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Patriots Foundation and Mental Health Advocates Bring Groundbreaking Exhibit to Boston Common

New England Patriots Foundation, KyleCares, youth mental health experts and community leaders gathered on Boston Common to deliver an immersive display and resource fair encouraging open conversations about mental health

BOSTON – This National Suicide Prevention Month, [Active Minds](#), the country’s leading youth mental health nonprofit, brought its award-winning mental health education exhibit “[Send Silence Packing](#)” to Boston for an all-day event on **Monday, Sept. 9 on the Boston Common**. Recent data from The Massachusetts Association for Mental Health highlights a concerning trend: Suicide is the [leading cause of death](#) for youth aged 10 to 14 in the state.

In response to this crisis, [Send Silence Packing](#) is an interactive display featuring over 100 backpacks that spark conversations about mental health, centering themes of loss, survival, and resilience. The exhibit shares stories of young lives lost to suicide, encouraging youth and young adults to foster open conversations about mental health, share resources, and inspire action for mental health. The immersive exhibit has traveled nationwide for more than 16 years to engage local communities in a collective effort to address the escalating youth mental health crisis.

Send Silence Packing data indicates that three-quarters (76%) of attendees say they used the information they learned to support their own well-being and 70% used it to support friends and family members over the subsequent six months. Active Minds staff and mental health professionals were on-site during the event to speak with visitors about help-seeking tactics and how to detect signs of distress in peers.

“These powerful stories of loss and survival aim to promote much-needed nationwide conversations about mental health and encourage communities to take action,” **said Joy Sheppard, director of community programs at Active Minds**. “Our goal is to create an environment where mental health is openly discussed and prioritized. We’ve seen how Send Silence Packing inspires young adults across the country to take meaningful steps toward mental well-being, and we look forward to this exhibit driving lasting change in Boston.”

The New England Patriots Foundation has long developed programs and partnerships with local organizations to promote cultural diversity, education, family support, and health, focusing on enhancing young people’s educational needs, creativity, and character development. Their continued efforts with youth in New England, including [foster children](#), [struggling students in school](#), and [young men of color](#), are supported through their collaboration on Send Silence Packing.

“Send Silence Packing creates a powerful, interactive space for young people to engage with mental health education in a way that truly resonates,” **said Josh Kraft, president of the New England Patriots Foundation**. “We’re proud of our partnership, and are committed to breaking down mental health stigma and empowering individuals to take charge of their well-being. We’re

dedicated to fostering open discussions about mental health and advancing suicide prevention efforts, particularly in historically marginalized areas across Massachusetts.”

Send Silence Packing supports the mission of KyleCares, a leading local mental health advocacy group that has delivered stigma-reducing educational workshops, training, and programs to more than 84,000 high school and college students across New England over the past five years. With over 300 Mental Health workshops, training programs at over 100 schools across the New England region, KyleCares has empowered youth to initiate discussions about mental health.

“Over the years, we've dedicated ourselves to bringing mental health education and programming into schools, fostering open conversations about the difficult topics of mental illness, self-harm, and suicide,” said **Jim Johnson, president and co-founder of KyleCares**. “Our collaboration with Active Minds perfectly aligns with our mission to encourage young people to speak openly about mental health. We're eager to see this partnership strengthen mental health education and spark crucial conversations in our community.”

“As a father who lost my daughter to suicide, I know firsthand the devastating impact of silence surrounding mental health,” said **Mark Bresnahan, founder of Sarah's Village**. “Send Silence Packing is a critical initiative that breaks down stigma and encourages open conversations about mental health struggles. I am honored to participate in this event and stand alongside others who are committed to saving lives.”

“In 2022, suicide was one of the nine leading causes of death in the US, with more than 49,000 people dying by suicide. That's one death every 11 minutes. For youth aged 10-14 years old, suicide is the second leading cause of death. If you or someone you know is in crisis, know that you are not alone- call 9-8-8 or visit 988 lifeline.org”, said **Everett Handford, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 1**. “The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Biden- Harris Administration are dedicated to implementing comprehensive suicide prevention strategies for populations disproportionately affected by suicide, with a focus on historically marginalized communities, persons with suicide-centered lived experience, and youth. Learn the warning signs of suicide, get help for yourself or others, and together, let's make a difference.”

For more than 20 years, Active Minds' network of student-led chapters has reached students at over 600 high schools, colleges, and universities, supporting over 8 million college students. Active Minds' student-led chapters have utilized the organization's mental health [curriculum](#), [trainings](#), and discussion guides to increase awareness and action on issues of mental health.

You can view photos from the Boston stop [here](#).

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About Active Minds: Active Minds is the largest nonprofit in the United States mobilizing youth and young adults to change the culture around mental health. By amplifying the collective, diverse voice of youth and young adults, we are building a movement of lasting champions who improve mental health norms, forever changing how mental health is valued and prioritized in society. To learn more, visit www.activeminds.org.

About the New England Patriots Foundation: Robert Kraft established the New England Patriots Foundation in 1994 as a way to give back to the communities the Patriots call home. The mission of the foundation is to aid individuals and families that are often marginalized in today's society. Through the implementation of year-round programming and support of philanthropic agencies, the foundation is building stronger communities throughout New England. For more information about the New England Patriots Foundation, visit www.patriots.com/community.

About KyleCares: KyleCares is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that helps high schools and colleges in New England support student mental health by CONNECTING schools with mental health resources, FACILITATING long-term strategies, and FUNDING school-based mental health education, awareness, and suicide prevention programs. The foundation aims to eliminate student self-harm and suicide by creating school cultures where students and their caregivers have the confidence and support to seek help, without shame or hesitation. See more information at www.KyleCaresInc.org.