

WSCA WINTER NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025

Dr. Daphne Ali, WSCA Newsletter Editor/
Huntington HS School Counselor

What You'll Learn

❄ Hello, incredible school counselors, college counselors, and mental health clinicians! As winter winds down and spring approaches, the Western Suffolk Counselors' Association is here to support you with warmth, resources, and a strong sense of togetherness. Whether you're championing high schoolers, guiding middle schoolers, nurturing elementary students, or supporting individuals in higher education and mental health, remember—you are never alone!

WSCA is just a question away, ready to connect you with outstanding resources to empower your students and strengthen your school communities. In this issue, you'll find expert mental health strategies, highlights from recent events, an inspiring feature on a Long Island school district's counseling program and more. So grab a cozy seat, turn the page, and let's navigate this season together! ❄

Executive Board

President: Sarah Taiclet
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VP, Development: Ken Grotell
VP, Operations: Dr. Daphne Ali
Treasurer: Suzanne Miller
Secretary: Adriana Silva
Past President: David Oroza

Upcoming Events

Spring Conference for LI Counselors
March 21 - 7:45am @ SUNY Farmingdale
Spring College & Career Fair
April 28 - 6:30pm @ Hauppauge HS
Retiree Luncheon
May 6 - 12:00pm @ J&R's, Islip
Scholarship Reception
May 21 - 6:00pm @ Wilson Tech Dix Hills
End of Year Ceremony
June 2 - 12:00pm @ The View, Oakdale

Contact Info

wsuffolkcounselors@gmail.com
WSCA, P.O. Box 100,
Commack, NY 11725

A HOLIDAY HAPPENING TO REMEMBER!

Celebrating Collaboration, Inspiration, and Connection at
WSCA's December Event @ Captain Bills

An Evening To Remember

✨ The magic of the season was alive at WSCA's December Holiday Happening! Kelly Whitney-Rivera, District Director of Guidance and Chief Information Officer at Valley Stream Central School District, shared inspiring updates on her work with New York State's Blue Ribbon Commission.

During the Holiday Happening raffle, we raised \$400 and donated it to Long Island Cares in time for Giving Tuesday.

A heartfelt thank-you to Ohio Wesleyan University for sponsoring the event, with Anthony Rinaldi, Associate Director of Admission, showcasing why their university is such an amazing choice!

The Holiday Happening gathered school counselors, counseling students, directors, mental health leaders, and more for a night filled with collaboration, networking, and joy. Missed it? No worries—the next event is coming soon, and you won't want to miss the magic! 🌟



EMPOWERING SCHOOL COUNSELORS: A MORNING OF LEARNING & IMPACT!

Strengthening Support for Students in a Digital & Social World
@ Suffolk County Community College



The Winter School Counselors' Breakfast Workshop was an incredible success! 🎉 Sponsored by Suffolk County Community College, this event brought together passionate school counselors for an engaging and informative morning focused on two critical topics:

- ◆ Teen Dating Violence & Consent ❤️
- ◆ Safe Internet Use 🌐🔒

Presented by the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the workshop featured Assistant District Attorneys from the Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Bureau, who provided expert insights on:

- ✓ Recognizing the warning signs of teen dating violence 🚩
- ✓ Supporting students in abusive relationships 🤝
- ✓ Educating teens on the importance of consent 🗣️
- ✓ Navigating the dangers of cyberbullying, online predators, and digital peer pressure 📱⚠️

The interactive discussions and real-world strategies left counselors feeling empowered 💪 and better equipped to support their students through today's challenges. The energy in the room was incredible, and the knowledge shared was truly invaluable!

A huge THANK YOU 🙌 to everyone who attended and helped make this workshop such a meaningful experience.

36TH ANNUAL WSCA SPRING CONFERENCE



Mark Your Calendars:
Friday, March 21st, 2025
Farmingdale State College

The WSCA Spring Conference is back, and it's bigger and better than EVER! This year's theme – "Navigating Partnerships to Empower Students" – is all about unlocking the power of collaboration and giving YOU the tools to make a lasting impact in your school community. And trust us, you won't want to miss it!

What's in store? 🌟

Explore dynamic workshops including topics like Choice Theory, collective care teams, trauma-informed practices, restorative practices, college admissions, financial aid, and more!

🌟 **SPECIAL OFFER ALERT** 🌟

Bring 3 current WSCA members from one building/district to the conference, and each member will pay \$30 each instead of \$45 each!



Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Matthew Boccanfuso,
Principal of Lindenhurst HS

With nearly 30 years in education, Dr. Matthew Boccanfuso has seen it all! From teaching social studies to leading as an assistant principal and now principal, his approach to education revolves around one powerful idea: connection. As a leader deeply involved in his community, Dr. Boccanfuso emphasizes the power of relationships—between students, staff, and the community—to drive success and educational excellence.

Get ready to be inspired by his vision for a 21st-century approach to education, where connection and collaboration are the keys to unlocking student potential!

AN UNFORGETTABLE SCHOLARSHIP NIGHT OF CELEBRATION!

