The Peer Institute is all about teamwork. It takes teamwork to plan for and attend the Peer Institute, to participate in team challenges, and to promote healthy messaging on your campuses. One person cannot do it all.

We were very fortunate to have a great team of advisors and students attend the Peer Institute this year. We were and continue to be inspired by your spirit, hard work, dedication, sense of self, and commitment to promoting healthy messaging on your respective campuses. The energy throughout this year’s conference was amazing.

To the Peer Institute veterans, we were thrilled to have you back this year. To the new attendees, we hope to see you again soon. We wish you all the best in your college careers and beyond, and hope that the power of peer education is something you carry with you for a lifetime.

With much PE love,
The Peer Institute Coordinators— Joe, Hillary, Michelle, Katelyn, & Matt

Hosted at Rider University, sponsored by The College of New Jersey, and funded by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, this year’s Peer Institute took place from Tuesday, June 11th to Thursday, June 13th and was attended by eleven colleges and four high schools; a wonderful turnout that exemplified peer education through collaboration. All attendees were greeted by some important safety messages from the NJDHTS including “Hang up! Just Drive,” “Drive Sober Or Get Pulled Over,” and “Click It! Or Ticket!” We hope that these words will stay with all of our attendees every time they are behind the wheel (continued on page 2).
In between team challenges and activities, attendees had a variety of opportunities to learn and utilize skills necessary for a peer educator. This occurred via trainings and presentations covering the Bacchus Gamma modules required to become a certified peer educator including: understanding the power of peer education, strategies for change in high-risk behavior, listening skills, responding and referral skills, intervention skills, developing inclusive peer education programs, programming and presentation skills, taking care of yourself, and group development and success. Additionally, the Peer Institute highlighted presentations on advertising healthy messaging through social media, learning about gambling addiction, understanding and promoting Green Dot, and empowering participants to take ownership over being a responsible driver.

Gabe Hurley - A Profound Inspiration

Peer Institute attendees were deeply moved by the story of Gabe Hurley, an extraordinary young man whose life was drastically changed in an automobile accident caused by the thoughtless irresponsibility of another driver. Despite steep challenges and adversity, Gabe inspired attendees as he shared his vigor and conviction to continue pursuing his goals and dreams. We hope to internalize and apply this message to our own lives as we always consider the responsibility we have to others to make healthy choices.

Dave Connor - Tech in Practice

Dave Connor, Assistant Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life at TCNJ, showed Peer Institute attendees some practical ways to make technology work to improve the organization, impact, and dissemination of the messages peer educators strive to promote. Highlighted in his presentation were Google Voice, Stupeflix, Rockmelt, and Poptip.

Alli Clare - How to be a Hero

Alli Clare, The Hero Campaign, taught us that all it takes to save a life is to step up and be a designated driver. We can honor the memory of John R. Elliot and save so many others’ lives by taking this simple pledge and acting on it.

The New Jersey Peer Institute was proud to be Mike Grant’s DJ debut. Mike kept attendees energetic and involved by providing entertainment between presentations, during downtime, and throughout the talent show. We’d like to thank Mike for sharing his passion for music and peer education throughout the conference (pictured in the top left-hand corner to the right)!
Peer Ed’s Have Talent

After two days of informative and exciting presentations, attendees enjoyed the Peer Institute talent show. This year, the talent show quickly developed from a few courageous souls into a plentitude of singing, dancing, dramatic skits, and old fashioned good vibrations. The whole event was led by our very own resident MC, Christina Ortiz, who put Howard Stern from America’s Got Talent to shame.

Matt Bellace Returns as Keynote

During the last day of the Peer Institute, over 120 high school students joined our college peer educators in attending the keynote presentation, delivered by Matt Bellace, Ph.D. Matt used humor and some unforgettable skits to help the audience distinguish between “bad pain” and “good pain.” While peer educators may face hurdles of “bad pain,” attendees learned that delivering healthy messaging to peers and staying consistent with peer educator goals are prime sources of “good pain.”

After Matt Bellace’s presentation, the collegiate peer educators showcased their presentation skills by presenting to the high school students on diverse topics including: healthy body image, healthy decision-making regarding drugs, alcohol, and sex, what to expect in college, healthy relationships, and making friends. As always, the high school students enjoyed hearing from different colleges about valuable topics and took useful information back to their schools to share with their peers.

Even with the hurdle of thunder and rain, peer educators showed their ability to overcome adversity and made the morning an incredible success.

Contact Information

Per your requests via evaluations, here is the contact information of some highly regarded presenters!

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Gabe Hurley
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The Peer Institute takes preparation, coordination, and a tremendous amount of dedication on the part of presenters, students, advisors, and planners. We would like to thank each and every participant who attended this year’s Peer Institute, and hope to see you back next year.

We would like to specially recognize Peer Institute Coordinators and key players who helped plan and run the event including: Joe Hadge, Michelle Gervasi, Hillary Klimowicz, Katelyn Hoobler, Matthew Bobchin, Topher Sutton, Allison Montgomery and Sara DiGiacomantonio.

Finally, we’d like to give a big thanks to all presenters, students and advisors who attended the Peer Institute:

**Presenters**
- Jeffrey M. Beck, CCGNJ
- Matt Bellace, Ph.D
- Dr. Robert Chapman, Drexel University
- Alli Clare, HERO Campaign
- Dave Connor, Fraternity & Sorority Life Assistant Director, TCNJ
- Ann DeGennaro, Livingston High School
- Gabe Hurley
- Robbin Loonan, Anti-Violence Initiatives, TCNJ
- Chris McKittrick, Counseling & Psychological Services, Monmouth University
- Allison Montgomery, Residence Director, TCNJ
- Dr. Stuart Roe, Counselor Education, TCNJ
- The College of New Jersey– SAVE Peer Educators
- Peers Educating Peers, New Jersey City University
- Rowan University-StudentCare
- William Patterson University

**Attending Schools**
- Greg Ieraci & Theresa Torsiello—Berkeley College
- Tanya Morgan—Keystone College
- Bea Rogers—Monmouth University
- Marie Cascarano, Allison Halpern & Alyssa Stokes—Montclair State University
- Emily Adler, Jennifer Mullan-Gonzalez & Charles Yarbrough—NJCU
- Alaysha Walker—Raritan Valley Community College
- Larry Tonetti—Rider University
- Allie Pearce—Rowan University
- Christina Ortiz—Rutgers Newark
- Hue-Sun Ahn & Michelle Gervasi—The College of New Jersey
- Marianne Edmond—William Patterson University
- Hopewell Valley Central High School—Lois Fyfe
- Ewing High School—Kelly Ahearn
- Katzenbach—Heather Osowski
- Montgomery High School—Christine Grossman

Check out NJ Peer Institute on Facebook!