



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID NOW OFFERED IN FAYETTE**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County residents now have access to a unique mental health program, thanks to a growing partnership between Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services and the National Council for Behavioral Health.

Mental health professional Kira Eicher of Health 360 is working with Chestnut Ridge CEO Michael Quinn to administer the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training Program. Typically \$100, the 8-hour training course is now being offered free of charge.

“This is the first time that this training is being done locally and is part of a national campaign put off by the National Council, so we are very excited,” said Eicher, who will serve as program instructor.

Eicher said the program is geared toward adults who work closely with youth, such as teachers, bus drivers, security guards, nurses, cafeteria workers, other school affiliates, emergency medical personnel, police officers, community organization employees and volunteers, faith-based organization members, scout troop leaders and even foster parents.

“The goal of the training is to familiarize adults with what mental illness looks like for the youth and how to recognize the signs of a youth who is struggling with a mental health crisis,” Eicher said. “The training doesn’t teach the participants how to be a therapist or mental health professional, but rather how to be a point of contact for a youth who may be experiencing some problems and what resources and techniques are available to best help that youth.”

Quinn said Uniontown Area School District recently got on board with the coping curriculum after receiving state funding to bolster youth mental health awareness.

The Youth Mental Health First Aid Program introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge.

The next training is scheduled for January 31, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration, 215 Jacob Murphy Ln., Uniontown. Register online at <https://goo.gl/forms/D2FM0F8z47RGmhXx1> or in person at the beginning of the training. For more information, email [kreicher@usc.edu](mailto:kreicher@usc.edu) or [mquinn@crCSI.org](mailto:mquinn@crCSI.org).

“If we get a large part of the community trained as Youth Mental Health First Aiders, we can address mental illness earlier in youth and be able to get them the help they need before their illness becomes unmanageable,” Eicher said.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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