

Skaneateles Club That Promotes Mental Health Awareness Receives State Community Service Award

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The Morgan's Message Club at Skaneateles High School. About 80 student-athlete ambassadors are involved in the club.

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Four years ago, the Skaneateles Central School District began a club as students found interest in discussing and supporting mental health among their peers.

The club, which became an official after-school activity a couple of years ago, revolves around Morgan's Message, an initiative dedicated to mental health awareness among student-athletes.

Morgan's Message honors the late Morgan Rodgers, a Duke lacrosse player who died by suicide in 2019. The organization works "to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health in sports," according to a description.

The Skaneateles club's work with Morgan's Message led to them winning the New York State Public School Athletic Association Community Service Challenge. Skaneateles was selected out of 204 project submissions.

The club consists of 80 student ambassadors as they strive to foster open conversations and create a supportive environment.

“I am very proud of our students,” Skaneateles athletic director Steve Musso said. “We pride ourselves on being an education-based athletics program. Winning is a goal, but our purpose is much deeper than that. I think this exemplifies that belief.”

The club is guided by Kristin Moses, coordinator of student support services and family engagement at Skaneateles High School.

On Feb. 26, the club held Morgan’s Message night during the Skaneateles varsity boys basketball game against Cazenovia.



The Skaneateles varsity boys basketball team held Morgan's Message night in a home game against Cazenovia on Feb. 26. Provided Photo

Student-athletes involved in the evening shared the purpose of the school district’s club, provided resources and support to combat the mental health epidemic within the student-athlete community.

Aside from boys basketball, Skaneateles’ ice hockey and soccer teams also host Morgan’s Message nights every season.

“I witnessed firsthand how our dedication game reached far beyond the players on the court,” Moses said. “The messages we received from coaches and officials following the event were deeply moving, and a powerful reminder that mental health touches all of us — athletes, coaches, referees, and families alike.”

Moses noted that the basketball game created a space for “conversation, reflection and connection.”

“It reminded us of all that while we come together for sport, it’s our humanity that binds us and life will always matter more than the final score,” she said.

The club also sold T-shirts and stickers, along with awareness ribbons that feature information on the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline number.

Skaneateles boys basketball coach Jim Ryan noted that two of his players — [Brody Loi](#) and [Sean Olley](#) — worked with Moses to organize the Feb. 26 event.

“It’s quite an honor that the boys basketball team was able to be a part of Morgan’s Message by hosting a dedication game,” Ryan said. “Brody and Sean (as player-ambassadors) did a tremendous job working with Mrs. Moses to organize an event that touched many people in our community who attended the game. We would like to thank NYSPHSAA for recognizing the effort of our team, along with all the students here at Skaneateles who are part of the club.”

Moses mentioned that the club has raised more than \$1,000 so far this year.

“As we continue to address the challenges surrounding mental health within the student-athlete community, the efforts demonstrated by Skaneateles High School’s Morgan’s Message club are truly inspiring,” said Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director. “By actively engaging with and supporting their school’s Morgan’s Message club during their game, these student-athletes sent a powerful message — that no one is ever truly alone, and that support is always available for those who need it.”

More information on Skaneateles’ Morgan’s Message club can be found [here](#).

“We are incredibly proud of our students and the work they’ve done to support mental health awareness,” Moses said.