



DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County
Department of Human Services



August 2020

Stand Together extends programming to meet pandemic-related needs

The coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll on everyone's mental health, but youth have been hit especially hard. To help combat the stress and uncertainty that local youth are facing, Stand Together made the decision to provide virtual programming over the summer, marking the first time that the program has run outside of the academic year.

Under the guidance of Stand Together staff and three high school advisors, two student workgroups comprised of students from six different school districts developed an e-zine (online magazine) and podcasts to educate their peers about mental health topics. The e-zine and podcast are available for viewing on the Stand Together [website](#).

"The e-zines and podcasts will provide valuable information that can be shared with all of the participating Stand Together schools once classes resume in the fall. Both address common mental health issues that students deal with on a daily basis. In addition, these projects provided our Stand Together students with meaningful activity over the summer, the opportunity to broaden their knowledge about mental health issues and a way to meet students from other school districts who are passionate mental health advocates, which normally wouldn't happen," said Mike Gruber, community wellness team coordinator in the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH).

In addition to providing a way for students to connect over the summer, the virtual programming allowed Stand Together staff and youth to explore opportunities to use technology in place of in-person meetings. The knowledge gained over the summer will help as students transition into a new school year that may consist of virtual classes or extracurriculars that can only be conducted online.

To learn more about Stand Together, contact Mike Gruber at michael.gruber@alleghenycounty.us.