

Skin Screening Comes to GRHS
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Glen Ridge: May is Melanoma Awareness Month and in an effort to educate the community, the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation has selected Glen Ridge High School as the site for a free skin screening for students and faculty on May 19th. This unique opportunity is part of a larger awareness campaign about the importance of prevention and the early detection of melanoma and other skin cancers. After hosting two very successful skin screenings at Montclair High School, the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (RFMF) wanted to expand its reach into neighboring communities.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to raise our students' awareness of melanoma and other skin cancers and were thrilled to be selected by the Foundation for the skin screening,” says Glen Ridge High School Principal Dirk Phillips. “We want to teach our students about the importance of taking care of themselves. This includes taking the necessary precautions to prevent skin cancer,” he says.

The event will run from noon to 3:00 pm on May 19th and is open to all GRHS faculty, staff and students in grades 7-12. Students and staff will have the opportunity to learn about proper sunscreen application, gather tips and information, and then will be treated to favor bags and treats. Privacy pods will be set up in the gym and all exams will be conducted by a medical team led by Dr. Daniel Groisser of The Dermatology Group. Dr. Groisser is a Board certified Dermatologist and Medical Director of the RFMF. The RFMF is asking for students to pre-register for screening appointments by logging onto www.rayfesta.org.

“The students at Glen Ridge High School take matters about their health pretty seriously so I am hoping for a great turn-out at the screening,” says RFMF student liaison and GRHS junior Olivia Mason. “I want to make sure my friends and classmates use sunscreen and learn about protecting our skin—now and in the future,” Mason says. To encourage participation, Mason and her team of student volunteers have been walking the halls with stickers that read, “Got Skin? Get Screened.”

According to the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation, 1 in 150 people will be diagnosed with melanoma this year and about 48,000 will die from melanoma in the United States. “The numbers are staggering and since there is no known cure for this form of cancer, the best defense is early detection,” says Teri Festa, RFMF executive director. Unfortunately, melanoma strikes people as young as 12 years old, according to the Foundation, and is more prevalent in those who have extended exposure to the sun. “Teens are a particularly vulnerable group since our children spend a lot of time outdoors socializing, playing sports and tanning. Educating teens about the proper use of sunscreen will enable them to make smart choices about time spent in the sun,” Festa says.

GRHS Principal Phillips sees this event as a great first step on the path to healthy living. “We are urging all our students and staff to participate in this screening. Hopefully this is a big step for the members of GRHS community to develop healthy practices that will lead to a happy and skin cancer free life,” he says.



Memorandum

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About the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (www.rayfesta.org)

The mission of the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation is to educate on the importance of early detection and the prevention of melanoma. As a youth-targeted organization, we strive to change behavior and make the act of applying sunscreen to become as commonplace as wearing a seatbelt is today. Much of this work is being done by aligning with sports leagues, teams and athletes. Ray Festa died of melanoma in 1992 at the young age of 53. He was diagnosed too late. His family took their unfortunate story and, along with others, formed the Foundation to both honor his memory and help save others from his regrettable fate. For additional information, interviews and press kits, contact Teri Festa at teri@rayfesta.org or 973.744.3557. Find us on rayfesta.org, Facebook and Twitter

About Ray Festa.

Ray Festa was born, raised and remained a lifelong resident of Montclair, New Jersey. A 1957 Montclair High School graduate, Ray was an outstanding athlete and a committed leader in all aspects of high school life. As an adult, Ray was the owner of Ray's Luncheonette, a beloved lunch spot for many MHS students and all members of the community. Ray's Luncheonette became a gathering place for fun, for conversation, for community involvement and for relaxation – all in a wholesome, friendly environment. Ray's business embodied his values – family, civic responsibility, sports, and the development of young people – and Ray became a large part of the fabric of the Montclair community. At the young age of 53, Ray was taken from family and friends as a result of melanoma. The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation was created to support the furtherance of Ray's values throughout his community and around the country.

About Melanoma

Melanoma is a malignant tumor of melanocytes which are found predominantly in skin but also in the bowel and the eye. Malignant melanoma is a serious type of skin cancer that causes the majority of skin cancer related deaths. It is due to uncontrolled growth of pigment cells, called melanocytes. Despite many years of intensive laboratory and clinical research, the sole effective cure is surgical resection of the primary tumor before it achieves a Breslow thickness greater than 1 mm.

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