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How a New Foundation Is Addressing Mental Health for Young People Entering Adulthood

Paul Karon



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For years, Inside Philanthropy has been reporting on the longstanding dearth of giving for mental health issues, and while it's still a deeply underfunded area, there's some cause for optimism that more money will start to flow. Increasingly, celebrities are speaking out about the issue, as are people who have personal and family experience with mental illnesses and suicide. In just the last few years, new foundations have emerged to address specific mental health issues. One of the newest is the RADical Hope Foundation, established in 2018 with a focus on the mental and emotional health of young people and college students.

Since its launch, the foundation has been working to identify, evaluate and fund youth mental health programs. Its first partnership, announced last year, was with PeaceLove, a program that uses expressive arts to enhance wellness. RADical Hope provided funding to bring additional analytic rigor to the program and increase PeaceLove's training capacity. And late last month, it announced another partnership, this one with New York University, aiming to take on the growing problem of mental health issues like depression, anxiety and suicide on college and university campuses.

The program with NYU will seek to head off mental health problems and crises before they arise by giving first-year college students tools and skills to develop emotional resilience and healthy habits in work, life and relationships. The new students will be organized

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leaders, advocates, artists, athlete, and others, as well as educational resources and group discussions.

Young Americans on and off college campuses have been exhibiting rising rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, substance use and other diseases of despair for years; the COVID-19 pandemic made it worse. Kids making the transition from high school to college are at particularly high risk, said Liz Feld, CEO of RADical Hope.

The philanthropic forces behind RADical Hope are retired businessmen Larry Bossidy and billionaire Kenneth G. Langone, a co-founder of Home Depot. Bossidy, the former CEO and chairman of tech and manufacturing conglomerate Honeywell International, lost a grandson to suicide. The young man's parents, Pam and Phil Martin—Pam is Bossidy's daughter—created RADical Hope in his memory to develop and fund programs that address the mental health issues of young people.

Langone, a New York native who made his fortune in finance, has long been a major donor to NYU—in 2018, he gave the university \$100 million to make tuition free for all students at the NYU School of Medicine. A decade before that, Langone and his wife gave \$200 million to the institution, which was then renamed the NYU Langone Medical Center. Langone has supported a range of causes within health and medicine, and other fields, and is a major Republican donor.

RADical Hope is currently raising \$3.5 million to

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hopes to expand it to partner schools across the country.

“RADical Hope and NYU are responding to an urgent need to support students as they begin a critical chapter in their lives,” said Bossidy, in a news announcement. “Together, we have developed a skill-based wellness program aligned with Radical Hope’s mission priorities: Connectivity, engagement, emotional intelligence and empowerment.”

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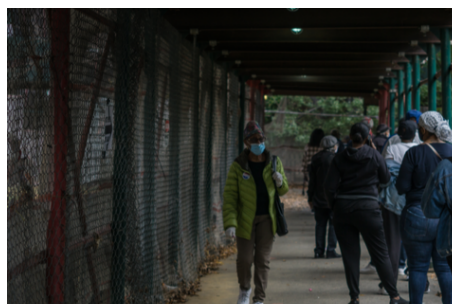
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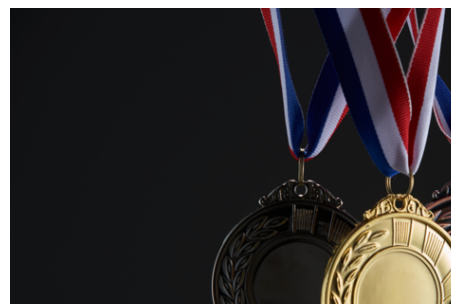
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