

LUX ET SPES



STONEHILL COLLEGE



Donor Update
on the
Wellness Initiatives Fund

2018-2019 Academic Year

Overview of the Wellness Initiatives Fund

With the generous support of Robin McQueen-Lynch '80 and Bob Flynn '87, Stonehill College launched a Wellness Initiatives Fund in the Spring of 2019. The Wellness Initiatives Fund provides financial support to various student wellness programs, trainings, and events.

Student groups, faculty, and staff are encouraged to apply for these funds to either develop new and innovative wellness initiatives or to enhance current program offerings. A few examples that would be considered for funding include:

- developing and implementing new programs that educate on the mind, body, and spirit connection;
- creating best practice offerings for students on mental health, anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention;
- inviting impactful guest speakers to campus;
- offering weekly wellness-related classes for students;
- supporting and enhancing large-scale events such as Fresh Check Day, a suicide prevention wellness event; and
- providing additional support and training for students who seek to implement peer health training and education.

Preference is given to programs, initiatives, and opportunities that serve as models for replication and sustainability on the Stonehill campus, demonstrate collaboration across areas, and/or extend the impact of an already existing program at Stonehill.

Funding requests are evaluated based on the criteria mentioned above, number of proposals received, and resources available for that year. Requests are reviewed by the Wellness Initiatives Fund team, chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs and comprised of representatives from across campus with knowledge of and interest in student wellness topics.

Spring 2019 Funded Programs

During the spring 2019 semester, six proposals were submitted and approved, for a total of \$3,090 in funding released from the Welless Initiatives Fund. A brief overview of these events can be found below.

JED Campus Initiative

An interdisciplinary team of staff, faculty, and students implemented the JED Campus Mental Health Initiative, which will extend from January 2019 through the spring of 2023. This initiative assists colleges in maximizing their mental health and wellbeing resources by assessing current campus initiatives, performing an environmental scan, and conducting a student wellness survey (Healthy Minds). JED consultants then work with the College to create a four-year strategic plan to address campus mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention needs. The Healthy Minds Survey will then be repeated towards the end of the four-year commitment to evaluate progress made through various efforts. Resources from the Wellness Initiatives Fund were used to contract with JED for these services.

Mental Health in Athletics Seminar

The first ever Mental Health in Athletics seminar was held in January and was designed to provide tools, resources, and varied perspectives to assist our Athletic staff in best serving and supporting the mental health of 450+ student-athletes at Stonehill. The seminar included presentations from Counseling Services, a former student-athlete from The University of New Haven, and a practicing Licensed Mental Health Counselor who specializes in the field of athletics.

SAAC Student-Athlete Mental Health Seminar

Given the success of the mental health seminar with Athletics staff, the Stonehill Student Athlete Advisory Committee invited Ivy Watts, a former decorated student-athlete from The University of New Haven, back to campus in February to present to all student-athletes, as well as other students interested in the topic. Ivy shared her personal story of the challenging mental health issues she struggled with and inspired students on campus to be more open with themselves and others about their own struggles with mental health. The event proved to be very impactful for the many community members in attendance.

You're Not Alone: Living with Loss

Sadly, the College has received a number of reports of students who have lost immediate relatives this academic year. In an effort to provide additional support to these students, this spring Counseling Services and Campus Ministry collaborated to offer a targeted outreach program, titled Living with Loss. The group met three times during the semester, and students were given opportunities to share their personal stories of loss and how they were experiencing the grief process. Topics discussed included the process of grief, impact of family relationships, coping with "firsts" (birthday, holiday, etc.) without a loved one, change in students' view of the future without a loved one, and ways students find hope/solace. Students were provided with several printed resources, as well as personal contact information for peers who have also lost a close family member and agreed to be available for additional support.

Mind Full Live Event: The Intersection of Hip Hop and Mental Health

In April, the College sponsored the Mind Full Live Event through What's On Your Mind Inc. (WOYM). The mission of this organization is to normalize conversations around mental health in communities of color. WOYM recognizes that suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people ages 15-35 and is working to minimize this number in all youth in a way that black and brown voices are highlighted. Hip Hop is the most consumed genre of music globally as of 2018 and its fan base is comprised of mostly young people from all walks of life. The goal of the Mind Full Live event is to fuse all of these conversations. Mind Full Live The Intersection of Hip Hop and Mental Health is a facilitated live podcast taping with a black male therapist who is a fan of hip hop and a local rapper who has had national placement. Students in attendance were able to discuss mental health in a way that added to its normalization, and the podcast will be shared widely through various social networking platforms.

Self-Care Fair

In an effort to help students, faculty, and staff be mindful of what they may need as they entered finals week and the busy summer season, Wellness Housing students and Office of Human Resources collaborated to offer a day-long Self-Care Fair in April, open to all community members. The fair served as a hub for education, personal reflection, and moment for relaxation and joy. Multiple stations were offered, including a meditation station; a station to create recipe books; an area for bullet journaling; and adult coloring, as well as various giveaways and raffle prizes featuring self-care items. The hope is to continue this event in the future, as it combines intellectual, spiritual, and cultural aspects into the discussion of self-care and allows for the Stonehill campus community to continue to build connections across all levels.

Cycle and Speak

Finally, a student submitted a request for us to host a workshop that addresses both physical and mental wellness offered by Katie Horwitch, cycle instructor and founder of WANT: Women Against Negative Talk and Equinox. Katie offers a two-part event featuring a 45-minute cycle class followed by a workshop aimed at rethinking one's purpose and pursuing it fearlessly and unapologetically. The request was approved in April, yet in an effort to maximize attendance given the already highly programmed last month of the semester, the student decided to wait to hold the event until the fall semester.



The College is truly grateful for the generosity of our alums, especially Robin McQueen-Lynch '80 and Bob Flynn '87, and to members of the Class of 2019 who are assisting us in our efforts to support the overall health and wellbeing of our students, which remains our top priority.