



**BATAVIA
PUBLIC
SCHOOL
DISTRICT 101**

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CHIP IN Batavia and Batavia United Way Team Up to Fund New Mental Health/Substance Abuse Program at Batavia High School

December 2, 2016 (Batavia, IL) - When the founders of **CHIP IN Batavia** (Community Helpers Impacting People In Need) and executive director of the **Batavia United Way** heard that on-site counseling services for low-income and homeless students at Batavia High School were needed, they swooped in to help fund a new mental health/substance abuse program for these students.

“We have several at-risk students with financial barriers who need help. They are using or at-risk of using drugs and alcohol, at risk of suicide, or exhibiting signs of high anxiety or depression. All are at risk of academic failure,” said Lisa Palese, BPS101 Director of Student Services. “We want to make sure that this group of students is fully supported with services in the building. Our goal is to help them immediately understand the impact of anxiety, depression, and destructive behaviors, and to teach them healthy coping skills and safer alternatives that do not involve drugs and alcohol.”

The BPS101 Student Services Dept. sent a proposal to Joanne Spitz and Melinda Kintz, founders of CHIP IN Batavia to offer a 16-week drug/alcohol program and suicide prevention services for these students. Kintz is also the Executive Director of the Batavia United Way and involved that organization, too. The proposal was swiftly approved, allowing services to start at the beginning of 2017.

With the additional supports in place for students facing financial hardships, BHS counselors and social workers will be more available to help all BHS students with social-emotional needs.

“We are so grateful for the continued support of CHIP IN Batavia and Batavia United Way,” said BPS101 Superintendent Dr. Lisa Hichens. “Both service organizations provide valuable programs and numerous supplies to our students and families in need, including Success by 6, Adopt a Family, BHS/Elementary Mentoring Program, Prom Dress Drive, filled backpacks, food, clothing, transportation, and much more. Their support of this prevention-based mental health/substance abuse program positively impacts our entire community.”

Parents and students interested in learning more about adolescent mental health and substance abuse prevention should visit the Office of Adolescent Health website at <http://hhs.gov/ash/oah>. For information about programs in place at BPS101, please contact Lisa Palese, BPS101 Student Services Director, at lisa.palese@bps101.net.