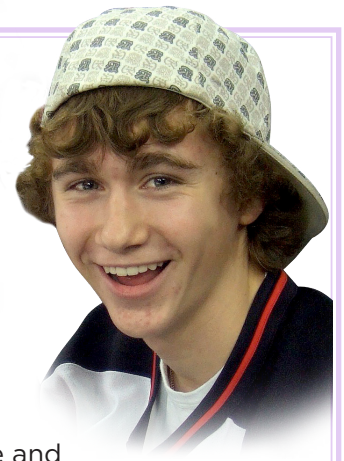


# Remembering T.J.

## *A Story of Teen Depression, Lessons and Hope*



On December 1, 2010, 16-year-old cherished son, brother, friend, varsity athlete and honor student T.J. Sefcik died by suicide. How could a boy with so much love and potential make this choice? In the hopes of preventing other teens from following the same path, T.J.'s parents, Wendy and Steve, and his 17-year-old brother Matt share T.J.'s story of living with depression. Depression in teens is a common illness. 1 in 8 teenagers experience some degree of depression. It is estimated 20% of teens will suffer at least one depressive episode before reaching adulthood.

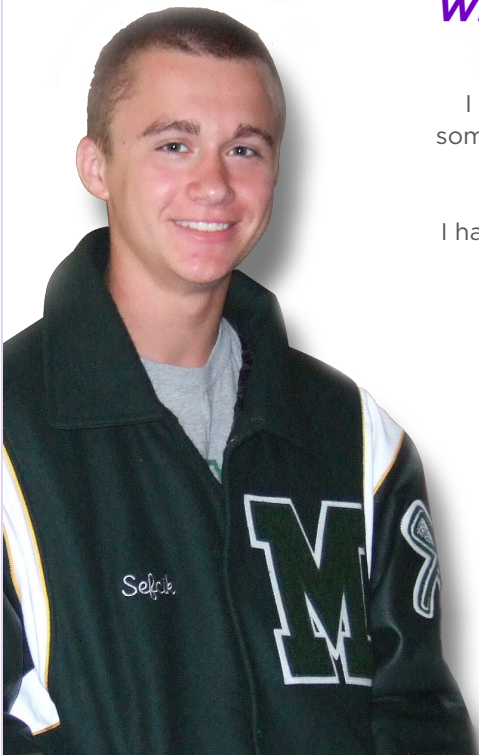
This program gives students and parents a view of what teen depression can look like and educates them to pay attention to their mental health and emotions, something that is often pushed to the side. They describe many of the red flags that are often dismissed as typical teenage behavior. Their story gives hope to teens who may be struggling and don't know what to do with how they're feeling. It empowers teens to look outside themselves to their friends and classmates, and gives parents knowledge to help understand their teens a little better.

### ***What People Are Saying...***

I want to say thank you for coming to my school today because speaking as someone with depression the presentation gave me hope today. So thank you.  
—High School student

I have received numerous compliments from all aspects of your presentations. The students had so many great discussions about the lecture. The parents have been calling and emailing about the night presentations.  
—Barbara Christianson, Student Assistant Counselor,  
Hasbrouck Heights (NJ) High School

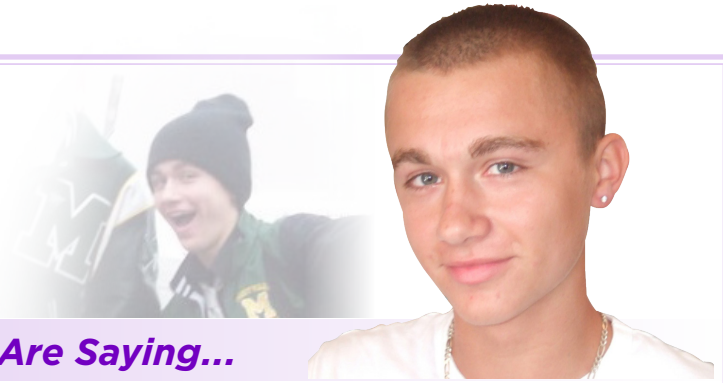
I just wanted to thank you so much for your program. I know it must be extremely difficult to talk so openly about everything that happened, but it was truly appreciated. I have to tell you the buzz and discussions that have started since the program are really great. You created openness for us to all talk about things together with friends, with our kids and among co-workers. It's been amazing to me how we all feel a little more connected. You touched on things that I took away with me forever and keep repeating in my mind. I will not be afraid. I honestly feel empowered now to a degree to be more aware and understand my children more.  
—Julie Canavatchel, parent



