



September 30, 2023



# Building Bridges of Hope

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**Ashley Judd**

*Award-Winning Actress  
Political Activist & Advocate for Social Justice  
Global Humanitarian*

## 15th Annual Wellness Conference

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The Conference Center at Mercer  
1200 Old Trenton Rd.  
Princeton Junction, NJ

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Sign-in/Breakfast .....	8:15 - 9:00 am
Plenary/Welcome/Intros.....	9:15 - 9:30 am
Fireside Chat with Ashley Judd .....	9:30 -10:30 am
Workshop I .....	10:45 - 11:45 am
Compelling Conversations 1A .....	10:45 - 11:10 am
Compelling Conversation 1B .....	11:20 - 11:45 am
Lunch .....	12:00 - 1:00 pm
Workshop II .....	1:15 - 2:15 pm
Compelling Conversations IIA .....	1:15 - 1:40 pm
Compelling Conversations IIB .....	1:50 - 2:15 pm
Closing Activity .....	2:25 - 3:00 pm

"Love Can Build A Bridge"

***Register by September 22, 2023 at  
[weblink.donorperfect.com/Harvest of Hope 2023](http://weblink.donorperfect.com/Harvest of Hope 2023)***

***or scan:***



For more information:  
[www.namimercer.org](http://www.namimercer.org) | 609.799.8994

# Ashley Judd, Special Guest

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Ashley is a Golden Globe and Emmy-nominated actress who adroitly stars in both indie gems and box office hits. A feminist and social justice humanitarian, she is the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, advocating for the sexual and reproductive rights and health for girls and women worldwide. She has traveled to 22 countries, spending time in brothels, refugee camps, hospices, and slums, learning directly from the vulnerable and resilient about male sexual violence and how to overcome gender inequality. Her *New York Times* bestselling book, *All That Is Bitter & Sweet*, chronicles these journeys. Her forthcoming travels summer 2023 are to Slovakia, Ukraine, and the Sahel.

Ashley graduated from the Honors Program at the University of Kentucky and earned an MPA from Harvard's John F. Kennedy's School of Government. Her paper, *Gender Violence: Law and Social Justice*, was awarded the Dean's Scholar Award at Harvard Law School. She has been Leader in Residence at the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School.

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She serves on several boards, including the International Center for Research on Women, the Rape and Incest National Network, Demand Abolition, the Gloria Steinem Sex Equality Fund to End Trafficking in Women, and is Ambassador for Culture Reframed (focusing on the public health crisis of pornography). She is Chairperson of the Women's Media Center Speak Project: Curbing Abuse, Expanding Freedom. Her TED Talk about online misogyny has over two million views.

She is a sought after public speaker and frequent OpEd author on topics as diverse as conflict mineral mining and child marriage. Recently, she wrote in the *New York Times* about her beloved mother's death by suicide and the need for privacy laws in such tragedies.

Ashley was *Time* magazine's Person of the Year in 2017 as one of the Silence Breakers. In 2019, the United Nations honored her as Global Advocate of the Year.



Ashley lives part of each year in the Central African rain forest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where her partner has a bonobo research camp. Bonobos, our closest living relatives, are egalitarian, matriarchal, and free from male sexual violence. Their stable and peaceful societies are undergirded by female coalitions. They give her hope.

# David Lee White, Guest Interviewer

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NAMI Mercer welcomes back David Lee White, award-winning playwright/performer/educator, who interviewed actor Maurice Benard at Night IN with NAMI in 2020 and ABC meteorologist Ginger Zee at Harvest of Hope in 2022. A lifelong devotee of using the arts to build and celebrate community, David has collaborated with local theaters and educational institutions to stage comedies, musicals, and verbatim theater.

Throughout his career, David has been a vocal advocate for mental health. As one of the inaugural group of playwrights to receive commissions from the New Jersey Performing Arts Centers' Stage Exchange Program, he wrote *Fixed*, a play about navigating the mental healthcare system. His mental health awareness work continued with *Panther Hollow*, a solo show about his battle with clinical depression in his youth.

For 14 years, David was the associate artistic director at Passage Theatre in Trenton, NJ, which specializes in community-based works. While there, he wrote the farces *Blood: A Comedy* and *Slippery as Sin* as well as oral histories *Trenton Lights and Profiles*, co-created with Artistic Director June Ballinger. He continues to work with Passage Theatre and recently helped create the shows *The OK Trenton Project* and *Janet Wide-Awake* with co-writer Rich Bradford.

David's work with Kate Brennan on *The Infinity Trilogy* has been seen at theatres, colleges and high schools all over the country and was the recipient of a MAP Fund award. *ALiEN8*, the first musical in the trilogy, was recently performed at the Bucks County Playhouse this August and is now available through YouthPLAYS. The second musical, *Clean Slate*, premiered at Rider University and Passage Theatre. David currently teaches improvisational comedy and theatre history at Drexel University. He is also the new artistic director of OnStage Seniors in Princeton.

