

# **MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESS RELEASE**

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*For further information, please contact Lisa Evangelista, Office of Public Information, Medford Public Schools...levangelista@medford.k12.ma.us or (781) 393-0599*

## **MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HOSTS SYMPOSIUM ON ADDICTION**

On Saturday, over (90) people attended the Symposium on Addiction-Proactive Steps and Resources, made possible by a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. This Symposium discussed ways that parents and teachers can identify substance abuse and promote preventative family strategies, and was primarily for teachers and parents of elementary and middle school students.

Dr. Robert Brooks, a renowned Psychologist on faculty at Harvard Medical School served as the keynote speaker. He spoke about the opioid crisis and provided preemptive steps and strategies for parents and teachers to help young people not fall prey to addiction. Dr. Brooks is the author or co-author of (15) books regarding developing resiliency in children and adults and has lectured on these subjects nationally and internationally. He discussed the importance of responsible parenting and strong family relationships, as well as, having a supportive school climate. He closed his remarks by encouraging everyone to strive for balance in their personal and professional lives.

After Dr. Brooks' presentation, a resource fair followed, featuring Medford's Boys & Girls Club, the Medford Girl Scouts, Learn 2 Cope, Families Anonymous, Team Medford, SEPAC, Medford's After School Programs, DCS Counseling Services, the Medford Public Schools Nurses, Discipline Strategies Which Increase Self Esteem (Karen Buetens), Pediatric Associates of Medford, Danvers Adolescent Program, Institute for Health& Recovery, Al-Anon and Lahey Health Behavioral Services.

In addition, break-out sessions were held that featured discussions on

- **What Parents & Teachers Can Do About Substance Abuse – In the Home and in the Classroom** – presented by Howard C. Wolfe, MA, LMFT, Director, New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition
- **Preventative Family Strategies** – presented by Laura Shapiro, PMHNP-BC MSN, M.ED, Family Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
- **Identifying Substances** –presented by Det Sgt Leo Sacco, III, & Officer James Riccardi, Officer Patrick O'Keefe, Officer Rory Lockowitz, all of Medford Police Department; Penny Funaiole, MA, CPS, Prevention and Outreach Coordinator/Supervisor

- **Identifying Signs & Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression in Adolescents** – *presented by Tracey Riley, Med, CAGS, School Psychologist and Stacey Schulman, MA MS, CAGS, School Adjustment Counselor*
- **Anxiety & Depression: How Substance Abuse Impacts Young Children** – *presented by Angela Grace-Lepore, LMHC Adjustment Counselor; Loren Gomez, LMHS, School Psychologist; Karen Roberto, BSN, RN, NCSN, Medford School Nurse; & Lauren Kruczkowski, MS, CAGS, NCSP, School Psychologist.*

**“The Symposium discussed the importance of building supportive relationships and developing good decision making skills for students and their families. The event was a significant part of our overall commitment to effectively address the realities of substance abuse. We will continue to reach out to our community to engage more members in these critical conversations”, said Roy Belson, Superintendent of Schools.**

**The Addiction Symposium was organized by Rich Trotta, Director of Media, Fine Arts & the Center for Citizenship & Social Responsibility; Michael Skorker, Administrative Intern, the Center for Citizenship & Social Responsibility & Spanish Teacher, Medford Public Schools; Timothy Klein, Community Outreach Coordinator & School & Community Partnership Counselor, Medford Public Schools; Toni Vento, MS, RN, NCSN, Supervisor of Health Services, Medford Public Schools; Marie Cassidy, Family Specialist, Medford Family Network; Rachel Perry, Director of Physical Education & Health Education and Assistant Athletic Director, Medford Public Schools; and Jeffrey Lappin, CAGS, Supervisor of Therapeutic and Clinical Services, Medford Public Schools; and Officer James Riccardi, Medford High School Resource Officer, Medford Police Department.**

**The generous sponsors of the event were: the Medford Rotary Club, State Representative Paul J. Donato, Pediatric Associates of Medford, PC and Middlesex Federal Savings Bank.**

**Pictured in Photo Left to Right:**

**Front Row: Toni Vento, Erin DiBenedetto, Medford School Committee, Dr. Robert Brooks, State Representative Paul J. Donato, Ann Marie Cugno, Medford School Committee, and Rich Trotta.**

**Back Row: Jeffrey Lappin, Paulette Van der Kloot, Medford School Committee, Michael Skorker, Kathy Kreatz, Medford School Committee, Dr. John Perella, Headmaster, Medford High School, and Roy Belson, Superintendent of Schools**