For information contact Wendy Sefcik at 908.227.8481 or [wendy@sefcikprod.com](mailto:wendy@sefcikprod.com)  
*There is no fee for this program.*

# Remembering T.J.

*A Story of Teen Depression,  
Lessons and Hope*



## What People Are Saying...

I can't begin to put into words my appreciation for what your family did for the entire Lazar staff and district visitors at today's presentation. If I heard once, I heard a dozen times, "This was the best workshop we ever had." It was passionate, powerful, honest, real, enlightening...the list is endless. The impact was tremendous and you have made a difference in many perspectives this morning.

—Sharon Car, Principal, Robert Lazar Middle School, Montville NJ

I want to offer my most sincere thanks and appreciation for the presentation you so graciously and powerfully delivered in my Comm 110 class. I have to say it was one of the most important aspects to the course as I discovered, both through emails and through my course evaluations. It really opened up some profound contemplation and conversations with my students and the impact it ultimately has had is beyond my ability to truly measure.

—C. Michael Elavsky, Ph.D., Associate Professor,  
College of Communications, The Pennsylvania State University

T.J. occupied every single thought I had on my drive home after your program Monday evening. As I sat in utter amazement listening to you, Steve and Matt share your story throughout the day, I couldn't help to wonder "How??" How can you speak with such compassion, such love, such sincerity? How can you watch the video, hear the music and open your hearts to allow others to learn? The answer came to me as I drove home... it's T.J.! I truly believe that the energy and spirit of T.J. lives through you to help you save lives. Every quality you each described T.J. as having in life, you all demonstrated in your presentations. I have absolutely no doubt that each and every person [youth and adult] learned a life lesson Monday.

—Michele Hart-Loughlin, Program Coordinator  
Bergen County Department of Health Services, Division of Mental Health

Thank you so much for bringing the topic [of mental health] to our attention and helping us to help others. I left with that old feeling of how much I love my job and it reminded me of why I went into teaching — to try to make a difference.

—Mary Ann Duffy, Teacher, Robert Lazar Middle School, Montville NJ

The message and gift you shared with our students and parents is one that is very rare in today's times. So often as a counselor I search for the right, moving assembly to bring to our students, faculty and parents. Too often, the message or presenters fall short of our expectations. Every time I hear your message, it far surpasses anything I could of hoped to give our students. As I sat and listened to you, Steve and Matt answer questions from concerned parents and students, I was amazed at the warmth, genuineness, and accuracy of each response. More than bringing a program to our school, you are touching lives. I know that your family and T.J. have touched mine in a way that will forever make me a better parent and a better counselor.

—Nancy Systma, Counselor, Bergen County Academies

You and your family helped to spark a conversation about mental health awareness among us teachers today. I believe that mental health is a topic that everyone should be educated on and aware of. I know from my own experience the importance of having good mental health. Hearing Matt talk today also made me aware that it is not just something adults struggle with. I hadn't really thought about how young children and pre-teens could be affected by mental health as well. After listening to your family today, I am going to make more of an effort to bring up the topic of mental health in my classroom and advisory group.

—Megan Rosenthal, Teacher, Robert Lazar Middle School, Montville, NJ

For information contact Wendy Sefcik at 908.227.8481 or [wendy@sefcikprod.com](mailto:wendy@sefcikprod.com)  
*There is no fee for this program.*