



MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



## The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) hosted its 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Wellness Summit virtually on Tuesday, March 9 - Thursday, March 11, 2021

The Annual Wellness Summit, which was offered at no cost and intended for student leaders and school personnel, included a morning and afternoon session each day. Over 500 participants were engaged in 12 interactive workshops covering subjects such as student and staff mental health, self-care and resiliency, substance misuse prevention, promoting support for LGBTQ students, suicide prevention, sports injury prevention, clean eating and diet culture and student leadership and teamwork. Participants included students, teachers, nurses, school administrators, wellness coordinators and school resource officers.

Workshop presenters included members of the MIAA Partners in Prevention, a powerful collaboration of public and private prevention agencies and initiatives. These agencies provide generous support, resources and expertise in the delivery of wellness services and programs. Presenters included: Ivy Watts (*Ivy Watts Speaks*), Jeff Perrotti (*DESE Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students*), Charity Bell (*MA Department of Mental Health*), Robert Hackenson, Jr. (*Dynamic Influence*), Student Advisory Committee (SAC) (MIAA), Jon Mattleman (*Minding Your Mind*), Kendra McDonald (*Samaritans*), Dr. Andrew Chen and Kate Fischer (*University Orthopedics*), Theresa Melito-Connors (*Dr. MC's Self Care Cabaret*), Monika Ostroff (*MEDA*), Chris Sullivan (*Not in the Playbook*) and Kathi Meyer Sullivan (*Taylor's Message*).



Kathi & Chris Sullivan



Charity Bell



Dr. Andrew Chen



Theresa Melito-Connors

Attendees' comments reflected the value they found, personally and professionally, in the Summit session content:

**On Kathi Meyer Sullivan and Chris Sullivan's substance abuse offering:**

*This was the best presentation I have ever been to and one that personally hit home. Kathi and Chris did a fantastic job!*

**On Theresa Melito-Connors' self-care presentation:**

*Put your 'oxygen mask on first' just like when you're on a plane. You need your oxygen to be able to assist others. When we take care of ourselves, we'll be better equipped to assist others.*

**On Dr. Andrew Chen and Kate Fischer's sports injury prevention session:**

*I am going to share the concept of "sedentary athlete" with my students. I'm going to encourage them to take movement breaks during our 90-minute block classes.*

**On the Student Advisory's small-groups session on leadership:**

*I learned how to better communicate with my peers and be more open with them.*

**Additional participant reflections included:**

- *Charity was real and relatable. A great presentation!*
- *I enjoyed Ivy's contagious positivity and sharing her personal story of struggle with mental health issues.*
- *Jeff is always a powerful, inspiring presenter.*
- *How to support LGBTQ students in the school environment is such an important topic that should continue to be addressed with educators.*

Participants were encouraged to use the provided resources and presentations and bring them back to their schools and communities.

Additionally, the MIAA presented four prestigious wellness awards, which were selected from a myriad of nominations. Each recipient had their award presented in person in a socially-distanced presentation and again recognized virtually at the start of the Wellness Summit.

### **Congratulations to the 2020 MIAA Wellness Award Recipients!!**

#### ***Jeff Perrotti – Michael J. Kane Award***

The Michael J. Kane Award, which honors the legacy of former colleague Mike Kane, and seeks to recognize those who share his motivation for making a difference in the lives of others, was presented to Jeff Perrotti, founder of DESE Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students. Jeff conducts workshops on sexual orientation and gender identity for school administrators, counselors, nurses, coaches, teachers, parents and students and has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching.

#### ***Ivy Watts – MIAA Wellness Partner of the Year Award***

The MIAA Wellness Partner of the Year Award, which honors an organization or individual for their service, support and partnership with MIAA wellness initiatives, was presented to Ivy Watts, of Ivy Watts Speaks. Ivy is dedicated to promoting mental wellness and reducing stigma around mental illness, by sharing her story through public speaking. Ivy has also created several online platforms to help students develop their mental wellness toolkit for success.

#### ***Dorothy “Dot” Pearl – Wellness Coordinator of the Year Award***

The Wellness Coordinator of the Year Award, which recognizes a school Wellness Coordinator who has proven dedication and commitment to help their students make healthy life choices, was presented to Dorothy Pearl, Director of Wellness for Norfolk, Plainville, Wrentham and King Philip Schools. Representing three towns and four school districts, Dorothy has demonstrated exemplary leadership that has involved planning, implementing and sustaining wellness programs that have influenced highly successful outcomes for thousands of students and staff members.

#### ***Jhoan Perez – Champions of Wellness Student Award***

The Champions of Wellness Student Award, which recognizes a student or student group who exemplify the importance of wellness in their school and/or community, was presented to Jhoan Perez, of Cristo Rey Boston High School. In the absence of fall sports, Jhoan took the initiative to create and lead a running club for the school. The group focused on challenging workouts, maintaining positive attitudes and striving for improvement, rather than on competition.

# EDUCATIONAL ATHLETICS



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