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## PlaySmart: Concussion Prevention in Youth & Interscholastic Hockey

By Kim Noble, RN, MBA; YHC Program Coordinator

Last Monday, over 300 people attended the PlaySmart event hosted by South Shore Hospital. The evening showcased local and national experts on concussions resulting from hockey. The program included guest appearances by hockey legends Ted Donato, Pat LaFontaine, Paul Stewart and Tony Amonte.

Pat Lafontaine, a Hall of Fame NHL player, began the evening by speaking about his 15 year NHL career, including his numerous concussions. He was open and honest in describing his experience with post concussive syndrome and the support and guidance he received from neurologists and psychologists. He also described the feelings of despair during recovery when he just was not "feeling like

himself" and the emotional impact on his wife and family while he was recovering. His main message to the audience was that, "Our game needs a cultural change to protect our players."

To help the audience understand the significance of this injury, Dr. Jane Kent, Director, Concussion Management Program at South Shore Hospital, explained that a concussion (mild traumatic brain injury) is a functional disturbance to the brain and not a structural one. The injury results in the individual having a mix of physical, emotional, cognitive and sleep disorders. To recover, the athlete needs rest. Steve Clark, Athletic Trainer at Northeastern University spoke about having an emergency plan in place, creating a culture where it is ok for the athlete to be

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**"When in Doubt,  
Sit them Out!"**

To view a recent Fox News interview of Jeannine Donato, R.N. on Evaluating Concussions visit:  
<http://www.myfoxboston.com/dpp/morning/evaluating-concussions-a-head-of-the-game-20120124>

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### Tip for Better Living:

"Since at the beginning and end of our lives we are completely dependent on the kindness of others. how can it be that in the middle we would neglect kindness to others?"

**H.H. the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama  
b. 1935**

## Youth Health Connection Upcoming Meetings & Events:

**January 30, 2012** from 3:30-5:30 PM, **Educational Program** entitled "Stress & Disordered Eating" at Braintree High School, Media Center. Speaker: Scott Schinaman, Psy.D., Dir. of Adolescent Services, Walden Behavioral Care. **To register email:** [karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

**January 31, 2012** from 2:30-4:00 PM, **South Shore Families, Adolescents and Communities Together against Substances** (FACTS) Regional Coalition Meeting will be held at Hingham Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room. For more information contact: [Kimberly\\_noble@sshosp.org](mailto:Kimberly_noble@sshosp.org)

**February 7, 2012** from 9-11AM, Youth Health Connection All Advisory Board Meeting (all members welcome!!) at Linden Ponds, Derby Clubhouse, Seasons Catering Room on lower level. Please RSVP to [Karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:Karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

## Act Out Loud: Is Your School Participating?



There is still time to register to participate in "Act Out Loud." However, the deadline is fast approaching! This event focuses on Teen Driver Safety and the last day to register your school team is on Jan. 31, 2012.

What makes up a team? Three High School Students and a Faculty Advisor! (This is the minimum number of students needed.) There are three steps to participate:

- 1) Create a Safe-Tee Shirt Design.
  - 2) Create a Sign Design.
  - 3) Create a Facebook Yearbook.
- Teams are eligible for a \$10,000 Grand Prize that will be announced in May 2012.

All registered teams will have access to all the on-line resources and they will receive a fun toolkit to help spread the message of safe

teen driving. Last year's toolkit had silly bands, buttons, keychains, posters, texting thumb bands, and a lot more!

Act Out Loud is sponsored by the National Youth Traffic Safety Month. To learn more and register your school team visit: <http://www.actoutloud.org>



## February Teen Night Happenings at South Shore Y-Hanover

Looking for something different for the teen in your life to do on a Friday evening? Remember that every Friday is Teen Friday from 6:30-9:30 PM at the South Shore Y-Hanover, 75 Mill St. This event is for any teen/tween age 10-17 years old. This is a free program for members, and there is a low cost of \$7 for non-members. Participants will register upon arrival and receive a wristband. When they leave, their wristband is

removed and they are not allowed to re-enter. Why all the excitement? Every week there is open swim & gym, cardio & weight training, gym games, recess games, as well as snacks and drinks. There are special events for February 2012: On 2/3 there will be Zumba, Yoga, Trivia and water polo, plus pizza for \$1/slice. On 2/10 there will be a Snow Ball Dance (\$10 for Members and Non-Members) plus open swim, open cardio and snacks. On

2/17 there will be Zumba, Yoga, Wii Games, Line Dance Mash Up and Yart. Closing out the month on 2/24 there will be a "So You Think You can Dance?" activity, Teen Toning, Tennis Challenge, Aerobics Challenge, Yidol and Bingo.

Do you **have questions** or want more information? Contact Caitlin Cavanaugh at 781- 829-8585 x259 or [ccavanaugh@ssymca.org](mailto:ccavanaugh@ssymca.org)

## Managing Life Threatening Allergies (LTA) in Schools

The School Health Unit at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health recently announced that Dr. Michael Pistiner, Chief Allergist for Harvard Vanguard and parent of a child with food allergies, is available to give presentations on LTAs to groups of nurses, other staff, parents, etc. Many of you know Dr. Pistiner. He

has often presented to school nurses. He is dedicated to helping schools become as safe as possible for children with life threatening allergies. For those of you who wish him to speak, it would be great if you could get a reasonably- sized audience. (This e-mail goes to Maine, NH and RI nurses--

you too may ask him to speak at your annual or regional conferences as long as it is not too far!) You all may contact Dr. Pistiner through his e-mail: [michaelpistiner@gmail.com](mailto:michaelpistiner@gmail.com) Dr. Pistiner has been enormously helpful in working with LTA management in the Massachusetts schools.

