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All Ages Invited to Mayor's Youth Mental Wellness Event

BY ANA FIGUEROA

The next installment of Mayor Lili Bosse's Mental Wellness Series is billed as a "youth" event. But actually, it is designed for every age and the age we live in now.

Hosted in conjunction with the city's Teen Advisory Committee, the Jan. 29 Mayor's Youth Mental Wellness Event features a keynote from the fashion brand Madhappy; an array of local mental health resources plus hands-on workshops to inspire creativity.

Taking place on the Crescent side of City Hall from 12:30 - 3 p.m. in the afternoon, it promises to be a street fair of positivity, acceptance and inclusion with one important theme: No one should feel alone.

Bosse spoke with the Courier about the genesis of the event as well as its important



The co-founders of the clothing/lifestyle brand Madhappy will present the keynote at the Mayor's Youth Mental Wellness Event Jan. 29.

mission.

"I really wanted to work with the Teen Advisory Committee (TAC) and have them share what they wanted this to look like. They have done the hard work on this. It is

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MENTAL WELLNESS, from page 1 really their event," said Bosse.

The TAC is comprised of 6th-12th grade students who live in or attend school in the Beverly Hills Unified School District. The group holds monthly meetings and works on special events and community outreach programs such as this Jan. 29 event.

"In this generation it's so important that they hear from each other because I really do believe that growing up is hard enough on its own. So often kids and teens think that whatever they're feeling they didn't want to share it with anyone else," said Bosse.

When TAC members were asked about their vision for the event, they immediately suggested that Madhappy would be the perfect fit.

Created in 2017 by co-founders Noah Raf, Joshua Sitt, Peiman Raf and Mason Spector, Madhappy is a streetwear line founded to encourage discussion about mental health. With positive messages such as "Local Optimist" and "Sharing is Caring" emblazoned on hoodies, T-shirts, leggings and more, Madhappy has attracted fans such as LeBron James and Cardi B. After hosting a succession of pop-ups over the years, the LVMH Ventures-backed Madhappy will open a dedicated storefront in West Hollywood this year.

Two of the company's founders, Peiman Raf and Spector, launched The Madhappy Podcast in 2021. And The Madhappy Foundation is a recently created 501(c)(3) organization that distributes a portion of the company's proceeds in the mental health space.

The Mayor's Youth Mental Wellness Event kicks off at 1 p.m. with a conversation with The Madhappy Podcast co-founders. This keynote speaker portion of the afternoon will be livestreamed at beverlyhills.org/live.

Bosse is particularly enthusiastic about the participation of Madhappy.

"The Raf brothers went to Beverly High and that is what is so great about having them here. They themselves went to our schools. When I reached out to Noah Raf to see if he would be willing to do this, he said absolutely. It was serendipitous since this was the TAC's first choice," she said.

Bosse adds that the Madhappy message is perfect for these times. The Madhappy community, called "The Local Optimists," is connected to mental health resources and news through the podcast, as well as newsletters and social media channels.

"I think we can learn a lot from the way the Madhappy brand has taken away the stigma that goes with asking for help. What they've done is encourage people to be comfortable with their feelings. I'm curious to hear how they found the courage to be public about times in their lives when they had their own mental wellness challenges. I so admire it. To take it to a clothing line that people can proudly wear is such a step in the right direction. I think they are walking the walk. For me, they are inspiring to every generation," said Bosse.

In addition to the keynote, the Mayor's Wellness Event will also include mental health and wellness booths offering resources and information from local agencies such as the Maple Counseling Center, Norman Aid, Bulldog Aid and the city's own police, fire, and parks and recreation departments.

Also on the program are an array of Arts and Culture workshops for anyone interested in expressing nascent talents. These include poetry sessions with poet Brian Sonia-Wallace, the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate whose work explores the topics of queerness, grief and transcendence. The iconic East L.A. printmaking collective Self-Help Graphics will be on hand to conduct poster-making screenprint classes. And Iranian American artist and designer Parisa Parnian, founder of Savage Muse, will conduct a workshop in collective mural making.

"If we can touch one person with an 'aha moment,' it will be worth it," said Bosse.

She adds, "The struggles that anyone would have at 15, 18 or 90 are very similar, whether it's depression or anxiety or sadness or feeling alone. I believe that this event is going to resonate with every generation. The conversation about mental wellness, whether it's with Dr. Edith Eger at 95, or the founders of Madhappy at 30, knows no boundaries at all. No matter what age you are, you will feel you aren't alone." ●