

## Seneca Students Raise Money and Awareness for Mental Illness



On Friday, May 29, Seneca High School's Psychology club hosted their inaugural Glow Run. The run was based off of the theme of "Shine a Light in the Dark" to emulate the importance of happiness and properly dealing with mental illness. The Glow Run was an approximate 5k around the school and the property. It ended in a tunnel of lights and at the finish line, a celebration awaited the runners. Within Seneca's stadium, runners enjoyed, music, food and a series of glow games. KanJam, cornhole, and ring toss were all re-vamped to incorporate glowing features and runners were also able to decorate themselves with glow in the dark paint, glow bracelets and glow necklaces.

Mr. Sean Kennevan, Seneca's AP Psychology teacher, was approached by three seniors, Cailey Talbot, Morgan Lubner, and Lauren Bogardus, this past fall who wanted to start a Psychology club. Together, they invited other students to join and soon thereafter they were planning their first big event in an effort to raise awareness of mental illness and its need for support. According to a statistic published by the National Institute of Mental Health in 2013 "one in four adults experiences a mental illness in a given year." This statistic is alarming, and Seneca's students felt a strong need to raise awareness and to raise money to support their mission. The club's mission is to spread awareness of mental illnesses, to provide information and resources to help those who are affected by mental illness and to help reduce the stigma associated with having a mental illness.

Lead by Psychology club Advisor Sean Kennevan and Psychology club President Cailey Talbot, the Glow Run successfully raised \$1,500 to donate to NAMI FACE (Family and Consumer Exchange), a local chapter serving Burlington County people.

“We were so glad to see the participation from the school community. Stigma is such a crucial barrier to treating and understanding mental illness. And getting the younger population to help ease that is important,” said Burlington County NAMI FACE president Ruth Heald. “This kind of activity is a perfect example of the efforts that can be made to reduce the stigma. Since mental illness affects one in four, it's vital to reach others with this message.”

NAMI stands for National Alliance on Mental Illness and it is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. For more info go to [www.nami.org/About-NAMI](http://www.nami.org/About-NAMI).

The Glow Run was a successful, and the Seneca students have big plans to make it an even bigger event next year. Look for notices for the Glow Run in the fall. All runners, donators, and supporters are welcome.