# Mandala and Zentangle Art: Perfect Together

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## Workshop Description

In this workshop, you will learn the basics of Zentangle, an inventive and relaxing method of art, to create a mandala. In ancient Sanskrit, mandala means "circle," a geometric form that represents the universe. The repetition of symmetric designs in these art forms will help you to unwind from stress, feel peace, and express your creativity. No experience is necessary, and you do not need artistic ability.

## Meet Diane Forer, BA



*Diane Forer is a retired art educator in the East Brunswick Public School System. During her years there, she received a Middlesex County Governor's Outstanding Teacher Award. She also completed courses to earn the title of Master Teacher in the East Brunswick schools. Her passion to teach and create art has not diminished since retirement.*

*She currently teaches painting parties for nonprofits, Girl Scouts, teachers, friends, churches, and women's organizations for fun and to encourage everyone to find their inner artist. Diane received Honorable Mention awards for non-professional art submissions in the Mercer County Senior Art Shows of 2021 and 2022.*



***Art washes away from the soul  
the dust of everyday life.***

-Pablo Picasso

# Navigating Bipolar Disorder: From Hopeless to Hopeful

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## Workshop Description

This workshop will describe the characteristics of bipolar disorder and the differences between Bipolar 1 (BP1) and Bipolar 2 (BP2). Kelly will present several case examples, including that of Tamara Peters, who will recount her personal experience. You will learn about common medications, treatment options, and tips and tools for navigating a BP diagnosis to enjoy a full life. There will be time for questions from participants.

## Meet Kelly McGlynn, LCSW

*Kelly McGlynn is a licensed clinical social worker with more than a decade of experience guiding clients with bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, and borderline personality disorder. Her specialized training includes Eye Movement and Desensitization in 2020 and Intensive Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) in 2012.*



## Meet Tamara Peters, MA

*Tamara Peters, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder with psychotic features at the age of 38, is a client of Kelly McGlynn. Prior to her diagnosis in 2018, Tamara experienced periods of depression and elevated mood. She earned an MA in Mental Health Counseling from The College of New Jersey and is associate director of Career Student Communities at Rutgers University. She also is the proud mother of a beautiful nine-year-old girl.*



# Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills for Family and Caregivers

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## Workshop Description

This workshop will touch on the four components of DBT: Mindfulness, Emotion Regulation, Distress Tolerance, and Interpersonal Effectiveness. Participants will gain basic knowledge of DBT and review specific adaptations of this theoretical approach to their relationships with loved ones who are experiencing emotional difficulties associated with mental illness. Practicing DBT will increase participants' understanding of the emotional and behavioral responses of both their loved one and themselves.

## Meet Gerilyn Suschke, MA, NCC, LPC, ACS



*Gerilyn Suschke is a therapist with an MA in Counseling and Personnel Services from The College of New Jersey (1999). She has extensive experience providing outpatient therapy services to adults and adolescents, including individuals, couples, families, and groups. She is a trained practitioner of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Rational Motive Behavioral Therapy (REBT). Over the past 23 years, she has worked in many roles in the mental health community including as a program director, clinical director, clinical supervisor, and educator. Currently she is the owner of Breakthrough Counseling and Behavioral Health, LLC in Hamilton NJ.*



# Ask the Doctor

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## Workshop Description

This workshop offers a safe and empathic environment to seek answers to your questions about psychiatric problems and treatment options. Dr. Jones will guide you with actionable information to navigate your personal or loved one's journey to recovery.

## Meet Dr. Jones, DO

*Dr. Jones is the medical director for the inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Pennsylvania. Prior to her current position, Dr. Jones served as vice chairperson of the Behavioral Health Department at Crozer Health/Crozer-Chester Medical Center and medical director of Behavioral Health at Christiana Care Union Hospital in Cecil County, PA. She has 11 years of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, including the following disorders: emotional, psychotic, mood, anxiety, adjustment, substance-related disorders, and sexual and gender identity disorders. Before her career in psychiatry, Dr. Jones was the Florida State Influenza Coordinator. She received her BS in Biology from Florida A&M University, her MS in Cellular and Molecular Biology from Florida A&M University, and her DO from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Jones completed her residency in Psychiatry at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of NJ/Rowan.*



# Tai Chi: A Gentle Path to Building Strength

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## Workshop Description

Tai Chi is a time-honored exercise that is used to enhance health, balance, and confidence. This workshop will teach you how to improve deep breathing, balance, and lower body/leg strength using various slow, smooth movements. These movements are usually done in a standing position but can also be done seated.

