



MEDIA RELEASE & MEDIA INVITED

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10TH ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FLASH MOB

A Decade of Breaking Down Stigma - Thursday, May 11 @ Central Library

Fact: 1 in 5 adults in the United States experience mental illness each year.

Fact: More than half of the people with mental health conditions in the U.S. did not receive any treatment in the last year.

Fact: Nearly 3 million adults in New York suffer from a mental health condition.

Fact: Each year, 1 in 6 youth (ages 6 – 17) experience a mental health disorder.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month - a time to raise community awareness about local mental health care resources and to break down the stigma associated with mental illness and heal as a community. It is for these reasons that nearly a dozen local organizations that make up the *Mental Health Awareness Coalition* are presenting the **10th Annual Mental Health Awareness Flash Mob on Thursday, May 11 from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square** in downtown Buffalo. The event, in collaboration with the library's monthly *Wellness at Central* program, is free and open to the public.

The Mental Health Flash Mob in Buffalo was created a decade ago by Michelle Scheib, director of the Independent Living of Niagara. This event is celebrated out of the loss of Jonathan Ramos, a 22-year-old University at Buffalo football player who was diagnosed with schizophrenia and took his life. "It is believed that if only our community was more open and accepting of people needing and getting mental health care, that lives such as Jonathan's could be saved. Our main purpose is to make getting mental health care just as important as getting physical care – which is nothing to be ashamed about," said the Flash Mob Coalition. "The main goal of the **10th Annual Mental Health Awareness Flash Mob** is to end the stigma surrounding mental health and to share information about resources available in the community – because no one should have to struggle alone and recovery is possible."

Activities for all ages include a healing circle, resource/advocacy fair, performers, rock painting, chalk drawing, chess, raffles and speakers. The Flash Mob is from 2 – 3:00 p.m. on the Library's main entrance ramp at Washington Street. Additional activities include:

- 2 – 3:15 p.m. - Buffalo Peacemakers Cookout, Flash Mob & speakers (outside ramp)
- 3:15 – 3:45 p.m. - Storm Young Performs
- 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. - QuizMaster Dennis George
- 4:00 p.m. - Recovery Trax Music Sessions
- 4 – 6 p.m. – Tabling
- 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. – Kind Fools' WRITE ON! workshop, Re/Story: Poetry and Recovery Storytelling and Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition's Community Circle for Teens.

For information, call the Restoration Society at 716-208-8126 or the Library at 716-858-8900 or www.BuffaloLib.org.

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