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MEDIA RELEASE

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Mental Illness Awareness Week Ushers in Music Concerts: Nonprofits and Local Schools Partner to Bring Concert Series to Area Schools

On October 3rd, 4th, and 5th, during Mental Illness Awareness Week, area schools filled with music and discussion about mental health through a partnership between GUIDE Program, Inc., Mental Health Association of Montgomery County, and four local schools. Lindsay Rush, a musician associated with Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association) through its mpower awareness program, came to Montgomery County to perform at Damascus High School, Gaithersburg Elementary School, Washington Grove Elementary School, and Gaithersburg Middle School. Ms. Rush is a talented, aspiring musician who is also a dedicated mental health advocate. Presentations educating students about age-appropriate mental health issues were offered as a part of each concert, with Mayor Sidney Katz taking the lead in this effort at the Gaithersburg area schools.

GUIDE Program, Inc. and Mental Health Association of Montgomery County partnered in this endeavor as an outreach mechanism to educate school communities about the importance of mental health and to empower students with information about accessing support for mental health concerns. In addition to ensuring students are aware of their school system supports like school counseling offices, they were informed of services specific to their community and/or school level, including: Linkages to Learning and GUIDE's Youth Service Centers, the Montgomery County Youth Crisis Hotline and the Montgomery County Crisis Center.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), approximately one in five children and adolescents experience the signs and symptoms of a diagnosable emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorder at any given time.

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GUIDE Program, Inc.'s mission is to enrich lives, empower families, enhance communities, and embrace diversity through the provision of high quality mental health and social services. GUIDE, a nonprofit behavioral health agency, has been serving the suburban Washington/Baltimore region and Montgomery County since 1968 providing an array of community based residential and nonresidential direct service programs. Annually GUIDE touches the lives of over 3,000 children, youth, and adults. Individuals and families can turn to GUIDE to obtain guidance and assistance in times of personal challenge. Public officials and community agencies often look to the agency to provide effective resources for their communities.

Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) promotes mental health and wellness and supports those with mental illness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs. A private, nonprofit, United Way (#8151) agency, MHA has served Montgomery County residents for over 50 years. The organization currently manages 10 direct service programs for children, teens, families, senior adults and individuals with long-term mental illness. Over 1,000 volunteers implement programs under the direction of MHA's professional staff.

Mpower, a Mental Health America youth awareness campaign, is supported by hundreds of musicians nationwide and reaches teens and college-age adults at concerts, in the classroom, over the Internet and through the media to help them get informed, get help and get involved with one of the most debilitating health care dilemmas facing Americans today: untreated mental illness.

Press release available at:

<http://www.guideprogram.org/Media%20Release%20-%20mpower%20concerts%2010-07.pdf>



Lindsay Rush Performing at local area schools.



Lindsay Rush and Mayor Sidney Katz