



MEDIA RELEASE

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Strengthening Connections: A Powerful Parent Academy at Rumson School District



Rumson, NJ — On Monday, March 24, 2025, the Rumson School District hosted a successful Parent Academy event focused on supporting children's social-emotional well-being. The lunch-and-learn workshop series, *Compassionate & Connected Parents*, attracted over 60 families, offering tailored sessions for parents of children at all grade levels. Participants engaged with experts, gained valuable strategies, and explored ways to strengthen connections and support their children's emotional and mental health.

"Through our Parent Academy series and mini-workshops, we reflect our commitment to ensuring that every family in our community has the support necessary to foster the well-being of their children," said Mrs. Jennifer Gibbons, Principal. "The series offered parents practical, evidence-based strategies that can be implemented at home to promote emotional health and resilience."

For parents of younger children in grades K-3, Deanna DeAndino, creator of the *Mindset Tapestry*, led a session on mental health and the development of a healthy mindset. Her innovative resource aimed to inspire self-worth and foster meaningful connections between children and their families. In addition, the workshop highlighted ways to cultivate emotional regulation and promote a growth mindset through The *Attuned School Approach*, a social-emotional learning (SEL) model that emphasized the importance of adult involvement in supporting children's development.

"This event is one of the many ways we are ensuring that parents are equipped to support their children's emotional and social growth," said Dr. John Bormann, Superintendent of Schools. "By focusing on both the students and the adults guiding them, we are building a more compassionate and connected school community."

Parents also participated in workshops focused on the digital landscape. Timothy Shoemaker led a session on "*Unlocking the Secrets to Online Safety*," sponsored by the Tigger Stavola Foundation. In this session, parents learned about online privacy, security risks, and how to address potential dangers in the digital world. Dr. Wang, a physician at Hackensack Meridian Hospital, also explored the effects of social media, examining its pros and cons and offering strategies to navigate these platforms in ways that benefit children's educational development.

Additionally, a variety of other workshops were available for families of all ages. Ajita Shah, LPC, NCC, ACS, PMH-C, provided guidance on creating an environment at home where children feel safe, heard, and empowered. Larry Thompson, LCSW, led a session on "*Parenting with Intention*," encouraging parents to focus on self-care and self-compassion to foster a more balanced approach to parenting in today's fast-paced world.

"The support we provide through events like this strengthens the bond between families and our school community," said Dr. Michael Snyder, Director of Student Services. "By offering parents the tools they need to succeed, we are collectively investing in the well-being of our children and their futures."

Dr. Snyder added, "The strength of our community lies in the connections we build—both with each other and with our children. By investing in our children's social-emotional well-being today, we are shaping a future where

every child can thrive with confidence, resilience, and a deep sense of self-worth. Together, we have the power to nurture not just students, but the leaders of tomorrow.”

Mychal Mills, co-founder of *Konscious Youth Development & Service (KYDS)*, concluded the sessions with a workshop on restorative parenting practices. This session aimed to foster mindfulness, resilience, and trauma-healing practices in children.

The event successfully brought together families in the Rumson community, offering practical tools for supporting children’s emotional health while strengthening connections among parents. The workshops provided essential knowledge for navigating the challenges of raising children in today’s rapidly changing world.

The Rumson administration extends a special thanks to the *Rumson PTO* for their generous sponsorship of the lunch and their unwavering support of district initiatives. Without their continued commitment, events like this would not be possible.

For more information, visit the Rumson School District’s website or contact the event organizers.