🎓 Scholarships, Celebration & Success! 🎉 Join Us May 21st @ WSBoces Wilson Tech, Dix Hills Campus for an Amazing Night!

WSCA is rolling out the red carpet (figuratively speaking) to honor outstanding students from Suffolk County High Schools who are taking the next big step toward their futures! 🚀🌟

We're awarding scholarships to deserving graduates pursuing post-secondary education this fall! The number of recipients will depend on the incredible applications we receive—so encourage your students to apply!

But here's where YOU come in... To be eligible, you must be a current WSCA member (2024-2025) and the official counselor of record for the student you're recommending. Each counselor may submit one outstanding candidate. 🎓❤️

Click Here: [Scholarship Application](#)



Scholarship Reception

📅 Wednesday, May 21, 2025
📍 Wilson Tech, 17 Westminister Avenue, Dix Hills, NY
🕒 6:00 - 8:00 PM ET

📅 **Deadline to Submit Applications:**
Friday, March 28, 2025, by 11:59 PM

WESTERN SUFFOLK
COUNSELORS' ASSOCIATION

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Every year WSCA gives scholarships to our local teens. Please donate as much as you can. It goes a long way.

SCAN

Zelle

w****@gmail.com



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@WSCA-WSCA

venmo



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SHAPING FUTURES: AN INSIDE LOOK @ HALF HOLLOW HILLS EAST

DREAM TEAM

Meet Mr. Robert Citrano: Director of Guidance at Half Hollow Hills East and his Outstanding Counseling Team! 🌟



After an incredible 32 years in education, Mr. Robert Citrano, Director of Guidance at Half Hollow Hills High School East, is preparing to retire this July. In this special interview, Mr. Citrano reflects on his time in the district, highlights the success of the guidance program, and shares his vision for the future. 🎓

Mr. Citrano takes great pride in how the guidance program at East has evolved over the years to meet the dynamic needs of students. "Our focus is on preparing students not just for college, but for careers as well. Over 85% of our students move on to college, but we're also seeing a growing interest in career-focused paths, such as Wilson Tech," he explained. It's exciting to witness students pursuing hands-on careers in fields like HVAC, cosmetology, and, soon, fire science! 🧰👩🔧🔥

A key success for the guidance department has been the expansion of its resources. Mr. Citrano oversees a team of 9 dedicated and vibrant counselors who are able to give personalized attention to each student. This individualized support has contributed to a graduation rate consistently over 98%. Mr. Citrano also praised the department's efforts in fostering a welcoming environment for all students, making the guidance office "one of the most welcoming places in the building." 😊

The guidance team uses tools like Naviance to help students explore their career interests and develop strong study habits. The success stories speak for themselves: from students going to Ivy League schools to those attending community colleges like Suffolk, all have been well-prepared for their next steps, thanks to the dedicated work of the guidance department. 🇺🇸

Looking ahead, Mr. Citrano's vision for the program includes continued growth, particularly in the realm of career education. "I'm excited to see the expansion of tech-focused programs. The future is bright, and I'm confident the guidance team will carry on the legacy we've built here," he shared.

As he nears retirement, Mr. Citrano leaves behind an impressive legacy of guidance and leadership. His passion for education, his team's hard work, and the growth of the guidance department at Half Hollow Hills East will undoubtedly continue to impact students for years to come.

Mr. Citrano, we wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement! 🌟



presents its

COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR

April 28, 2025
6:30pm to 8:30pm

at **HAUPPAUGE HIGH
SCHOOL**

This event is free and open to ALL students and parents. College representatives will be on hand to answer questions and offer information.

Students are encouraged to register ahead of time to make their fair visit more efficient.

REGISTER NOW

at

gotocollegefairs.com



*A scholarship will be awarded to one
lucky attendee!!*





COUNSELORS **STRIVE** IN 2025



Sabrina Fearon, MSEd, LMHC is Ready to Strive in 2025 & Shares Some of Her Tips for Success!

The start of a new year often inspires us to set resolutions and goals. Yet, by mid-January, many of us feel overwhelmed 😞 or have already quit. ❌ How can we set ourselves and others up for success in 2025? By embracing a holistic approach—mentally, physically, and spiritually—and following a simple framework: Ignite, Reset, Pause, Go, and Reflect.

Ignite: Find Your Purpose 🔥

Begin by identifying what truly motivates you. What brings you joy and fulfillment? ❤️ Start small by visualizing your goals and writing them down. A clear purpose is the spark that fuels your journey.

Reset: Clear the Clutter 🧹

Declutter your mind and environment. Let go of distractions, unnecessary commitments, and habits that drain your energy. Replace them with practices like journaling, meditation, or organizing your workspace to create a fresh start. 🌱

Pause: Prioritize Self-Care 🛀

Before diving into action, take a moment to recharge. ⚡ Self-care is essential for sustaining your efforts. Practice mindfulness, nurture your body with healthy habits, and connect with your spiritual side to maintain balance. 🧘

Go: Take Intentional Action 🏃

Break your goals into smaller, manageable steps and celebrate progress along the way. Remember, consistency matters more than perfection. Stay adaptable, and don't hesitate to seek support from others. 🤝

Reflect: Learn and Adjust 🔍

Regularly evaluate your progress. 🤖 Reflect on what's working and what isn't. Adjust your strategies and remind yourself of the bigger picture. Reflection ensures continuous growth and keeps you aligned with your purpose.

