

# *If only I'd known...*

## A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON OPIOID ADDICTION

**March 4th, 2018**

**3:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**\*\* Doors open at 2:30pm – Interactive Resources & Refreshments**

**Ramsey High School Auditorium**

**256 E. Main Street, Ramsey NJ 07446**

### BERGEN COUNTY “IF I’D ONLY KNOWN ...” SPEAKING EVENT & Q&A PANEL

#### Mark Tomat - Recovering heroin addict



Mark is a 29 year old recovering heroin addict who is approaching 3 years of sobriety. He has lived in Bergen County for the entirety of his life and attended local high schools, both public and private. Mark has spoken to students, faculty, and parents about his experience with opiate addiction in

the majority of the high schools in Bergen County and is actively involved in helping other addicts in treatment and in the community throughout the state.

In 1990, Acting Prosecutor Calo left the Prosecutor’s office for private practice. For the next 27 years, he practiced criminal and civil law, cultivating an expertise in employment law. A renowned trial attorney, Acting Prosecutor Calo lectured widely on criminal and civil law topics.

Acting Prosecutor Calo returned to the BCPO in May 2017 as the First Assistant Prosecutor. He is a graduate of Columbia University and New York University School of Law.

#### Sergeant Tim Shoemaker – Drug-Free advocate & Ramsey Police Dept.



Drug abuse and addiction forced their way into Tim Shoemaker's young life before he was old enough to read. By the time he was a young adult, he had watched the people he loved most, be destroyed by their struggles with alcoholism, prescription drug abuse, marijuana and crack cocaine addictions. From the shadows of

such bleak beginnings, Tim has become one of our most passionate and inspiring drug-free advocates - from interdiction work as a police officer, to interventions as a friend. Tim has established a close relationship with the victims of drug abuse and the struggles of their experience.

Tim has been formally recognized by multiple senators and members of Congress, including Congressman Scott Garret, who commissioned a U.S. flag to be flown over the Capital Building in honor of Tim's public service. He has been the recipient of several distinguished awards, including the 2009 NJ Drug Abuse Resistance Education Officer of the Year and the 2011 U.S. National Drug Abuse Resistance Education Officer of the Year. He has been featured on the radio, profiled on the evening news and has spoken at schools, universities, town halls and prominent professional conferences across the country.

#### Dennis Calo – Acting Prosecutor, Bergen County Prosecutor's Office



On January 17, 2018, Acting Prosecutor Dennis Calo was sworn in as the chief law enforcement officer for the County of Bergen.

Acting Prosecutor Calo began his career at the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office (“BCPO”) in 1977. He quickly assumed a

leadership role, becoming Chief of the Grand Jury Unit in 1978. Soon thereafter, he established the Homicide Squad, and served as its Chief for four years. He tried capital and other major homicide cases, including the successful prosecution of the notorious serial killer Richard Cottingham.

In 1983, Acting Prosecutor Calo was appointed First Assistant Prosecutor, becoming the chief administrative officer of the BCPO. In that capacity, he oversaw the prosecutorial staff and continued to direct the Homicide Squad and other specialized squads and investigations, including political corruption, fraud, arson, sex crimes, child abuse, and narcotics. During his tenure at the BCPO, Acting Prosecutor Calo became a recognized expert in applying forensic scientific techniques in investigations and the courtroom.

### Gail Cole - Parent advocate



Gail Cole lost her 22 year old son Brendan on January 4, 2014 to an accidental heroin overdose. In March 2015, she co-founded *Hope and Healing After an Addiction Death*, a bereavement group in Bergen County for those who have lost a loved one to the disease of addiction. Gail is passionate about educating both parents and

students about the dangers of opioid pain medication and to remove the stigma and shame associated with addiction and mental illness. Over the past 4 years, she has spoken with the Bergen County Prosecutors Office, as well as on many panel discussions, sharing Brendan's story. In 2017, Gail and her husband Brian were one of the four families featured in the HBO documentary, "Warning: This Drug May Kill You." Gail and 5 members of Hope and Healing recently participated in a round table discussion about the opiate epidemic with David Ushery on WNBC.

### Sunni Roberts, MS - Student Assistance Coordinator and Anti-Bullying Specialist at Ramsey High School



This is the first year that Sunni Roberts has worked at Ramsey High School as the Student Assistance Coordinator and Anti-Bullying Specialist. Prior to Ramsey High School Sunni Roberts has worked at Ridgfield Park Junior/Senior High School as a Student Assistance

Coordinator and as the District's Anti-Bullying Coordinator. In both districts Sunni has helped to address barriers to learning that impact both the individual student and the school in order to increase student success while improving school climate. She educates students on substance abuse and mental health by developing programs throughout the districts. She works with students on a group basis and individual basis on overall health and wellness. She partners with parents, students, school resource officers, other school faculty, community coalitions, agencies and services in seeking to remove barriers that impede student success. As a Student Assistance Coordinator, Sunni utilizes both individual strategies for identified students and environmental approaches to improve the educational opportunity for all students and educators. Sunni holds a Master's degree in Psychiatric Rehabilitation from UMDNJ, a Student Assistance Coordinator certification from Kean University, and Supervisor's Certification. She is currently working towards her doctorate in Educational Leadership.

### Patrolman Sean Beamon – Ramsey Police Dept.



Patrolman Sean Beamon joined the Ramsey Police Department in January of 2013 after serving honorably in the United States Coast Guard for 6 years. While on the road, during his short career, Patrolman Beamon has already arrested over 75 people, most of them for narcotics before taking over the position of the LEAD curriculum instructor. Patrolman Beamon brings with him a wide range of knowledge, experience and training in current drug trends in the local area. Patrolman Beamon studied at the University of Duquesne in Pittsburgh, PA, and earned a BS in criminal justice. Patrolman Beamon is also a married father of three.

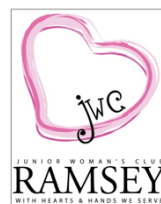
### Jenica Siniscalco, LCSW - Student Assistance Coordinator at Don Bosco Prep High School



Student Assistance Coordinator Jenica Siniscalco has worked at Don Bosco Prep since the fall of 2015, developing programming and educating students on substance use/abuse and providing individual interventions for students struggling with a variety of social, emotional, and

substance use concerns. Prior to Don Bosco Prep, she worked as the program coordinator of the adult co-occurring treatment program at High Focus Centers, where she oversaw an intensive outpatient and partial care treatment program for young adults and adults struggling with mental health and substance abuse concerns. Jenica Siniscalco holds a master's degree in social work from Fordham University, is a licensed clinical social worker who works locally adolescents and adults in a private practice.

### Collaborating Organizations



**Thank you for joining us!**