



Young professionals raise funds and fun with a musical night at FitzGerald's



Thrive Associate board, left to right: Anna Biggins, Gabby Pendley, Greg Rogalla, Allie Gottlieb, Elizabeth Long, Evan Edwards, Nick Maggio, and Rachel Spears

Mental health awareness and fun were priorities for Thrive's new Associate Board, which drew about 200 people to FitzGerald's for a night of live music, good food, and fundraising.

The May 25 gathering, featuring Ian Leith and The Dozen Buzzin' Cousins, raised more than \$3,000 for Thrive. FitzGerald's and the band donated services, and local businesses offered raffle prizes.

"The success of the FitzGerald's event exceeded our expectations!" said Rachel Spears, Associate Board Chair. "It was successful not just because we were able to raise money for Thrive, but because we were able to connect across generations in a really fun way." Anna Biggins, Associate Board Member, added that her husband, Donnie Biggins, had recently started the Giving Tuesday series at FitzGerald's and "it was the perfect fit and venue for our first in-person event. The entire staff at Fitz was wonderful in accommodating us, and the bonus was the restaurant, Baby Gold, having recently opened!"

The Associate Board came together in February to support Thrive's mission of help and hope for those with mental health needs. The board aims to cultivate the next generation of leaders and volunteers for Thrive.

"Mental and emotional health is something I've been passionate about since college," Spears said. "Like many, at different times in my life, I've dealt with anxiety and had help getting through the tough times." Mental health "is a very prevalent topic" among the 25 to mid-30s age group that makes up the Associate Board, she said.

Others who are interested in learning about the Thrive Associate Board are invited to contact Elizabeth Long at elong@thrivecc.org

That uneasy feeling could be transition anxiety

Symptoms of Anxiety

- Feeling nervous or tense
- A sense of panic or danger
- Increased heart rate
- Hyperventilation
- Trouble concentrating

- Rumination
- Difficulty sleeping

Wellness Strategies

- See a therapist or doctor
- Exercise, stay active
- Do things you enjoy
- Take time for social relationships
- Avoid substance use
- Seek a support group



Life is opening up, but you can't shake a restless, nervous feeling. After a year of coronavirus caution, vaccines are available, and life is in transition.

If you're feeling anxiety, you're not alone. The American Psychological Association reports that about half of those polled expressed fear or anxiousness about in-person interactions. While older people are more at risk of serious illness from Covid-19, younger people are more likely to experience depression and anxiety as a result of the pandemic. Many individuals with existing mental health conditions have experienced more severe symptoms.

"A lot of people are feeling anxiety and confusion about what life is supposed to be like now," said Daisy Rios, LCPC, Thrive Manager of Youth Services. "They are uneasy about going out and especially going mask-less. After a period of isolation and loneliness, suddenly people are celebrating again."

Re-entry is stressful for many. It's a good time to assess how you are doing, which could change daily. Consult a clinician or doctor if your functioning has changed.

"If you are unable to go to work or get out of bed, reach out for help," said Thrive therapist Elaine Phillips, LCPC. "It is important to have a person you can talk to, someone you trust and can reach out to. It can be comforting to know someone is there for you."

OPRF students walk 52 miles for mental health



Jackson Tanner and Ezekiel Wells walked 100,000 steps for mental health awareness and Thrive

NAMI Metro Suburban. Jackson Tanner and Ezekiel Wells, cross country runners and Science Olympiad teammates at Oak Park and River Forest High School, walked 52 miles and raised more than \$15,000 to support mental health awareness.

The friends were looking for something safe and community-oriented to do during the Covid-19 pandemic. They decided to walk over 100,000 steps--two marathons--to raise funds for Thrive Counseling Center and

NAMI Metro Suburban.

"Ezekiel and I feel passionately about the issue of mental health," Jackson said. "So many people think it's a taboo topic to discuss, and we're hoping to de-stigmatize the issue."

The pair trained throughout the spring for the walk, which spanned more than 17 hours on a single day in April. They called the effort "A Step in the Right Direction."

"The walk was probably the hardest thing I have every done," Ezekiel said. "As tough as it was, it was also a very thrilling journey."

To read more about Jackson and Ezekiel's remarkable fundraiser, click [here](#)

Thrive thanks new sponsors!



Thrive welcomes three local businesses that have joined a new sponsorship program aimed at supporting mental health services and awareness in our community.



Thanks to **Forest Insurance Agency**, Forest Park; **Thomas J. Dwyer & Associates** legal services, River Forest; and **Wildflower Center for Emotional Health, LLC** Oak Park and Chicago.



Sponsor support for community mental health services makes a vital difference for our neighbors.

Thrive is THE Oak Park and River Forest Community Mental Health Center

Your gift to Thrive helps ensure that the support of a mental health professional is within reach of all members of our community.

[*Please make a gift today*](#)

Thrive Counseling Center offers crisis intervention, psychiatric treatment, individual and group therapy, and an array of wellness programs. Thrive is located at 120 S. Marion St., Oak Park IL, 60302

Contact Thrive at 708-383-7500 or visit www.thrivecc.org

