



Look who's talking about AIR

"I personally witnessed the power of the AIR program, and its positive impact on young people. It was palpable, it was real, and there is no doubt in my mind that it made a difference in the lives of every participant, not just students, but parents and faculty as well."

– **Celina Gray**, Former Executive Director of the NJ Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma

"Attitudes In Reverse (AIR) has provided our students with a most important resource. Due to the work of AIR volunteers, our students know that they are not alone. They learn that the stigma associated with mental illness need not close them off from normal functioning... from happiness. AIR tells them that they can get help... that they deserve to get help."

– **Michael Zapicchi**, Principal,
West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North

"Attitudes In Reverse has opened my eyes to just how great the stigma surrounding mental illness is. This organization has helped me to learn a great deal about mental health and given me the motivation to work to eliminate stigma. Because of AIR, I now actively try to educate others about mental illnesses, and their severity. In short, because of AIR, I have the drive to work to change the world, one attitude at a time."

– **Cadet Joseph Babitsky**, AFROTC,
Norwich University, VT

"Mental illness and suicide prevention are two topics that affect all of us in society but especially young individuals who are trying to carve their path in life. We need a society to openly speak about suicide prevention and mental illness to acknowledge the need for awareness and treatment. The AIR Dogs help start conversation with their wagging tails, smiling doggy faces and kisses. I can honestly say the dogs and the AIR volunteers have changed the lives of my students and myself by educating us on the need for a conversation about mental illness to change one's attitude. The IN THEIR SHOES display makes a major impact on each and every individual who sees it. The AIR programs help make individuals in society aware and compassionate towards those who might be struggling in silence."

– **Dr. Nancy Cherofsky**, Assistant Nursing Professor,
Wagner College, Staten Island, NY

"Thank you for making me aware of the possibility that I could have a mental illness. After the AIR presentation at my high school, I began to look into mental illnesses. This past September, I got help and got a diagnosis of depression and social anxiety disorder. So, thank you again for giving the presentation that ultimately saved my life."

– **High School Student**, West Windsor-Plainsboro
School District, NJ

"AIR's presentation in my high school received overwhelming support from both faculty and students. Its messaging regarding erasing mental illness stigma and letting students know it is OK to ask for help seemed to break down the barriers as several students came up after each presentation to ask for more information. Faculty members, including teachers, guidance counselors and administrators, have requested AIR to come back and present again. I look forward to continuing my relationship with AIR and helping our students get the support they need to achieve overall health and wellness."

– **Julie Schick**, Director of Athletics, Health, &
Physical Education & Nursing, Perth Amboy, NJ

"The Coming Up for AIR presentation brought a few students to Guidance, all of whom decided it was time to talk. We took it one step further with one senior girl who is having suicidal ideation. She will be getting treatment immediately."

– **Trenton School Principal**, Trenton, NJ

"Attitudes In Reverse's message of normalizing mental health issues for teens is of vital importance in our society. Explaining to teens that mental suffering is common and can be treated allows them to feel better about seeking help."

– **Cynthia Bratman, Psy.D.**

"The IN THEIR SHOES display is literally breathtaking. The power of seeing all of those empty shoes stops you in your tracks and sends a message that serves as an invaluable tool in the efforts to prevent suicide."

– **Jennifer Velez, Esq.**, Commissioner,
NJ Department of Human Services.

"This powerful display literally draws individuals not only into the shoes, but also into the minds of youth who struggle with mental health disorders and suicidal thoughts. This is a profound way to build empathy and eliminate stigma."

– **Debra L. Wentz, PhD**, Chief Executive Officer,
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and
Addiction Agencies

"According to a 2005 review in the British Medical Journal, dogs act as 'social catalysts', leading to greater interaction between people and alleviating feelings of loneliness, especially among patients with disabilities. I have observed the AIR dogs interacting with our students... everyone smiles... everyone laughs... the dogs brings joy to the kids they interact with... isn't that the idea?"

– **Michael Zapicchi**, Principal,
West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North

Start THE Conversation, Reverse an Attitude, Save a Life!

“Mental illness is like air: Just because you don’t see it,
it doesn’t mean it isn’t there. It’s all around us.” – Katelyn Baker

Attitudes In Reverse® is 100% volunteer driven 501c3 non-profit
whose mission is to reverse attitudes about mental health stigma.



Coming Up for AIR™

- Interactive presentation for students in middle schools, high schools and colleges – presented to more than 14,000 NJ, NY and VT students in just over three years.
- Addresses how to reinforce good mental health, recognize when you may need help and access services that do help.
- Emphasizes mental health disorders are real illnesses and, therefore, should not cause shame or embarrassment.



In Their Shoes™

- Exhibit designed to build understanding and empathy and encourage youth to reach out to others who are struggling and help them to get help.
- Shoes represent 234 youth ages 10 to 24 in New Jersey who lost hope and took their lives between 2009 and 2011.
- Tags on the shoes express thoughts that may go through the minds of youth who are struggling.

Annual Art Design Concept Contest to Spark Conversations, Build Awareness

- Promoted in schools to engage art, health and education departments in the discussion about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention.
- Prizes – iPad for First Place – are awarded to the contest winners during the Annual Miki & Friends 5K Walk & Run for AIR event in mid-May.

Annual Miki & Friends 5K Walk & Run for AIR Event - Third Saturday in May

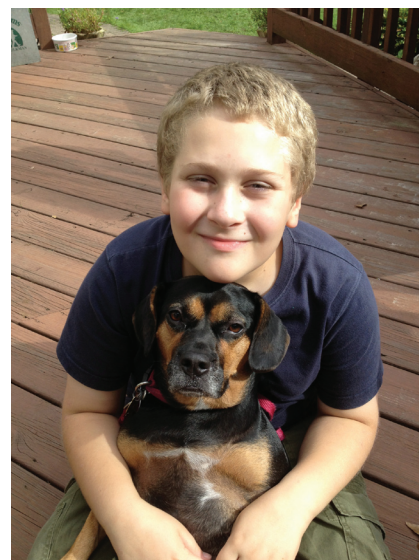
- Celebration of dogs’ contributions to people’s mental health.
- Also concerts, dog activities and demonstrations – a lot of fun for families with or without dogs.
- Great, fun way to gain volunteer/community service hours. Every volunteer gets a free thank you t-shirt.

AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™

- People Saving Dogs. Dogs Saving People.™
- Dogs in need of homes with the proven ability and personality to be Emotional Support Dogs are matched with individuals who have mental, emotional or developmental disabilities.
- The result: The individuals are no longer socially withdrawn as the dogs bring comfort in and actually foster social interactions.

Kenny Baker Memorial Scholarships

- One scholarship is awarded each spring to a graduate of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, where Kenny Baker, the son of AIR Co-Founders Kurt and Tricia Baker, attended.
- Another scholarship is awarded to a graduating Senior from a local Swim Club, Hamilton Aquatics.
- Kurt, Tricia and their daughter Katelyn established AIR soon after Kenny completed suicide following a long battle with severe depression and anxiety.



Contact AIR for More Information

Visit www.attitudesinreverse.org • Call 609-945-3200 • Write to info@attitudesinreverse.org