

Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education & State Representative Hannah Kane Joint Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Nationally Recognized Speaker Dr. Ruth Potee to Present “Under Construction – What every parent must know about your tween/teens brain development” Forum Presented by the Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) and Sponsored by Representative Hannah Kane

Shrewsbury, MA – On Thursday, March 5th, at 6:30pm at Shrewsbury High School in the auditorium, an important community awareness forum will be presented by the Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) and sponsored by Representative Hannah Kane, on adolescent brain development and its impact on teen risk taking, including alcohol, vaping and substance abuse. This event was initially planned in November 2019 but was rescheduled to March 5, 2020 due to an unforeseen circumstance.

This is an opportunity for elementary, middle-school and high school parents and all community members, to learn from the latest medical science and research on adolescent development, particularly when it comes to healthy brain development. Middle-school and high school youth are highly encouraged to attend.

Dr. Potee, a board-certified Family Physician and Addiction Medicine Physician, is a nationally featured speaker and recognized expert in the area of adolescent brain development and its impact on teenage risk taking. She has won compassionate care recognition for her approach to the disease of addiction and she blends scientific research with hands-on understanding of the challenges of raising healthy teens. Dr. Potee will share information in an approachable manner regarding brain chemistry, who's at risk, the role of genetics, the role of stress and trauma, and prevention and treatment options.

Dr. Potee chairs the Healthcare Solutions Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and she was honored as Massachusetts Medical Society Franklin District Clinician of the Year in 2015.

“Dr. Potee is returning to Shrewsbury after an informative and impactful presentation in November 2017. A dynamic speaker, Dr. Potee helps parents better understand the brain development in our youth and how and why risk-taking and substance abuse can be more prevalent for young people, and the life-long impact of early use of drug and alcohol. I think her forum is a critical learning opportunity for parents and students,” stated Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury).

Massachusetts is still battling an opioid addiction epidemic and with the legalization of adult-use marijuana, it is also important to understand the increased risk of dependency when youth use and the long-term impacts on brain development.

“Raising teenagers is difficult work and Dr. Potee can help all parents develop a better understanding of adolescent brain development and teens decision making processes which place every teen at risk. Addiction cuts across every socio-economic class, race, ethnicity, and gender and we have unfortunately seen the devastating impact of substance abuse, particularly opiate and nicotine/vaping addiction, has had upon families in our community. If you can only attend one evening meeting per year, this is the one you should attend”, stated Shrewsbury High School Principal Todd Bazydlo.

“The more we can learn about the workings of the teenage brain, the better we can connect to and communicate with our teens. This goes a long way toward helping our kids avoid risky behaviors such as vaping and underage drinking”, stated Oak Middle School Principal Ann Jones.

“Dr. Potee has the unique ability to make challenging and intricate subject matter come alive. She explains brain science in a way that is both approachable and entertaining. Audience members will learn exactly why substance use is so potentially dangerous to the young brain. This is a critical learning opportunity for parents and youth alike”, remarked Jennifer Rifkin, Director of Clinical Services, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services.

The Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) is comprised of a wide representation of the community joining forces to help reduce substance abuse and its consequences and impact among youth and adults in Shrewsbury. The Coalition consists of representation from youth, parents, business, law enforcement, school and public service officials, community leaders, health care professionals, faith-based organizations, media, state and local government agencies, social service providers and other community representatives working collaboratively to identify and implement community-wide strategies to address issues concerning addiction prevention and education.

SCAPE has previously held the following events open to the community and targeting parents since 2016:

- Community awareness forum on the Opioid Epidemic in April 2016.
- Screening of the film “If Only” produced by James Wahlberg of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation in October 2016.
- Presentation “Under Construction – What Every Parent Must Know About Your Tween/Teens Brain Development” in November 2017 by Dr. Ruth Potee on adolescent brain development and its impact on teen risk taking, including alcohol and substance abuse.

- Forum “Middle Schoolers at Risk: What Every Family Needs to Know” held in November 2018 with experts speaking on topics such as vaping, social media, gaming, marijuana and how to talk to your kids about them.
- Screening in March 2019 of the documentary “If They Had Known” produced by kids for kids about the risks of current party culture and the deadly results of mixing alcohol and prescription medication.

For more information please contact Representative Hannah Kane at 617-722-2810 or RepHannahKane@gmail.com or Christine Mowry of Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services at 508-845-6932 ext. 306 or cmowry@syfs-ma.org. In addition, you can find out more information on Dr. Ruth Potee at ruthpotee.com

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