

COUNTY OF KANE



Public Information Office



Kane County Government Center
719 South Batavia Avenue
Geneva, IL 60134
P: (630) 444-1108
MannJulie@co.kane.il.us
www.countyofkane.org

Media Release

11/21/23

Kane County Health Department Releases 2023 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report

The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) and Kane County Regional Office of Education (ROE), as part of the Kane County System of Care (KCSOC) for Children's Mental Health, organized the 4th Annual Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health on February 3rd, 2023. This week, KCHD released a report detailing the event which identified student-identified needs for mental health support, and action steps for young people, schools, parents, and the community.

School mental health professionals and community leaders gathered to listen as eighty students from eight different high schools across Kane County shared their opinions about existing mental health services and what additional supports are needed for youth. Bartlett High School, Dundee-Crown High School, Elgin High School, Geneva High School, Larkin High School, South Elgin High School, Streamwood High School and West Aurora High School all participated.

"Young people are the experts on their own experiences," said Michael Isaacson, KCHD Executive Director. "Listening to youth voices is critical so that the community can provide services that fit their needs."

Students identified four key mental health needs: the need to be heard and validated by the adults in their lives; the need for connectedness and opportunities to develop social skills they missed out on during the pandemic shut down; the need to address trauma exposure due to the pandemic; and the need for increased access to high-quality mental health care delivered by diverse, well-trained professionals.

This was the 4th youth-focused event hosted by the Kane County System of Care since the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation awarded a seven year, \$2.3 million grant to the Kane County Health Department in 2018.

Kate McCormack, Manager of Children's Mental Health Initiatives at KCHD and Project Director of the Kane County System of Care spearheaded the organization of the event. "I am grateful and impressed every year at the dedication shown by school mental health staff and administrators who are dedicated to supporting youth," said McCormack. "I am amazed at the insights and ideas shared by the students for improving services as well as their bravery in sharing their stories."

The full 2023 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report is available at: <https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Childrens-Mental-Health.aspx>