

Choices

Access to Mental Health Answers



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SMILE AWARD

And the winner is...

The goal with the SMILE Award is to recognize champions of youth mental health across the United States. This lifetime achievement is a significant award recognizing those who have gone above-and-beyond the typical towards solving the mental health crisis facing us today.



INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Rhainazelle Manzano from California, has been awarded the Individual SMILE Award for her work as a Behavioral Care Manager. Specializing in supporting youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities, Rhainazelle's impact goes beyond clinical duties, reflecting a profound dedication to the well-being of the children she supports. She extends her influence to a broader spectrum of mental health conditions, advocating for evidence-based, personalized approaches in treatment plans, as well as transcends professional boundaries to spend her personal time volunteering with Feed the Children.



"My inspiration for advocating for youth mental health stems from the empathy and unwavering passion for the children I've had the opportunity to work with. I'm fueled by my commitment to champion an individualized approach to behavioral therapy. Witnessing tangible improvements in behavior, emotional regulation, and overall well-being solidified this dedication to advocating for effective policies and practices," said Manzano. "This, coupled with my academic journey, empowered me to bridge the gap between research and practice. I'm grounded in creating a brighter and more hopeful future for young individuals facing mental health challenges."

photo credit - provided by recipient

SMILE CORPORATE AWARD

Youth Guidance in Chicago, Illinois has been awarded the SMILE Award for their profound work to provide resources and tools that equip young individuals with the skills to manage stress, cope with adversity and build emotional intelligence. Through a combination of educational programs, post-secondary opportunities, workshops and outreach initiatives - specifically its emotional services programs including Evolve its social-emotional learning (SEL) program, Becoming A Man® (BAM®) and Working on Womanhood (WOW) programs - Youth Guidance's active approach to supporting youth mental health helps create a future where every young person can thrive emotionally, academically, personally and have a bright future.

Entering its 100th year of service, Youth Guidance has served nearly 15,000 youth, many of whom face barriers to success in school, especially given environment-induced stresses such as neighborhood and family experiences. Youth Guidance counsels youth and families while simultaneously working within schools to instill systems and programs that will serve as interventions to create healthy resilience in students. This work leads to higher student success rates and better overall outcomes.

"Youth Guidance is committed to providing resources and tools that equip young individuals with the skills to manage stress, cope with adversity, and build emotional intelligence," said Dr. Nacole Milbrook, Chief Program Officer at Youth Guidance. "We understand the unique challenges faced by today's youth and place a special emphasis on advocating for mental health initiatives that empower young individuals to navigate these challenges with both resilience and confidence. We aim to dismantle the stigma by fostering open conversations and creating a supportive environment where mental health concerns are met with empathy,

understanding, and effective intervention. We're honored to be accepting an award from an organization like Choose Mental Health whose mission is so closely aligned with our own."



**YOUTH
GUIDANCE**
GUIDING KIDS TO BRIGHT FUTURES

photo credit - Youth Guidance website

WELCOME NOIZ AS OUR NEWEST PARTNER

We are delighted to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our newest partner, Noiz for their support in making Choose Mental Health's inaugural event, MindQuest LIVE, a resounding success.

#ARKade Ambassadors rose to the occasion and challenged their community to not only raise funds, but to share their own personal mental health stories. Noiz (Noiz.gg) creating this connection and showing their dedication to fostering a community that cares about

mental health has not only elevated the profile of MindQuest LIVE but has also significantly contributed to the overall success of our event and mission. We sincerely appreciate their generosity, creativity, and teamwork, and we look forward to continuing this impactful journey together for future mental health celebrations.



noiz

SMILE AWARD PICKED UP NATIONALLY

The SMILE Award news was picked up by several outlets. The award represents “Sustained Mental Health Initiatives and Lifetime of Excellence” Click on media logos for press release.





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