

THE YOUTH COMMUNITY FUND: RAISING AWARENESS AROUND ANXIETY

WRITTEN BY YCF CO-PRESIDENTS QUENTIN MCCARTHY, FRANNIE KRAUSE AND LIAM NEILD



Members of the Youth Community Fund

This March, The Youth Community Fund welcomed members of the Bronxville, Eastchester, and Tuckahoe communities to view a screening of *Angst: Raising Awareness Around Anxiety* followed by a prerecorded Q&A with two national anxiety experts who appear in the film. The event, on March 8th at the Bronxville Picture House, quickly sold out and reached a wide range of the community.

The documentary was produced by the award-winning production company, Impactful, which focuses on mental wellness programming for middle and high school aged students.

Impactful's work has been screened for audiences as near as The Pelham Picture House, and as far as schools and community centers around the world. Organizations including Google, Goldman Sachs, the NFL, Starbucks, and the US Air Force as well as high schools, colleges, nonprofits, and community groups have all licensed Impactful's films. To date, this hopeful and inspiring film has helped over two million people.

We were excited to see the community come together this way to support the high schoolers in Bronxville, Eastchester and Tuckahoe. Anxiety affects 1 in 5 children, and 70% of teens say that anxiety is a major problem facing their age group. We felt it was important to not just talk about the mental health issues that have been top of mind in suburban communities like ours, but to actually take action to help de-stigmatize the topic of mental health. Our intention is to help open up a dialogue between local students, parents, and community leaders.

We urged our audience to question the problem of anxiety: Why have we seen a 634% rise in the use of Mental Health America's online tool for anxiety since the start of Covid? Why is there still so much fear and stigma in just talking to others



Kathleen Heraty and Shea Lewis

instead of hiding online? What can each of us do to make it better and best engage in a full and happy life? These are all questions asked to spark a conversation about not only the film, but also anxiety that influences members of the community each day. The core goals of the film are to help people recognize the symptoms of anxiety, give them coping tools, and encourage them to reach out for support when they need it.

Led by our own Peggy Belles, we took a brief break between the showing of the documentary and the prerecorded Q&A. Each person in the audience was able to center themselves and learn important simple and calming breathing skills that they could use in their everyday life.

"It was great to see parents, students, and important members of our community come together all to support the YCF and kids. It shows just how important events like these are to the success of our

community," said Delaney Leddy, a Youth Community Fund member who attended the event.

The idea for this showing grew out of the purpose of The Youth Community Fund: to teach the value of philanthropy by bringing together more than 100 local high school students with area nonprofit organizations. With the motto of "Youth Serving Youth," The Youth Community Fund organizes community service events, volunteer opportunities, and fundraising drives, all with a focus on serving the needs of youth in our area.

To receive funding for the screening, a sub-committee of The Youth Community Fund put pen to paper and wrote a grant request to our parent organization, The Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester and Tuckahoe. We hope that the film will help spark discussion for all of us – at home and at school – to be better equipped to



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- DELANEY LEDDY

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support ourselves and our peers and to know when to ask for help.

Similar to The Community Fund, The Youth Community Fund distributes grants each year from the funds we raise. Our members help evaluate grant applications, make recommendations for funding, and then vote as a group for those grantees that they believe will make the greatest positive impact. In 2022, The Youth Community Fund raised \$10,000. After a thorough review process, The Youth Community Fund awarded grants to four area nonprofit agencies.

In addition to fundraising, The Youth Community Fund also organizes dozens of local volunteer opportunities with nonprofits in our area, including Bundles of Joy, The Eastchester Community Action Partnership, The South East Consortium, Bronxville Ballet, Not For Sale, and Backyard Sports Cares, as well as our local villages, police departments, and parks and recreation departments.

We have also created our own special events, including the Parkway Oval Park Clean Up, The Youth Community Fund Paddlefest Fundraiser, and our Thanksgiving Diaper Drive.

Now in our fourth year, The Youth Community Fund represents seven area high schools and demonstrates the ability of students to get involved and make an impact close to home.

The overwhelming support and love for our community's children was expressed by every person at the Picture House and our community has been brought closer together as a result.



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