



PRESS RELEASE

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MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES LIZA LONG AND ERIC WALTON TO BE FEATURED SPEAKERS AT THE NETWORK FOR JEWISH HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES' 2018 CONFERENCE

Author of I am Adam Lanza's Mother and her teenage son share their journey to find appropriate care and support for the boy's bipolar disorder

March 21, 2018 [Paramus, NJ] – The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) announced today that mental health advocate Liza Long and her teenaged son, Eric Walton, will speak about one of the most underserved populations – teenagers with mental health issues – at its **2018 Conference: Unifying Our Human Service Voice**. To be held in Chicago, IL, April 29 to May 1, 2018, the conference's core themes are innovation, advocacy, best practices and collaboration.

“Supporting people, especially youth, who face mental illness is one of social service agencies’ most challenging efforts,” said Reuben Rotman, CEO of NJHSA, the leading voice for Jewish human service agencies in the US, Canada and Israel. “I am honored that Liza and Eric will join us to share their personal experience and perspectives about getting past the stigma of mental health, building awareness and gaining resources for much-needed services.”

Well known for her essay “I am Adam Lanza’s Mother,” [Liza Long](#) is a writer, educator and a children’s mental health advocate. Her 2015 book *The Price of Silence: A Mom's Perspective on Mental Illness* has been described as “a searing indictment of the lack of affordable care available for the treatment of mentally ill adolescents.”

Long is the mother of four children, one of whom has bipolar disorder. She began her blog, The Anarchist Soccer Mom, in 2007, when her family’s personal tragedy intersected with the public tragedy of the shootings in Newtown, Massachusetts. Long spoke at TEDx San Antonio in October 2013 and regularly contributes to the Huffington Post and Psychology Today.

Long’s son, **Eric Walton**, has bipolar disorder, a neurological condition that, when untreated, made his life difficult. When treated, he’s like any other normal teenager. Walton presented a TEDx-Boise talk about growing up with a mental illness in 2016. He has appeared in the Nova documentary *Mind of a Rampage Killer* and was featured on NPR’s national StoryCorps, among other appearances. Walton was appointed to the Idaho Intergovernmental Agency Task Force to redesign Idaho’s children’s mental health system in 2016 and continues to serve.

Other speakers will include innovation guru **Jeff DeGraff** and **David Axelrod**, Senior Political Commentator, CNN, and Host, The Axe Files; Director, University of Chicago Institute of Politics; and Obama's Chief Campaign Strategist and Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama (2009-2011).

Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA)

The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies was formed in May 2017 when the two leading Jewish service organizations – the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies (AJFCA) and the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS) – joined forces. NJHSA is a membership association of more than 140 non-profit organizations in the United States, Canada and Israel. The Network's members provide a full range of human services to the Jewish community and beyond, including healthcare, career, employment and mental health services, as well as programs for youth, families and caregivers, seniors, Holocaust survivors, immigrants and refugees, and persons with disabilities. The Network strives to be the leading voice for the sector, to be the go-to place for innovation, best practices, collaboration and advocacy, as well as to strengthen agencies to better serve their communities. Visit <http://www.networkjhsa.org> for more information.

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