FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District and Full Service Community Schools launch
“Adjusting to Change Community Circle”

Weekly online workshops aimed at helping people during time of great social concerns and continuing pandemic

PATerson – Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer today announced the launch of the “Adjusting To Change Community Circle,” a weekly online virtual workshop run in collaboration with the district’s Full Service Community Schools to help people build connections during the current time of great social concerns and the continuing pandemic.

“To say that we are in an unusual time is an understatement. The pandemic confronted us with challenges we never expected to face, and the need for social justice is a concern that none of us can ignore,” said Shafer. “It is time when people need to be more connected, not less. And that is why this weekly virtual community circle has been launched. It is place where people can go to be connected with others as well as any resources they may need.

The “Adjusting To Change Community Circle” is held on Zoom every Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. Anyone in Paterson is welcome to join the meeting. The meeting is moderated by licensed clinical social workers from Health N Wellness Services, LLC, which is led by Denise Hajjar.

“As the COVID-19 numbers began to mount along with the phone calls from frightened, affected families, our behavioral health team was compelled to find a counseling program to collectively reach out to our Paterson families who were dealing with the isolation from stay-at-home orders and confusion of navigating home schooling. Many were experiencing pain, grief and trauma from loss,” said Hajjar. “We modeled our Family Circles from ‘Project Fleur-de-lis’(PFDL), a school-based program of Mercy Family Center in New Orleans, which was created in direct response to the overwhelming mental health needs of youth and families in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Brené Brown, professor and author recently said, ‘This pandemic experience is a massive experiment in collective vulnerability.’ The goal of our community circles is to provide an empathetic embrace where families can share their pain from both COVID-19, and the devastating hurricane of unthinkable social injustice, as we navigate these unprecedented challenges together in hopes of gaining collective strength and insight to what lies ahead.”

To join the meeting, participants should visit zoom.us/join, then enter meeting ID 613 683 0507, and then enter the password, Circle.

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