

# Alex Archie Foundation

Helping young athletes find their dreams and supporting mental health awareness and suicide prevention.



Dear Family and Friends:

We are excited to send this latest installment of the AAF newsletter as we have many impactful events to share with you.

As is tradition: Pomperaug High School Scholarships and Mental Health Games: 2022 Scholarships Recipients: Alison MacDougall (Trinity College) and Matthew Christina (UVM). Leadership Award: Troy Gouveia (Clemson); 2023: Katie O'Leary (The College of New Jersey), Tyler Paccione (University of Colorado), Leadership Award: Mitchell Tepedino (Wheaton College). And #16 was worn honorably by Jack Funk.



Joe and Claire



Katie O'Leary, PHS 2023 recipient



2023 Boys' PHS Recipients

Congratulations to the scholarship recipients and a tremendous thank you to the PHS lacrosse community for making your mental wellness a priority! And finally, we would like to recognize the retirement of Mike Fleming in 2022 after 20 years of leading girls' youth lacrosse in Southbury and ultimately, the girls' program at PHS. Mike's leadership has been exemplary and even more so, his commitment to his players over so many years! Mike received a special Alex Archie Leadership award in 2022.

Mental Health Games were again held by both the boys' and girls' lacrosse teams in May at PHS. Jamie Belden Prajer has moved into the position of t-shirt provider for the Foundation and she created awesome shirts for these games. Together, the two teams raised just under \$4,000. for the AAF. We hope to use some of those funds to support mental health programming at Pomperaug in the coming school year.



PHS Girls' mental health game



Jack Funk and PHS Coaches



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Hill School mental health game

The Hill School: The AAF made its annual donation to the team again this year. We coordinated with Dave Page, just completing his 2nd year as the new head coach, for the 2nd annual Mental Health Game in May. We had the chance to meet the 2023 #16: Ben Walt, who will attend Trinity in the fall. Ben shared the loss of his close friend with us, "... I am honored to be spreading awareness by wearing #16 for The Hill lacrosse team... during my junior year, my childhood best friend committed suicide... I will never forget how positive my friend Colin was. Coach Page and I have talked about your son's legacy..." Hill boys' and girls' lacrosse teams also held Mental Health

Awareness Games in May of 2022 in coordination with the Counseling Department and Student Advocates for Mental Health (a student group that was born during COVID).



Hill Student Advocates for Mental Health

The Foundation also brought a speaker from Minding Your Mind (Jordan Burnham again!) to Hill in September 2022. The student leaders of SAMH wrote to us following Jordan's talk and shared this:

"We've received an overwhelming amount of appreciation and students saying this was the best speaker at Hill yet. The change you've brought to our community has

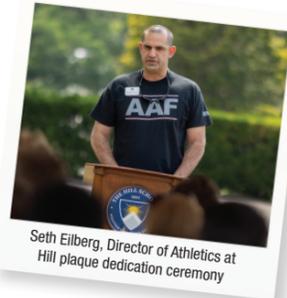


Jordan Burnham at Hill presentation

morphed every student's life forever..."

One final note about Hill: in June, Alex's classmates from the Class of 2008, raised money as a class gift for a plaque and tree

to honor Alex's life. The plaque was dedicated at their reunion and will lay permanently next to a new dorm. We are incredibly touched by this gesture and support from classmates and school administrators.



Seth Eilberg, Director of Athletics at Hill plaque dedication ceremony



Ashley, Brown Women's Mental Health game

We were excited to be connected to the Brown Men's and Women's Basketball teams through our friend at Hill, Seth Eilberg, who has a relationship with Men's Head Coach, Mike Martin. We worked with Mike and Monique LeBlanc to bring a speaker to both teams in October 2022. Both teams held mental health awareness games during their season as well. We then supplied both teams with a similar kit that was given to the lacrosse team: puzzles, coloring books and conversation cards. The coaches shared their interest in providing their players with non-screen activities, especially to use during travel as well as over the long 5-week winter break. We also worked with the Mindfulness Center at Brown and had developed a student-athlete pilot program when we learned that Brown had hired a Wellness Director for student athletes as well as a sports psychologist. We are very encouraged that Brown now has these professionals on their athletic staff. And finally, the AAF helped the Brown Active

Events at Brown University: the Foundation continued its work with the Women's Lacrosse team this past year. The team also worked with Morgan's Message to promote an overall culture of mental wellness amongst its players. The Foundation provided a pizza dinner in the late fall and supplied puzzles, adult coloring books and conversation cards to support their efforts. The women and men players created a 2nd mental health video which was played on the jumbotron at all of the women's home games this past spring (see alexarchieffoundation.com), the first at their Mental Health Game in March when the players wore t-shirts featuring the AAF and Morgan's message.

Minds chapter bring another speaker to the campus in February 2023. A very sincere thank you to Jay Witek for his steadfast support and pro bono tax work for the AAF, Thank you very much!

And, we are very grateful to Christy Meyer, mother of Paul and Becky for nominating the Foundation for a Mustard Seed Award through Sacred Heart Church in Southbury, CT. We received a \$2,000. gift from the church in June for which we are very grateful.

Your continued support means so much - thank you! We continue to be hopeful that the stigma around mental health concerns is decreasing and that it truly is "ok to not be ok." Please take good care of yourselves and those you love. Let us know if you would like a foundation t-shirt for a \$20. donation, and please share 988 - the universal text/call suicide prevention hotline number.



Jeremiah Langston, his parents, Tyra Stephenson, Don Wilson, BYL 2022



Zion Nevarez, his mother 2023 BYL recipient at award ceremony

Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse and Sports Academy: We had the pleasure of meeting up with Don Wilson and his camp counselors and players last August to honor Jeremiah Langston as the scholarship recipient for 2022. Jeremiah is attending Fairfield Prep and we hope he had a very positive freshman year. We just had the pleasure of meeting Zion Nevarez who has been awarded the 2023 scholarship. Zion has participated in Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse for 10 years and he will attend Southern CT State this fall - congratulations to both recipients!

A new project for the AAF is supporting the Paul Meyer Annual Spike ball tournament. Paul, who was also a Pomperaug graduate (2008), tragically died by suicide in August of 2020. His younger sister, Becky Meyer, the Meyer family and many friends gathered in Bridgewater, CT in late July 2022. A speaker came from Minding Your Mind to share about his experiences with depression and anxiety, followed by a food truck, silent auction and raffle and very competitive spikeball. Becky's efforts in coordinating this event raised \$15,000. for the Foundation. We are excited to work with Becky and the Meyers on the 2nd annual tournament for late summer 2023.



Henry and Mike: Spikeball 2022



Becky, Christy and Tom Meyer with Andrew from Minding Your Mind 2022



Brown Active Minds with speaker Stacey Pershall



Brown Men's Basketball Coach Mike Martin 2022



Brown Women's Basketball Assistant Coach Tyler Patch



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