



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SARATOGA COUNTY BRINGS BASKETBALL LEGEND CHRIS HERREN TO AREA SCHOOLS TO EMPOWER STUDENTS TO RETHINK ADDICTION

Presentations made possible as part of Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Comittment to Addressing the Opioid Epidemic Through Prevention, Education, Treatment, and Response Efforts

BALLSTON SPA, NY – Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr. today announced the Board is providing area high schools with a special presentation by basketball legend, Chris Herren. Herren will speak to high school students about his life, addiction, and how they can be empowered to rethink the disease of addiction.

Herren will speak to Shenendehowa High School students on Wednesday, October 18 at 12:30pm. He will speak to students at South Glens Falls High School and Burnt Hills/Ballston Lake High School on Thursday, October 19 at 8:30am and 12:30pm, respectively.

Shenendehowa will also host a community presentation, open to the public, on October 18 at 6:30pm at the High School East auditorium.

Chris Herren, a basketball legend from Fall River, Massachusetts, was an All-American, broke scoring records and was recruited by the nation's top colleges. Herren realized his lifelong dream of playing in the NBA when he was drafted by the Denver Nuggets in 1999 before losing his career and almost his family to the disease of addiction. Alcohol and drug-free since August 1, 2008, Chris has spoken to over one million students nationwide with the goal of sparking honest discussions and making a positive difference in their lives. Through inspiring presentations Herren empowers the audience and guides students to rethink how we look at the disease of addiction, from the last day to the first.

Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr. (Moreau), Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman said, "In Saratoga County, we've made addressing the opioid epidemic one of our top priorities. Bringing Chris Herren to our high schools for an honest discussion about addiction is just one of several initiatives the County is taking to help bring an end to the opioid epidemic in our communities. I thank our participating schools for allowing us to provide this thought evoking presentation to Saratoga County teens."

Supervisor Phil Barrett (Clifton Park), Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Health and Human Services Committee said, "Combating the opioid epidemic starts with prevention and education. Chris Herren offers a true life, powerful story that we hope students will take to heart. As Health and Human Services Committee Chair, I am proud to bring this important presentation to teens and families throughout Saratoga County."

(more)

Becky Carman, Director of Policy and Community Development at Shenendehowa Central School District said, "Shenendehowa Central School District is grateful to be able to host this inspiring event for both our students and community members. Learning about someone's personal struggle with addiction fosters empathy and compassion, while empowering students to stand up and make a difference. It helps students and adults to understand the complexity of addiction, along with its impact on individuals and the community as a whole. October is mental health awareness month, and having a presentation such as this one provides insights into the mental health aspects of addiction. Students and community members can gain a better understanding of the emotional and psychological challenges individuals face, which is essential for holistic mental health education."

Saratoga County is utilizing a multi-department approach to address the opioid epidemic through prevention, education, treatment, and response efforts and continues to make investments in a wide range of programs, equipment, and professional personnel to help communities battle the harmful grip of drug addiction that affects every municipality.

Some initiatives to address the opioid epidemic include:

- Meeting with families and advocates to better understand their needs and priorities, which has aided in developing programs and services for County residents.
- Establishing Family Navigator and Certified Recovery Peer Advocate positions in partnership with the Prevention Council.
- Conducting 21 Naloxone training events throughout the County, distributing more than 5,000 Narcan Rescue Kits and training more than 1,000 individuals.
- Distributing Naloxboxes throughout the County in areas with a higher need for Naloxone as identified by the County's Substance Use Surveillance Dashboard.

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