

# ERASE THE STIGMA

## Provide Hope

A person who loses their spouse is called a widow. A child who loses a parent is called an orphan. Yet there is no term for a parent who loses his/her child. That is because there is no loss like it.

It's just this tragic loss that one all-American family in Delaware County, PA experienced. And they are committed to preventing other families from having to endure such pain. That's why the Jackson family founded **Hope for Hallie, a non-profit organization dedicated to removing the stigma surrounding mental health and providing resources to children and families coping with mental illness.**

### Background

On October 28, 2019, a Monday much like any other Monday in the Jacksons' Swarthmore, PA home, Chrissie said goodbye to her middle child as she headed off to school at Strath Haven High School. But something felt off to Chrissie because her daughter left the house uncharacteristically early that morning--call it "mom's intuition." Unfortunately, Hallie never made it to school. Instead, she stepped in front of a moving SEPTA train and ended her young promising life. When the police knocked on Kevin and Chrissie's door, the worst nightmare a parent could ever imagine unfolded before them. Their middle child, a 16-year-old, track star, cheerleader, and star student, was gone. And their family's life would never be the same. In the aftermath that followed, the Jacksons realized if something like this could happen to their beloved daughter, it could happen to anyone's child. So, with the support of loving friends and family, they vowed that they would do everything possible to help prevent other families from experiencing such a loss. Thus, was born Hope for Hallie—a 501C3 non-profit formed in 2020.

The Mission of Hope for Hallie is to promote mental health awareness through sport.



### Achieving the Mission

Hope for Hallie (HFH) is achieving its mission through a combination of awareness, support, and education.

**Awareness...***To break the stigma for mental health, demonstrating that mental health is not a taboo subject.* During the past 18 months, HFH has hosted events to help raise awareness, including:

- Purple Out!, Dec. 2019, 300-plus participants, including schools, sports teams and individuals.
- Candle Light Vigil, October 2020, with Delaware County Crisis Team on site to assist the community and discuss mental health and suicide prevention, 200 attendees.
- 1st Annual Hope for Hallie Memorial Golf Outing, September 2020, with 120 guests, 15 volunteers, and 33 sponsors
- Nov. 2020, On Angels Wings Rides for awareness
- Mar. 2021 On Track For Awareness event at New Jersey Motorsports Park in Millville, NJ
- 45 people took part in a Virtual Mindfulness Meditation session and outdoor Yoga session sponsored by HFH and Team Sun Wellness.

Such events not only raise awareness but also enable HFH to raise funds that can be used to provide support services or education/training.

**Support...***To provide resources for those struggling with mental health issues like anxiety and depression--those who may currently be struggling in silence.*

HFH recently partnered with Child Guidance Resource Center (CGRC). As the largest provider of children's mental health services in the greater Philadelphia area, CGRC is dedicated to helping families all over the greater Philadelphia region achieve greater balance and wellbeing through their professional services. Through this recent partnership, HFH will be offering access to professional mental health counseling for teenagers free of charge, or at a reduced cost.

**Education...***To teach others what signs to look for because there is no face to those struggling with mental health issues. And then teach them how to support those in need.*

Leveraging its partnership with Child Guidance Resource Center (CGRC), HFH sponsored a Dine with Your Mind event to raise awareness of signs of mental health issues and provide information about how to access support resources. HFH also sponsored several online events, including a conversation about mental health, sports and transitions with Dr. Mitch Greene from Greenepsych Sport Psychology, and a conversation with Tiiu Lutter from Child Guidance Resource Centers about mental health and high school—as well as virtual chats.

HFH is currently in discussions with an organization that provides mental health training to school coaches. The goal is to provide such services to local area school or community athletic programs at a free or reduced cost.

### Call to Action

**In its first year, HFH made strides in advancing its mission** of promoting mental health awareness through sport.

**Reached** – more than 5,000 people

**Raised** – over \$100,000

**Supported** – more than 100 people

**Enlisted** – more than 60 volunteers

However, to grow the number of support services, awareness events, and educational resources—as well as broaden its reach beyond Delaware County, PA--HFH needs to raise additional funds and build strategic partnerships. **How can you help?** For more information on how you can help advance this noble cause, go to [www.hopeforhallie.org](http://www.hopeforhallie.org) or visit Hope For Hallie on Facebook.