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Attitudes In Reverse® Offers Life-Saving Education for Children, Teens and Adults
October Is National Depression Education and Awareness Month

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY (October 9, 2017) – The most common reason why individuals do not seek help for depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders is stigma: judgment on the part of individuals who are not struggling and feelings of shame and embarrassment experienced by those who are struggling. Another main factor is lack of awareness of mental health disorders and/or of the availability and effectiveness of services. In all of these situations, education is essential and impactful, as demonstrated by youths' responsiveness to a mental-health and suicide-prevention program presented by Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™). This Princeton-based nonprofit organization offers life-saving educational programs for younger children and adults, as well.

Education for Teens and Young Adults Proven Effective

Since January 2011, AIR has presented to more than 60,000 students in middle and high schools, colleges and universities in New Jersey and several other states. In 2017, to date, they have educated more than 5,000 students, compared to an average of 5,000 in each of the previous years.

"There clearly is an increasing need for mental-health education and treatment, based on the growing prevalence of mental-health disorders and suicides," said Tricia Baker, Co-Founder of AIR. The recent deaths of three young individuals in Princeton and West Windsor further underscore the need for education. "The only way to help ensure that people seek help and avoid getting to the stage of hopelessness is to teach them that mental health disorders are brain-based illnesses and that no one should be embarrassed to seek help," Tricia stated.

The *Coming Up for AIR™* program achieves this goal. "We have anywhere from about 2 to 6% of the students watching come forward in the days and weeks following the presentations seeking help," said Kurt Baker, Co-Founder of AIR. " They otherwise wouldn't realize they were suffering from mental health disorders. When you're young and you're having pain in your brain, so to speak, you may not even realize that that's not normal."

Coming Up for AIR teaches the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and suicide risk. This enables participants to recognize if they or their friends or family members are experiencing these symptoms and encourages them to seek help for themselves and others. The sooner a mental health disorder is diagnosed and treatment starts, the more likely the disorder will be managed and suicide can be prevented.

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New Version Tailored for Younger Students

One child under the age of 13 died by suicide nearly every five days between 1999 and 2015, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In an effort to reduce this tragic trend, AIR developed an educational program tailored for younger students.

Packing a Good Mental Toolkit teaches students strategies for coping with stress and strengthening their mental health. Therapy dogs are always involved in these highly interactive presentations.

Education Available and Encouraged for Adults, as Well

AIR also offers Lunch & Learn sessions for businesses. Studies have shown that when employers who invest in their employees' health, both the workers and the businesses benefit significantly. Employees gain improved health and quality of life, higher energy levels and greater morale. Their employers benefit with increased productivity and greater loyalty from their staff, as well as considerably reduced healthcare costs.

For example, a 2010 review of studies on the fiscal benefits of companies' wellness programs, conducted by a Harvard University economist, revealed that for every dollar invested in employees' wellness, the employers gained a \$6 return on investment: \$3 in healthcare savings and \$3 in reduced absenteeism costs.

"When we had AIR present for one of our Lunch & Learn sessions, our attorneys and staff filled one of our largest conference rooms two times over. Thanks to AIR, we were better educated, emotionally moved and overwhelmingly impressed with the informative and passionate presentations," said Ian S. Singer, Director of Marketing at the law firm of Szaferman Lakind in Lawrenceville, NJ.

The Bakers are certified instructors of Youth Mental Health First Aid. This training is strongly encouraged for everyone who has and/or works with children and teenagers. This nationally recognized program is endorsed by former First Lady Michelle Obama. Through this eight-hour training program, adults learn to recognize when youth are experiencing mental health crises and develop skills to intervene effectively, de-escalate the crises and refer the students to mental health professionals if needed.

For more details and to schedule presentations, please write to info@attitudesinreverse.org or visit the Programs tab at www.attitudesinreverse.org.

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Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™) was established by Tricia, Kurt and Katelyn Baker of Plainsboro, NJ, in 2010, soon after their son/brother Kenny died by suicide following a long battle against severe depression and anxiety. Their mission is to save lives by educating students about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention. Since January 2011, they have presented to more than 60,000 students in middle and high schools and colleges in New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Missouri, Texas and Arizona. AIR also offers Youth Mental Health First Aid instruction and includes the AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™ program, bringing dogs into schools to help students de-stress and engage in the conversation about mental health. In addition, AIR trains and certifies Emotional Support Animals and offers a lunch-and-learn program for businesses. For more information about AIR™, please visit www.attitudesinreverse.org or call 609-945-3200.