



GHCC Shalom Ministry Kicks Off First Mental Health Awareness Speakers



Liz Feld (right), Executive Director of RADical Hope and Gina Peterson (left), professor of nursing at Fairfield University's Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies, presented at the Greenfield Congregational Church in Fairfield on September 27, with Rev. David Rowe, pastor (center), serving as moderator. The presentation launched the church's new Shalom Ministry and shared information about RADical Hope's program for first year college students to build skills to develop their mental, physical and emotional health. Fairfield University was an early partner with the RADical Health program for their first year students.

Over forty community members attended the first evening speaker presentation hosted by the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church on September 27 as part of the church's newly launched Shalom Ministry. Liz Feld, Executive Director of the RADical Hope, shared information about their evidence-based program utilized to help first-year college students become empowered and equipped with tools and resources to support their own mental, physical and emotional health before they reach a crisis.

One of their signature programs called RADical Health trains peer leaders at colleges and universities to conduct a structured four-week mental health awareness "experience" or module for their students. The goal is to help students develop their own positive mental health habits, awareness and resiliency. Currently RADical Health has reached more than 5,000 students attending at over 25 national universities.

Fairfield University was one of the early partners with the RADical Hope Foundation and Gina Petersen, a professor of nursing at the Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies, became a peer leader and helps run one of the 4-week RADical Health experiences with first year students/peers. Gina shared her insights and observations from her leadership role about the positive impact and increased self-

awareness of students participating in the program. They left the program feeling more empowered on how to successfully monitor and maintain their own mental health and well being.

A link to the evening presentation, which was live-streamed, can be found [here](#).

The [RADical Hope Foundation](#) was founded in 2018 by Pam and Phil Martin, in honor of their son Chris, who died by suicide during his junior year in college. Recognizing the vulnerability of many first-year college students, the non-profit foundation supports and funds evidence-based programs (free of charge to partner institutions) that increase resilience in young people through core priorities: connectivity, engagement, empowerment, emotional regulation and sustainability.

This speaker series is just one part of the new [Shalom Ministry](#) launched at the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church in September 2022 by pastors Rev. David Rowe and Rev. Alida Ward. “We are living in a world with dramatically increasing need for mental health information and resources,” said David. “Our mission is to be with people in their journey through mental health crises, whether within themselves, or among loved ones; to identify and bring resources that help along that journey. We need to be an encouragement for each other; to be the source of Good News at the heart of our faith.”

Next Speaker: The GHCC Shalom Ministry will be hosting **Gary Mendell, founder of Shatterproof** on Tuesday, October 25 @ 7:00 pm in the church’s sanctuary. Shatterproof’s mission is to build a national movement to treat addiction like the chronic disease it is and offering evidence-based resources for prevention, treatment and recovery for families seeking assistance for their loved ones. Come learn from Gary, a dynamic speaker, about progress being made and the important work ahead that remains.