

Needham Youth & Family Services

May 2018 RAY of Hope Recipient

Conner Jahn



Left to right: Kelly Wallace, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital–Needham, Newton-Needham Chamber Representative, May RAY of Hope, Conner Jahn, Katy Colthart, Acting Director at Youth & Family Services.

May 2018 Recipient – Conner Jahn

Conner is a senior at Needham High School. He was nominated by Karen Mullen for the work he does in SALSAs (Students for Life without Substance Abuse). “I have known Conner Jahn for 3 years. Conner joined SALSAs Life without Substance as a sophomore in high school and quickly made a strong and positive impression as a leader. After just one year of volunteering with SALSAs the Leadership Team invited Conner to join them in planning and organizing key initiatives for the group,” notes Karen.

As a SALSAs leader Conner actively recruits new members, helps organize substance-free events for Needham High School students like “5th Quarter” after all home football games and acts as a peer mentor to middle school and high school students in the community. Conner and his fellow SALSAs students teach refusal skills that Needham 8th graders can use when faced with any risky situation. Conner explains to students that they need to learn how to “say no” to high risk situations and practice the skill before they are faced with a risky situation involving alcohol, drugs or anything else in which they are uncomfortable participating

Conner has produced an innovative Public Service Announcement featuring a diverse group of students explaining why they have chosen not to use. Conner titled the PSA “It’s Just Not Worth It”. In addition, Conner partnered with the SPAN coalition and the Needham Channel to develop for *first ever* extended homeroom training event focusing on Substance Use Prevention. The event featured Conner’s Public Service Announcement as well as interactive games to educate high school students about the negative effects of alcohol and other drugs.

Even though he is heavily involved with multiple organizations that strive to give back to the community and better the town of Needham. Conner states, “The single most valuable thing I have been involved with is running. I have ran eleven seasons of competitive running at Needham High School (four seasons of cross country, four seasons of indoor track and field, and three seasons of outdoor track and field). I have been fortunate enough to be elected as a captain for all three seasons. Rather than being just in a leadership position, I perceive my captainship as a mentor position. I know that I am forever impacting my teammates in my captainship position and within my community as it allows me to be a mentor and craftsman of leadership.”

At NHS Conner is involved in a number of clubs. He is the President of the Bay Colony Rail Trail Club, which is dedicated to maintenance, expansion, and raising awareness for a walking trail that runs through the town of Needham. As well as the Environmental Club. In addition, Conner has been a member of the National Honor Society since 2017.

Watch the ceremony honoring Conner at: <https://youtu.be/bUItU0PSR5g>

For more information please visit: www.needhamma.gov/youth/ray