By embracing these steps, we can help ourselves and others realize meaningful goals in 2025. Let this be the year where resolutions turn into lasting achievements. ✨

Stay Energized, Counselors! 💪



BRIDGING THE GAP: HOW WELLIFE NETWORK'S YOUTH CARE COORDINATION IS TRANSFORMING LIVES

**From Mental Health Support to Housing Assistance, Amber LeDeoux
Shares How WellLife Brings Services Directly to Families in Need**

Navigating care can be overwhelming, but the team at WellLife Network's Youth Care Coordination simplifies the process, offering care for children and adults with Medicaid across Suffolk County, NY.

Comprehensive Care for All Ages

WellLife serves children (age 5+) and adults indefinitely, connecting families to mental health, physical health, or substance abuse services. Their mobile model brings care directly to homes or community settings. 🚗

Easy Access, No Waitlists

Getting started is simple—a quick referral and call to Amber is all it takes! Once Medicaid eligibility is confirmed, families are quickly connected to a case manager. Best of all, no waitlist! 🕒

Tailored Mental Health & Substance Abuse Support

WellLife offers in-home therapy, family therapy, and skill-building services for kids and teens. Their Family Support Advocacy Program guides families through the system. Substance abuse support starts at age 16, offering counseling and medication management.

Addressing Housing Instability

WellLife partners with local shelters, linking families to housing resources, Section 8 applications, and food pantry services. Parents are referred to WellLife's adult program for further housing assistance. 🏠

Support for Developmental Disabilities

WellLife helps families with co-occurring conditions like autism and anxiety, assisting with OPWDD applications until families are connected to specialized case managers. 🧡

Collaborating with Schools

WellLife works alongside school counselors to advocate for students and help families navigate school processes. Regular communication ensures comprehensive support.

Bilingual Services Available

With Spanish-speaking staff and a partnership with Lodestar Children's Services for bilingual therapy, WellLife ensures families get the care they need in their preferred language. 🌐

Final Thoughts

WellLife Network offers fast, mobile care with no waitlists, serving Suffolk County families. For details, call Amber at 631-920-8622 or visit 3600 Route 112, Coram, NY.

WSCA's

RETIREE LUNCHEON

A taste of togetherness at noon!

MAY 6, 2025

J&R'S STEAKHOUSE
116 Main St, Islip, NY 11751

Contact Ray Martinez by May 1st if you
plan to attend.

(rayman07@yahoo.com)

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REACH OUT TO WSCA COMMITTEES

College Fair Committee

Suzanne Miller - Co-Chair
Melissa Solomon - Co-Chair
Debra Walling - Co-Chair
Dr. Daphne Ali
Peter Franzese
Mimi McCormack
Ray Martinez
Email Melissa at msolomon@copiague.net



Spring 2025 Conference Committee

David Oroza - Chair
Adriana Silva - Secretary
John Rosillo - Programming
Patricia McCallum - Evaluations
Ken Grotell - Registration/Treasurer
Email David at doroza@adelphi.edu



LICAC 2025 Committee

Dr. Theresa Saladino - Co-Chair
Sabrina Fearon
Lawrence Quinn
Peter Franzese
Adriana Silva
David Oroza
Kristen Incarnato
Miriam McCormack
Frank Pizzardi
Dr. Kathleen Corbett
Debra Walling
John Rossi
Ken Grotell
Robert Pertusati
Shannon Bethel
Email Theresa at saladit@sunysuffolk.edu

Scholarship Committee

Ken Grotell - Chair
Sarah Taiclet
Peter Franzese
Marilyn Harris
David Oroza
Sabrina Fearon
Marilyn Marsilio
Email Ken at kgrotell@gmail.com


STRONGER
TOGETHER


JOIN THE MOVEMENT: EMPOWER, CONNECT, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

JOIN US



Make sure to follow
“Western Suffolk Counselors
Association—WSCA” on FB.



We post relevant conferences, helpful tip sheets to reprint for your parents, students and teachers, latest news on regulation changes, solid resources for everyday practice, photos of our members at events, etc...

Please email Melissa Solomon with any questions or goodies to post. If you would like to be tagged in any photos, please let me know.

msolomon@copiague.net

This school year, we’re inviting YOU to take your involvement with WSCA to the next level! By joining our vibrant community, you’ll gain valuable resources, build lasting friendships, and connect with fellow counselors. Together, we’ll share ideas, tackle challenges, and elevate the counseling profession.

We have openings on our council and would LOVE for you to get involved! Your voice can shape the future of WSCA and make a real impact. Whether you have questions, resources to share, or tools to inspire others, we encourage you to join us.

Become part of our council, consider donating, and get ready to connect and make a lasting impact! ✨

Want to join us? It’s easy! Just shoot us an email at wsuffolkcounselors@gmail.com. We can’t wait to connect with you! 🎉

WSCA WSCA
@WSCA-WSCA



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