## Healthier Middle Schools: Everyone Can Help

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service's Team Nutrition Program have a resource library that includes information and resources for "Healthier Middle Schools: Everyone Can Help."

Team Nutrition's goal is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by using the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for

Americans and MyPlate.

The website offers a number of tools for school administrators, parents, teachers, food service staff and students. In each section there are videos you can view on YouTube as well as handouts for each specific category.

There are also links to educational materials regarding secondary schools

and local wellness policy. You can also learn about the Healthier U.S. School Challenge and how your school can apply. Additional information includes Eat Smart, Play Hard and My Plate.

Print materials will be available in early Spring 2012.

**To learn more visit:**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/healthiermiddlechools.htm>

## Adolescent Psychology: The Parent Version

Joani Geltman, M.S.W., Child Development and Parenting Expert, will speak at the Bird Middle School, Walpole, MA on Wednesday February 15, 2012 from 7-9 pm.

The title of the presentation is "Adolescent Psychology: the Parent Version." This program will cover *Drinking & Drugs, Sexting and Texting: What's a Parent To Do?*

Why should you attend?

Learn concrete tips on successfully parenting your tween or teen. Stay ahead of the game. Parent your tween or teen with knowledge... not fear. Attendees will learn strategies to teen-proof their home and relationship, how to set appropriate limits and how to identify and deal with a teen who is experimenting with sex, drugs and alcohol.

This event is sponsored by the Walpole Coalition for

Alcohol and Drug Awareness. **For more information** on Joani Geltman or to check out her blog visit: [www.joanigeltman.com](http://www.joanigeltman.com)



## Practice Kindness and Pass it On!

By Kim Noble RN, MBA; YHC Program Coordinator

The week of February 13-19, 2012 is *Random Act of Kindness Week*. With the busy pace of life today, it is nice to pause, reflect and acknowledge the acts of kindness that occur around us each day.

With the Youth Health

Connection's Focus Topic for this academic year being "Stress," gaining awareness of daily kind acts provides us with a small happiness boost with decreases our stress.

You don't have to wait until February 13<sup>th</sup> to begin! Heighten your observation,

be on the lookout for each small act and make sure to acknowledge it.

Want to implement this at your school or organization?

**To learn more** and access many resources visit: <http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>



## Youth Health Connection

### Medical Director:

Barbara Green, Ph.D.  
781-749-9227 x3  
[Barbara@bjgreenphd.com](mailto:Barbara@bjgreenphd.com)

### Program Coordinator:

Kim Noble, RN, MBA  
781-794-7415  
[kimberly\\_noble@sshosp.org](mailto:kimberly_noble@sshosp.org)

### Administrative Secretary:

Karin Farrell, B.S.  
781-794-7849  
[karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore Hospital dedicated to the positive mental health and physical well-being of youth. Our programs collaborate with schools, community health providers, law enforcement officers, state agencies, religious leaders, parents and peer leaders to help young people deal with the various challenges they face and the decisions they must make as they grow and mature. By combining efforts, we can ensure that local youth have access to the health-related knowledge, skills and resources they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lifetime.

Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore

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[karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

[www.southshorehospital.org](http://www.southshorehospital.org)

**Health Knowledge  
and Risk Prevention  
through Collaboration,  
Respect, Connectedness  
and Coalition Building**



## PlaySmart (continued) by Kim Noble, RN, MBA; YHC Program Coordinator

injured. If there is uncertainty regarding an injury - seek medical care.

As part of your team/league plan: 1) **Agree on a definition** of concussion. 2) **Share education**-players & families, 3) have an **emergency action plan** (where is the closest hospital, who will have what responsibilities, etc.). 3) **Assess player** post- hit to determine if they are dazed, stunned, unsure of game details, or have personality changes, etc. If the player is unconscious, treat as if there is a neck injury. He then outlined the staged return to play-no play, light aerobics, hockey drills on their own, no contact drills with team during practice, full practice with contact and finally full return to play.

Jason Mihalik, Ph.D, CAT(C), ATC, Assistant Professor of Exercise & Sports Science, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, also emphasized the need for emergency plans and rink side care providers. He referred coaches to the "Heads Up" Concussion Website for multiple free resources: (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>)

A few of the startling statistics from Dr. Mihalik's presentation were that 38% of athletes reporting no symptoms may still have some neurological deficits, there is current research at UNC that is finding that 75-80% of concussions are unreported and lastly, for every 1 concussion at the NHL level there are 50000+ at youth level. What can be done? Educate coaches, parents and players

more about the seriousness of concussions. To help with rink side assessment there is an electronic clipboard concussion application for androids/iPhones. The Concussion Recognition & Response™ app is a new tool that helps coaches and parents recognize whether an individual is exhibiting or reporting the signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion. The app allows a coach or parent to respond quickly and appropriately to this potentially serious medical situation. In less than 5 minutes, the user can complete a checklist of possible signs and/or symptoms to determine whether to remove the child from play and the need for

further medical examination. The app allows users to record pertinent information regarding a child with a suspected concussion and share that information via e-mail with health care professionals; it also provides a system for post-injury follow-up. With answers to Frequently Asked Questions for parents and coaches, this tool is an invaluable guide for learning about concussions. Dr. Mahalik informed those in attendance that he was one of the co-creators of this application tool. The app is available for \$3.99 with a portion of the proceeds benefiting concussion research at UNC and Children's National Medical Center.

(content about app from [www.parinc.com](http://www.parinc.com))