

**SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 1808
45 LINCOLN CITY ROAD
LAKEVILLE, CT 06039**

Mrs. Stephanie Magyar
Principal

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October 11, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are pleased to share with you that Salisbury Central School has been selected to pilot a new opportunity to support elementary-level youth mental health in partnership with the Connecticut Networks of Care for Suicide Prevention (NCSP) Initiative (SM62916) co-directed by the CT Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Children and Families, and Public Health, and funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The pilot opportunity was offered to us given our significant interest in the new resource.

[Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health](#) (Guide) was developed to respond to a critical mental health promotion and education, and youth suicide prevention service gap evidenced in CT data by the number of youth experiencing mental health issues, having difficulty connecting to supports, and intentionally self-harming. It was also developed to increase youth mental health literacy. Utilizing best practices, the Guide introduces mental health and wellness knowledge and skills to youth at an early age with the hope that they may keep and apply what they learn for a lifetime to help them stay healthy and safe. These include:

1. What is mental health;
2. Mental health is equally as important as physical health;
3. Daily activities that support mental health wellness;
4. How to identify when mental health needs attention;
5. Internal and external healthy coping strategies that support mental health;
6. How to identify and connect with trusted adults; and
7. Resources to share with trusted adults.

Gizmo, the mascot for the CT [suicide prevention campaign](#)- "1 WORD, 1 VOICE, 1 LIFE...Be the 1 to start the conversation," and his fellow therapy dog and K9 First Responder friends use a warm and fuzzy approach to introduce youth to what can be a challenging subject for adults to discuss and for youth to understand. This approach makes the Guide engaging, memorable, and not only easy to use, but fun as well.

The Guide's accompanying curriculum was developed by the NCSP in response to the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received internationally, as *Gizmo has over 170,000 Facebook Friends-Gizmo's Frens*, from parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, school administrators, medical and mental health providers, librarians, youth service providers, mobile crisis services, law enforcement, etc. all looking for ways to bring the book to life for the youth (and young at heart) they care about.

The curriculum is flexible and uses activities that strive to help youth, their trusted adults, and the settings in which they live support their mental health and create a greater sense of individual and community connectedness thereby strengthening their mental wellness and reducing their risk of many negative health outcomes, but most importantly poor mental health and suicide.

We look forward to introducing you and your youth to this wonderful new resource, and encourage you to connect with us if you have any questions. Please contact – Donna Begley or Fran Goodsell . You may also visit www.Gizmo4MentalHealth.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Stephanie Magyar