
Cleveland Clinic expert to address teen suicide

By Kelli Weir / Repository staff writer

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Dr. Ellen Rome of the Cleveland Clinic and Stark County Family Court's assistant court administrator Jacob Morgan will discuss how to prevent the next teen suicide Thursday at Canton Baptist Temple in Perry Township.

PERRY TWP. A Cleveland Clinic expert on teen mental health and a Stark County Family court official are coming to Canton Baptist Temple this week to talk about how the Stark County community can come together to prevent another teen suicide.

Dr. Ellen Rome, head of the Center for Adolescent Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, and Stark County Family Court's assistant court administrator Jacob Morgan will begin their presentations at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Canton Baptist Temple at 515 Whipple Ave. NW. The event is not advised for children younger than 12. Childcare will be provided by Canton Baptist Temple.

Following the presentations, attendees can visit community resource tables from 7:30-8:30 p.m. for additional information.

The event is sponsored by the Perry Township Police Department, Perry Township Fire Department, Perry churches, Perry Township trustees, Perry Rotary and the Perry Local School District in support of the the Perry Pledge: "Speak Life. Every Person. Every Day."

Perry Local Superintendent Scott Beatty said while the Perry community is hosting the event, all Stark County families are welcome.

"Our hope is that attendees will be have a better understanding of the complexities of the adolescent mind and their decision making processes especially when faced with the many stresses in today's world," Beatty said. "We

also want to place some strategies in our parents' hands as how to deal with and identify certain needs of today's youth. We understand there is no simple answer but we must continue to dialogue these issues and from there, see what additional resources and discussions are needed."

The event comes in response to the community's continued search for help on how to prevent additional teen suicides following the deaths of six current and former Perry Local students this school year and the recent suicides by two other Stark County teens.

About the event

In a phone interview Thursday, Rome said she's not coming to Stark County to dissect what might have caused the teens to kill themselves.

"I'm not there to play hindsight quarterback," she said. "I'm there to support the living and help the community move forward."

Rome, who received her undergraduate degree in psychology from Yale University; medical degree from Case Western Reserve and master's degree in public health at the Harvard University School of Public Health, said the information she plans to present will help not only parents but others in the community who might not know what to do or say when they encounter a depressed or suicidal teenager.

Among the topics Rome plans to address: What adolescent depression look like and how depression doesn't always manifest itself in sadness; how to remove lethal means from the house; signs to watch for in a teenager; how to bully-proof kids and immunize them from what can happen on the street corner, online or even in their home; and how to create positive opportunities for teens.

"It's going to be starting a dialogue, not ending a dialogue," she said. "... My big message for the whole community: No naming and no blaming. Instead, we want healing and promoting positive youth development and community resiliency."

For more information, call the Perry Local School District at 330-477-8121 or email speaklifeperry@perry.org.

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