

Townhaller



KSU Golf Course to Inspiring Community Agency!

LoveLight, Inc. is a small, grassroots non-profit with a big vision, who believes there are many people with a heart for helping children and teens, especially those who need an extra hand to help them realize their potential and give them hope for the future. They are trying to purchase the old KSU Golf Course to turn it into their permanent location. Here they will run programs for children, teens, and senior citizens. Not only do they provide programming for children and teens but Lovelight provided 14,838 lunches just during the summer of 2020!

This facility will allow them, with your help, to create, a model, nurturing, intergenerational child development and lifelong learning center/community. Therefore, they recently initiated “100 Special Friends”, asking individuals and groups to each donate or raise \$1,000 and the “2500 Person Challenge” to encourage 2,500 people to each donate \$100.

For more information contact Lisbeth "Betsy" Justice at 330-673-5839 or by email at lkjusti1@kent.edu.

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Happenings this Month

March 1st:

National Peanut Butter Lover's Day

Celebrate today with a little (or a lot) of peanut butter. Have you ever made your own Peanut Butter? It's the perfect way to celebrate the day. Check out the [recipe here](#).

March 17th:

HAPPY

St. Patrick's

☘ DAY ☘

March 30th:

Take a Walk in the Park Day

Stressed out or need a break from your computer? A walk in the park is just what you need! Take advantage of this opportunity for exercise and relaxation. It will help clear your mind and re-energize you.

March 8th:

International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The focus of International Women's Day is celebrating women workers and advancing women's rights. This day means acknowledging the women throughout history that have paved the way so women today can achieve their dreams.

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2021 is Choose To Challenge. "A challenged world is an alert world. And from challenge comes change." To learn more about the IWD 2021, Choose To Challenge campaign [click here](#).

**"There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish."
- Michelle Obama**





March into Problem Gambling Awareness Month

AMANDA BURKE, PH.D, CTRS, CHES

On May 14, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Murphy v. NCAA*, a case where the Court held that the federal ban on sports betting is unconstitutional, granted states the ability to authorize sports betting. Currently, over a dozen states host regulated sports betting markets. Several additional states are on the cusp of introducing legal sportsbooks. Ohio is on track to legalize sports betting by the end of this year.

Last year the NCAA "March Madness" basketball tournament was canceled due to COVID-19 for the first time since 1939. This is traditionally the biggest sports betting event of the year. According to the American Gambling Association (AGA), \$8.5 billion was bet on the 2019 March Madness tournament with over 47 million Americans participating. It has been projected that the cancelation of the 2020 NCAA tournament resulted in the loss of nearly \$9.1 billion in bets. The 2021 NCAA "March Madness" basketball tournament officially begins Thursday, March 18. Experts are expecting a boom in sports betting which will equate to nearly \$10 billion in bets wagered in person at casinos, through a sportsbook, online, through mobile devices, and illegally. One of the most popular activities taking place during tournament time is creating a sports bracket. Each year around 150 million brackets are filled out with around \$4 billion being wagered on these brackets. Interestingly, in most states, pools related to sports brackets are actually illegal.

Sports betting is one of the most popular forms of gambling for adolescents aged 14-22. Students most often bet on professional football and college basketball. Young gamblers have higher rates of gambling problems than adults. Males are far more likely than females to both gamble on sports and to experience gambling problems.

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) states that the rate of gambling problems among sports bettors is at least twice as high as among gamblers in general. When sports gambling is conducted online, the rate of problems is even higher.

The NCAA basketball tournament is the perfect time to shed light on problem gambling because March is designated as National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM). The goal of PGAM is to educate the public and health professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and promote the availability of services both locally and nationally.

National Council on Problem Gambling Executive Director Keith Whyte states "over the past decade the availability of gambling has skyrocketed but acceptance of gambling addiction as a serious public health concern has lagged."

In the United States alone there are six to eight million individuals meeting criteria for a gambling disorder, and many more are being affected by an individual's gambling behaviors.

It's important to know what gambling problems look like and who is most at-risk. According to data gathered by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS), more than 90,000 people in Ohio may be problem gamblers. Additionally:

- Males 18-44, of any race or ethnicity, are the largest at-risk group.
- Women over age 50 and rural women are more likely to be at-risk for problem gambling.
- 15% of Ohio youth ages 12-17 are gambling, and 3% experience negative consequences.
- 19% of those identifying themselves as African-American were at-risk or problem gamblers.
- 15% of those identifying themselves Hispanic were at-risk or problem gamblers.
- 12% identifying themselves as "Other Race" were at-risk or problem gamblers.

In Portage County:

- 76% of Portage County residents reported gambling in the last 12 months.
- 60% participated in the lottery.
- 30% of casino participants met at-risk criteria.
- 25% of sports bettors met at-risk criteria (currently illegal in Ohio).
- 17% of lottery participants met at-risk criteria.



