
Press Release

NEWS

Burlington County
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CHALLENGE DAY COMES TO PEMBERTON SCHOOLS JAN. 19-22

Award Winning Youth Program to Stop Bullying and Violence

The Partnership for Healthy Adolescents, coordinated by the Burlington County Health Department, will co-sponsor the award-winning Challenge Day program to eliminate bullying and school violence from Tuesday, January 19 through Thursday, January 21 at Pemberton Township High School.

About 300 sophomores and 75 adults will experience a day-long interactive workshop designed to address some common issues seen at most schools including cliques, gossip, rumors, negative judgments, teasing and apathy. This is the fourth year that the school has committed to the program.

The Challenge Day program also will be presented at Helen Fort Middle School on Friday, January 22.

School Social Worker Heather Ilconich said, "My school felt such a benefit from Challenge Day, sponsored by the Health Department last year that we scraped the funds together between the school and administration to deliver the program again this year. The response from Challenge Day was evident from day one. Our students embraced the philosophy and over 50 students continued to work together in the Circle of Friends/Circle of Change Group for the remainder of the year." (MORE)

PRESS RELEASE, CHALLENGE DAY JAN.19-22, PEMBERTON, ADD ONE

Ilconich continued, “Our parents and administrators were also appreciative of the systemic effects from Challenge Day; we all noticed an immediate response in regard to peer relationships, behavior and overall climate from those students who were lucky enough to attend our Challenge Day last May. We were so impressed that we pulled together to hold another Challenge Day this year. We are very lucky to have been able to host this wonderful program. Our Circle of Friends group is up and running and we will have the remainder of the school year to celebrate all of our students and continue to help them all feel safe, cared for and loved.”

Students, teachers, counselors, parents and members of the community are challenged to step out of their comfort zones, open their hearts and build connections with others. Two trained leaders guide participants through a carefully designed series of games, activities and trust-building exercises to break down the walls of separation and create new levels of empathy and respect.

The Partnership for Healthy Adolescents is funded by a grant from the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. For more information about Challenge Day and the partnership, contact Elfrieda Francis, healthy adolescent coordinator, at efrancis@co.burlington.nj.us or 609-265-5548.

For Pemberton Township High School, contact Jennifer Rodier, director of the School-Based Youth Services Program, at 609-893-8141 ext 2918.

For Helen Fort Middle School, contact Heather Ilconich, at 609-893-8141 ext. 3033.

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