## Meet Liz Wilk, MS



*Liz Wilk is a certified elementary school teacher with a BA in Spanish and an MS in Education. With 34 years of experience teaching elementary school children in New York and New Jersey, Liz also loves working with adults and has taught in adult literacy programs. Liz was introduced to Tai Chi in 2005 by Eliza Hammer, her Yoga teacher at a studio in*

*Pennington. She continued practicing Tai Chi with Eliza and others at the Pennington Ewing Athletic Club (PEAC). After the club closed due to COVID, she continued her practice at Schaefer Sports Center in Ewing as part of the Simply Fit Program. She teaches Tai Chi whenever she can.*



*In Tai Chi, yin and yang mean "empty foot and solid foot, stepping forward and backward, moving hands up and down, breathing in and out."*

# Compelling Conversations

## Meet Our Communicators

**Andrea —**

### **Post-Partum Depression and OCD**

*Near the end of my first (and only) pregnancy, I became very anxious and started having distressing thoughts about harming myself and others. My son's birth amplified these symptoms, and I was hospitalized with a diagnosis of postpartum depression. Later, I was also diagnosed with OCD. Through my experience in recovery, I've become passionate about perinatal mental health, advocacy, and letting other moms know they are not alone.*



**Bette —**

### **Daughter of a Mother with Untreated Bipolar Disorder**

*I will share my journey of learning how to navigate an overwhelming unpredictable family life due to an emotionally unavailable mother. I was able to thrive despite my roller-coaster upbringing by parents unable to show love.*



**Didi —**

### **Bipolar Disorder**

*Back in the summer of 1994, I was looking forward to my first year at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, when a prominent psychiatrist diagnosed that I had bipolar disorder along with a slew of other comorbid mental issues. Now, twenty-nine years later, having lived with "the beast of bipolar disorder," I would like to talk with you about my experience and how you can impact your own recovery.*



# Compelling Conversations

## Meet Our Communicators

**Elaine and Mark —**

### **Parents of a Daughter with Bipolar Disorder**

*We suspected something “not quite right” about our daughter’s behavior very early on. Unlike clearly defined developmental delays, there were no emotional development milestones against which to measure her progress. We would like to share our experience with parenting a child with an unknown serious mental illness that was not identified as bipolar disorder until she was 18.*



**Jennifer —**

### **Multiple Attempts at Suicide**

*At twelve years of age, I was suffering from depression, anxiety, and PTSD but kept my pain a secret because of stigma. My silence was broken by my suicide attempts, resulting in outpatient, inpatient, and residential therapy. It took years for me to admit that I needed help. Mental health recovery is a lifelong journey, and I have become the champion of speaking up and seeking treatment.*



**Jim —**

### **Nephew of a Godfather with Schizophrenia**

*Ever since I’ve known my uncle/godfather, he has struggled with mental illness. He has been missing, homeless, and in and out of various programs; he has tried lots of different treatments and medications over the years. Although his illness has taken an enormous toll on my family, he has shown us what it means to be truly patient, accepting, compassionate and to express unconditional love.*



# Compelling Conversations

## Meet Our Communicators

**Joyce —**

**Daughter of Mother and Mother of Children with Depression and OCD**

*There is a strong genetic component of mental illness in my family. Each generation has struggled, but we support each other and have been fortunate to find good treatment. Mental illness has been an unwelcome visitor that we all learned to challenge and embrace towards wellness.*



**Maia —**

**PTSD and Mixed Mood Disorder**

*Growing up in a low income, single-parent family, I struggled with finding ways to treat my mental illnesses. My adversity came to a head when my house burned down three days before I was due to move into college for my freshman year. Since then, combined with support from my mom, partner, and those around me, I've been able to seek treatment and find the sense of stability I once lacked.*



**Rob —**

**Father of a Son with Mental Illness**

*When I dropped my son at college freshman year, all went well. I didn't expect that two months later, I would be taking him home with severe, debilitating anxiety and depression. Join me to hear my journey from lack of understanding to acceptance and all that goes with it.*



# Compelling Conversations

## Meet Our Communicators



**Sharon —**

### **Mother of a Daughter with Personality and Bipolar Disorders**

*It was not until my daughter's involuntary hospitalization that the severity of her illness became a priority. We have learned a new way to communicate and now share respect for each other's needs. With help from NAMI Family to Family education, we were able to navigate the difficult barriers that impact persons with mental illness. I advocate for my daughter as best I can.*



**Stosh —**

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

*Unknowingly growing up with autism led to my facing problems with suicidal ideation and anxiety. Having the opportunity to get professional help enabled me to improve my self-esteem, develop new coping skills, and find a sense of purpose.*



**Tom —**

### **Father of a Son with Schizophrenia**

*After a heroic 15-year battle with schizophrenia, my beloved son took his own life last year. His mother and I will grieve his loss forever, but we are thankful for the many things our son taught us about dealing with adversity. Through his psychodysey, we learned to lead with compassion, to respect his sovereignty, and other important ways to help our loved ones with mental illness.*

# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



We are grateful to all the organizations who work with us, support us, and will be joining us as exhibitors at this year's conference.

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*A Night at the Races*

**Saturday,  
November 18, 2023  
6-10 pm**





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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**