

# Remembering T.J.

## *A Story of Teen Depression, Lessons and Hope*



On December 1, 2010, 16-year-old cherished son, brother, friend, varsity athlete and honor student T.J. Sefcik died by suicide. How could a boy with so much love and potential make this choice? In the hopes of preventing other teens from following the same path, T.J.'s parents, Wendy and Steve, and his 20-year-old brother Matt share T.J.'s story of living with depression. Depression in teens is a common illness; 1-in-8 will suffer at least one depressive episode before reaching adulthood.

This program gives students, parents and educators a view of what teen depression can look like and educates them to pay attention to their mental health and emotions, something that is often pushed to the side. The Sefciks discuss many of the red flags that are often dismissed as typical teenage behavior. Their story gives hope to teens who may be struggling and don't know what to do with how they're feeling. It empowers teens to look outside themselves to their friends and classmates, and gives parents knowledge to help understand their teens a little better.

### ***What People Are Saying...***



I have dealt with anxiety and depression myself, and hearing your talk really gave me hope. I hope that people talk about it, and reach out if they need help. Without a doubt I can say that you are saving lives.

*— Student, Phillipsburg High School*

I left the program understanding what my daughter experiences on many occasions. I am now able to understand “her definition” of depression and how it is playing a role in her life. When I arrived home after the discussion this evening, I approached my daughter and said “we have to talk.” We shared tears and hugged. She knew I finally “got it.” Thank you again for an eye-opening evening.

*— Parent, Pompton Lakes High School*

I can't begin to put into words my appreciation for what your family did for the entire Lazar staff and district visitors at today's presentation. If I heard it once, I heard it a dozen times, “This was the best workshop we ever had.” It was passionate, powerful, honest, real, enlightening...the list is endless.

*— Sharon Car, Principal,  
Robert Lazar Middle School, Montville NJ*

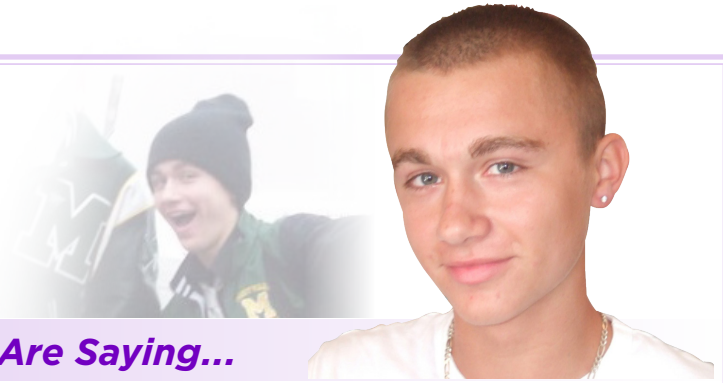
For information contact Wendy Sefcik at 908.227.8481 or [wendy@sefcikprod.com](mailto:wendy@sefcikprod.com)

*There is no fee for this program.*

**[www.RememberingTJ.org](http://www.RememberingTJ.org)**

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## What People Are Saying...

[T.J.'s story] was one of the most important aspects to the course as I discovered, both through emails and through my course evaluations. It really opened up some profound contemplation and conversations with my students and the impact it ultimately has had is beyond my ability to truly measure.

*— C. Michael Elavsky, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Penn State University*

Thank you so much for sharing your story. I believe our staff was moved by your presentation and found helpful resources for our students. As someone who survived being a depressed teenager and young adult, I personally appreciated your story more than I can say. You are making a difference.

*— Teacher, Closter, NJ*

The message and gift you shared with our students and parents is one that is very rare in today's times. Every time I hear your message, it far surpasses anything I could have hoped to give our students. As I sat and listened to you, Steve and Matt answer questions from concerned parents and students, I was amazed at the warmth, genuineness, and accuracy of each response. More than bringing a program to our school, you are touching lives. I know that your family and T.J. have touched mine in a way that will forever make me a better parent and a better counselor.

*— Nancy Systma, Counselor, Bergen County Academies*

I have to thank you for the student assembly you did at Montville High School. Because of what you said my daughter realized that she was suffering from depression. I can never repay you for having the courage to talk about what your son went through and, in turn, making my daughter realize she had depression, anxiety, was self harming and had suicidal ideation. I can never thank you enough for helping my daughter without even realizing that you did.

*— Parent, Montville High School*

I have been so upset about this issue after hearing so much in the local news. I felt helpless in thinking about my daughters. When I got home, I sat down and really talked to them and was happy to have the tools you provided. I woke up this morning feeling surprisingly happy. I think it is because although your story is heartbreaking, the way you presented it was also uplifting and truly does give some hope.

*—Parent, Green Hills Middle School*

The feedback has been pouring in and has been absolutely amazing. I have been a counselor at J&J for 19 years and have NEVER received such favorable and plentiful feedback for any other program. Your words, your pictures, your sharing of knowledge, your sharing of such sensitive and personal issues was felt and loved by all.

*— Cheryl Hoyt, LSW, MSW, Johnson & Johnson Employee Assistance Program*

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