer Programs** – We seek out volunteer opportunities that add real faces to our work and support our social issue.
- **Social Change Campaigns** – Research and plan social change campaigns to influence policies, laws, and/or the way people think about an issue.

# MYLC's Structure

- Advisors
  - YSB staff & co-advisor.
- Executive Committee
  - 5-6 student led leadership committee.
- General Members
  - High school students who are interested in our social issue.
- School Administration
  - We work closely with the school principal, dean of students & social workers and psychologists.



# Executive Committee

- Selection Process – Executive committee members are selected after participating in an information session, submitting a written application and participating in a panel interview.
- Roles & Responsibilities:
  - Meet weekly on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
  - Design, plan, schedule, lead & staff public awareness activities.
  - Co-lead all info sessions, orientations & member meetings.
  - Represent MYLC with the media, school administrators, teachers, staff as well as SPS district.
  - Member relations: frequent communication w/ members through text, phone & social media as well as monitor members' status.
- Our reasons for pursuing this leadership role.



# General Members

- Students interested in joining MYLC must attend an info session, complete a short essay, participate in a 10 minute interview w/ an exec and attend a 60 minute orientation.
- Our goal is to educate and empower our members. We want them to be comfortable with our issues and feel confident when discussing them with their peers and the public.
- Participation – All members must attend 15 of 20 BAMs and participate in at least 2 activities per month. We have two BAMs and at least 5-6 activities per month.

# Core Values

- You are welcome here just as you are.
- Everyone has a story to tell.
- What unites us is far greater than what divides us.
- Where you walk, justice should follow.
- Engage the outside world.
- Understand the consequences of indifference & silence.
- Members are helpers.
- Members have lives outside MYLC.
- Members are asked to take risks.
- The Four C's: Competent, Collaborator, Contributor & Character
- You as a MYLC Poster Child.
- Have fun!



# What We Do...

Examples of our work...  
Public Awareness Activities  
Volunteer Opportunities  
Mental Health First Aid  
MYLC Unplugged



Westhill High School

# Executive Perspective

How we view the work we do.

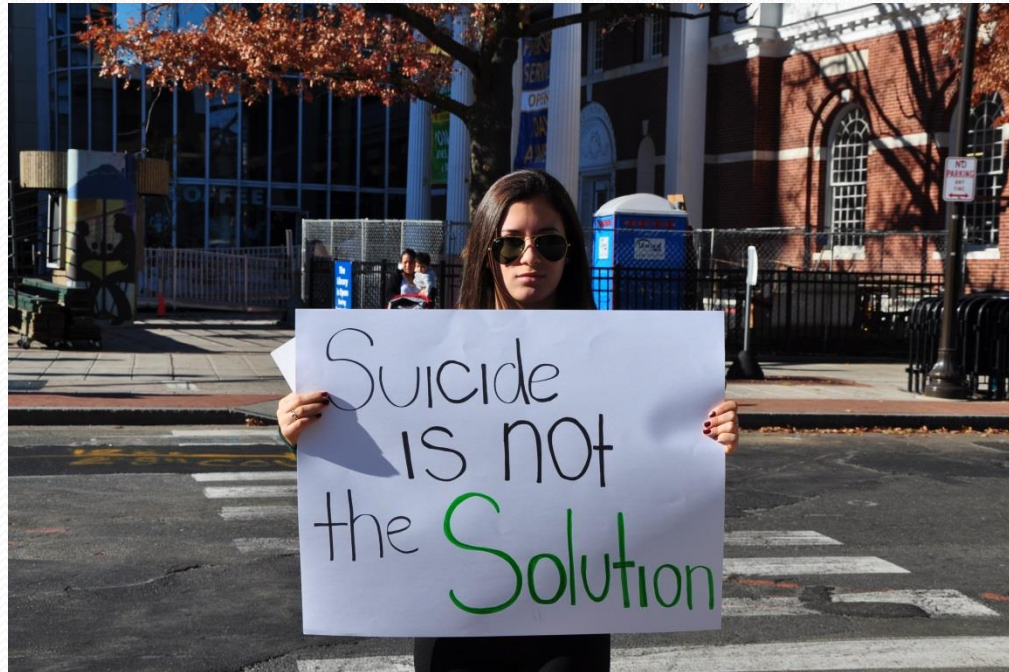


# Executive Perspective

- What are the challenges of tackling subjects as broad and prevalent as mental health & suicide prevention.
- How do you think students & others have responded to our work?
- Has there been any backlash, disagreement or questioning of our activities & methods?
- What are the challenges you've experienced in your leadership role?
- What has been rewarding about being in your leadership role?
- What lessons can you take away from your role as a leader and youth activist that you can use later in life?



# Questions?





# Presenters

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