



## **City of York Launches Youth Empowerment Campaign Promoting Positive Decisions, Community Connection**

**YORK** – The City of York Bureau of Health (CYBH) has launched a youth empowerment campaign centered on the message “Rise Above.” The campaign aims to address negative behaviors and unhealthy coping mechanisms by promoting positive choices and community connection among youth ages 11-17 years.

CYBH has partnered with All Youth Access, LLC and Latino Connection to launch a comprehensive awareness campaign centered on research and relevant messaging that aims to influence local youth and build community engagement in their lives. The campaign is funded by the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

An increase in life stressors and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to teens feeling isolated from their friends, family, and interests. As a result, local youth have experienced an increase in mental health distress. Additionally, substance use, mental health issues, and poor coping behaviors among adults have led to youth’s exposure to such behaviors. The CYBH and partners are working to change this reality for future generations and one initial step is the launch of the Rise Above campaign. This campaign empowers and equips youth to take control and make the choice to Rise Above peer pressure, fear, anxiety, and other challenges often linked to risky behavior. Using the acronym RISE, the campaign reinforces memorable and actionable steps for youth to follow when faced with challenging decisions:

- R – Remain calm. Pause and take a breath.
- I – Identify and make positive choices.
- S – Stay confident in your decision.
- E – Express yourself to someone you trust.

"As the popular proverb message conveys, it takes a village to raise a child. This is at the core of the campaign's commitment through community engagement and partnerships to provide support for the safety and wellbeing of our youth," says Monica Kruger, , City of York Bureau of Health Director.

To spread the message of power and hope, and to influence youth to take control of their choices, this initiative invites local businesses, schools, churches, libraries, non-profits, and other

organizations or individuals who regularly engage with youth to become a community partner with Rise Above.

“Rise Above is a fresh, relevant, and relatable campaign that empowers our youth to quite literally rise above negative behaviors and unhealthy choices,” says George Fernandez, President & CEO of Latino Connection. “By standing united in this message and presenting it to our youth in a way that is vibrant, uplifting, and accepting, we can create a positive ripple effect that will impact the City of York now and well into the future.”

Rise Above tools and resources can be found at <https://bit.ly/riseaboveyork>. Anyone wishing to help spread the Rise Above message can download digital materials to use in a place of business, school, church, home, or any other location that reaches youth.

“By hanging a flyer, giving out Rise Above branded items, and promoting this messaging on your social media accounts, you are creating opportunities for youth to ask questions, reach out for help, and build assurance in their decision to Rise Above challenges like drug and alcohol use,” adds Fernandez.

The Rise Above initiative will continue to grow its community outreach efforts over the coming months Stay informed by visiting <https://bit.ly/riseaboveyork>.

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