

Inspiring a Mental Health Revolution ... One Friend at a Time!

myfriendabby.org

June 2023

Hello! We just wanted to reach out and say a huge thank you for your ongoing support. The mental health crisis among young people in America is still going strong as we head into summer, with depression and anxiety rates on the rise. Recognizing this crisis, even the U.S. Surgeon General recently issued a public health advisory underscoring its impact on our youth. That’s why we’re incredibly grateful to have you by our side, helping us focus on preventing youth and young adult suicide through our peer-to-peer messaging and our My Friend Abby Peer Project Grants.

We’ve got some exciting updates to share with you! Our youth and young adults are doing some important work in the realm of mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Thanks to your generosity, they’re finding

their voices, forging connections, and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health.

Today, we want to share with you some of the ways MFA engages with youth and young adults, fostering supportive interactions and showcase a few of the innovative projects created by our grant recipients to raise awareness. We hope that you, like us, will be inspired by these exceptional mental health advocates. It is important to acknowledge that without your support, these projects, connections, and stories of encouragement would not have been possible. Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your dedication to MFA.

Warmly,
Gillian Anderson, Founder

Always Connecting ...

“Here’s My Truth” an impactful campaign for Mental Health Awareness Month



Jes, MFA Supporter: “Battling mental illness can feel scary, confusing, and especially isolating. During my darkest times, I believed that no one would understand what I was going through and I kept my struggles hidden. The biggest thing I’ve learned throughout my healing journey is that there is always someone who will take the time to listen, and

there is no reason to feel alone. We should all be committed to ending the stigma surrounding mental health so we can encourage others to speak up who are suffering in silence. Although it may feel uncomfortable at first, it can ultimately save a life.”

Jordyn, MFA Supporter: “I’m learning that progress isn’t linear, there are always setbacks along the way but that

doesn’t mean you aren’t improving. It takes time to build habits that benefit your brain. Designing your space, and things in your life to what makes your brain feel at ease has helped tremendously. Building a comforting space to thrive in with people who uplift you and are open to change can make a world of difference.



Prevention Champion Award



MFA is honored to be a Prevention Champion! Youth and young adult suicide prevention is what MFA is constantly striving for. We are so grateful to TPAUD Trumbull’s Prevention Partnership for recognizing our work.

Always Connecting ...

Positive Painting Project



A group of MFA teens, had fun bonding while painting wooden doorknob hangers with inspirational messages for our Spreading Sunshine campaign.

#37HelpOthersInABigWay!

We were thrilled to be featured on our local news station, News8 – WTNH, highlighting 2 MFA peer project grant recipients making a difference!



Trinity College Hillel “Mental Health Matters” Event

MFA founder, Gillian Anderson, was the featured presenter, educating students about mental health and suicide prevention. In spite of it being near finals week, the students were engaged, asked great questions, and we truly appreciated their desire to learn more about suicide prevention.



MFA Annual Appreciation Event

Our annual appreciation event is a fun way MFA brings together all of our amazing, hard-working youth members and volunteers who make it all happen!



Sending Sunshine!

Sending Sunshine Texts started as one of our original peer project grants but is still going strong with more and more individuals signing up to receive daily, uplifting text messages. You can subscribe on our website under “Sunshine Texts”.

Sending Sunshine



The greatest gift you can give someone is the space to be oneself without the threat of you going anywhere. Be there unconditionally for the people in your life.

And suddenly, you'll just know... it's time to start something new and trust the magic of new beginnings.

If all you did today was survive, well, that is okay dear. Some days we thrive and others we just survive... you will thrive again soon.

“I have so many favorites. I actually seem to receive them at different times and I always love opening them. I feel calmer after reading them and that helps me look at things differently especially if I am having a tough day. Thank you.” Tori

“It’s a moment of clarification and reset every single day!” Jack

Recent Innovative Peer Projects ...

Our grant recipients care about peer-to-peer connections and are providing creative and engaging projects.

Your Broken is Beautiful Too — Self-Care in Art



Meet Lorena, a young adult art teacher and one of our recent peer project grant recipients who organized a Kintsugi art-making workshop for families. This ancient Japanese art form teaches us that sometimes in the process of repairing things that have broken, we actually create something more unique, beautiful and resilient.

Pet Adoption Gift Baskets

Marley, a high school student, wanted to highlight the connection from research studies on how pets can have a positive impact on our mental health. Marley's grant project involved creating adoption gift baskets and distributing them to a local humane society along with an info sheet about the positive impact pets have on your mental health.



Peer Support Network In School



James' motivation for his peer project grant came from hearing people say that they feel alone. He used his grant money to provide silicon bracelets to the entire school with the words "Here For You" inscribed on them. Students and faculty were encouraged to write their names inside the bracelet and give the bracelet to a friend so they would know that they have support and are not alone. James also invited 2 guest speakers and the principal to talk about mental health, suicide prevention and available resources.

Inspirational TEDx Speaker

Gimi and Ava, students at the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, had the idea to invite a unique guest speaker to their school and David Woods Bartley accepted their invitation. David, a dynamic storyteller and writer, opens minds, creates hope and inspires others to take action by sharing his mental health journey.



Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: Mental health problems don't affect me.

FACT: Mental health problems are prevalent.

1 in 5 kids has a significantly impairing mental health disorder; yet less than half get the treatment they need.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people age 10 to 34 in the U.S. Nearly 20% of high school students report serious thoughts of suicide and 9% have made an attempt to take their lives.

Subscribe!

Subscribe to our weekly eblast — a quick read to stay up to date on current mental health information, new grant recipient projects, and what MFA has been up to. To sign up, email Gillian at gillian@myfriendabby.org

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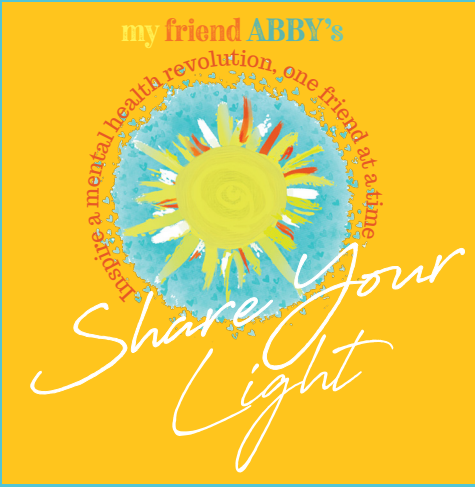
Save the Date!

Friday, October 20, 2023 @ 6:00pm
MFA's Annual Share Your Light
Event and Silent Auction

It's our largest fundraising
event of the year!

Thank you to all our sponsors,
volunteers and attendees who
participated in last year's event.
Your support means so much
and we are looking forward to
hosting this fun and inspirational
event again this year.

More information will be coming.
If you are interested in
sponsorship, let's talk!
email gillian@myfriendabby.org
Thank you!



Two Roads Brewing Co.
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Inspiring a
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