Gambling disorders are associated with a wide range of problems, including depression, domestic/intimate partner violence, bankruptcy, substance abuse, and suicide. Some common signs of problem gambling include:

- Borrowing money to gamble (including using credit cards).
- Lying about how much time or money spent gambling.
- Hiding bills or unpaid debts.
- Spending a lot of time gambling and thinking about gambling.
- Being restless or irritable when not gambling.
- Bragging about wins, but minimizing losses.



When low-risk behaviors are employed, gambling can be a fun, exciting, and social activity for most adults. If you chose to gamble, these tips may keep you safe from developing problem gambling or a gambling disorder:

To gamble safely, experts suggest the following:

- Don't think of gambling as a way to make money. It's a recreational activity.
- Set a limit on how much money and time will be spent gambling. Stop when either has expired.
- Spend only what you can afford to lose, which includes not borrowing from credit cards.
- Gambling and drinking/drug use are a dangerous combination.
- Don't gamble when depressed or upset.
- Avoid gambling if in recovery from a gambling disorder or substance use disorder

If gambling is no longer fun and games, there is a way you can get help for yourself or a friend/family member who needs it. Townhall II provides prevention education and treatment options for Portage County residents, and is neither for nor against adult, legal gambling. If you live outside of Portage County, the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline is available at 1-800-589-9966 for referrals anywhere in the state. For more information about problem gambling you can visit beforeyoubet.com and www.ncpgambling.org/pgam.

Interested in having a presentation/training on problem gambling presented at your agency? Contact Amanda Burke at amandab@townhall2.com to schedule.

Mental Health Tip of the Month

SARAH MCCULLY, OCPS

Look for the Helpers – You may be hearing this a lot lately. Fred Rogers is known for saying “Look for the Helpers”. This is especially true in times of uncertainty. I was asked to do an exercise once that helped me identify the “helpers” in my life. These helpers are your support system. Without a support system, a person is at risk for higher levels of stress and anxiety and all the issues that come with that. The exercise asks for you to map your supports. Think about the people you go to for the following reasons. It may be helpful to write this down on a piece of paper! This may not come easy for you at first. This activity could take you a few minutes, a few days or even a few weeks. Think about it. The same person can be entered multiple times.

Who, close to your life, do you consider a role model?

Who do you go to in times of personal challenges?

Who do you go to when you need a laugh?

Who do you go to when you need to cry?

Who do you go to for honest opinions?

Who do you go to when you need lifted up?

Who do you go to for common interests?

Who do you respect most?



Look at this list. These are your helpers. Pick up the phone and call them. Send them a text. Invite them to a free 40 minute Zoom meeting. You can still talk with them. You can still see their faces! Without your helpers, your stress is much higher!

Use your child’s teacher/teachers as a helper. If you are stuck on homework, ask them. Send them an email or join in during their virtual check ins. They will be happy to help. Use these tutors as helpers. You are not expected to navigate the teaching waters alone!

Do you need help with financial assistance, mental health, substance abuse, concern for a friend, general resources? Don’t forget about Townhall II’s 24 Hour Helpline. They are there 24/7 to answer your calls, questions, and/or concerns anonymously! The staff go through 80 hour trainings to be professional helpers and listeners! 330-678-HELP (4357).

Spring Ahead after the Time Change

SARAH GEHRING, RA

Many of us look forward to the spring, but not losing the hour of sleep. March 14th begins daylight savings time and clocks will turn ahead one hour. Everyone will adjust differently to the time change, but losing that hour of sleep can affect your productivity, concentration, and both physical and mental health. For your health and safety, here are some tips for adjusting to the time change:

Start going to bed earlier

- To ease the transition into daylight savings time, start about a week before by going to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier than your normal bedtime. This will help your body adjust and give you some extra sleep to make up for the lost hour. This can also benefit children who tend to feel the effects more than adults.

Enjoy the longer evenings

- One bonus about spring is the extra sunlight in the evenings. Take advantage and enjoy the natural light by going outside or even inside by opening your curtains.

Reduce screen time

- Screen time may help you relax and unwind for the evening, but they can actually make it harder to fall asleep. It is best if you can avoid screen time at least one hour before bed.

Avoid coffee and alcohol

- Set down coffee and caffeinated drinks about four to six hours before bedtime. Also, alcohol limits you from getting quality sleep, so avoid it late at night.

Staff Spotlight

Alexis Konecek



Start Date: Started interning January of 2018; First paid position was in May 2018

Current Title: Victim Outreach Manager

Previous Job Titles at Townhall II: Lead Advocate and Volunteer Specialist

Background into the Field of Work: "I didn't know much about Townhall II or survivors of violent crimes prior to the start of my internship. I learned so much about survivors of violent crimes and fell in love with the work our agency does for the community. I realized I had a passion advocating for survivors. I graduated from

Kent State University in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Criminology.

Currently, I am in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Kent State. The work I have done at Townhall II made me want to work with trauma survivors as a future licensed counselor."

Fun Fact about Alexis: She was a competitive swimmer for 8 years.

Favorite Quote: "Take it one day at a time."