Mental Health in Literature, STEM Resource, and QSA!

June 2019

Spotlight
Kariba Allen, Author of Mommy's Monster

Created in empathy, Mommy's Monster is the story of a mother's struggle with bipolar disorder, depicted through the eyes of her five-year-old daughter. With no precedence for her mother's behavior, the young girl creates an imaginary monster as the reason for her mother's oddities.

Very rarely do adults speak to children about their emotional sentiment, leaving children to garner feelings of abandonment, neglect or latent resentment. This book has been created to encourage open dialogue between adults and children around emotional vulnerability. It is also a reminder that children face disparities at home that greatly impact the way that they experience the world outside of their residence. Because of this, they are also in need of consistent mental wellness checks.

The author, Kariba Allen, is a youth development professional with over 15 years of experience in the facilitation of social emotional learning in afterschool programming. Her additional experience as a former relationship advice contributor for the international online magazine, MadameNoire, has allowed her to pen Mommy's Monster with both parent and child in mind.

The daughter of a single parent with bipolar disorder, Kariba struggled with her own emotional identity for many years prior to consciously focusing on personal development through wise counsel and spiritual alignment. Her children's book embodies the experience of her younger self in understanding her mother's behavioral tendencies. Written therapeutically, Mommy's Monster allowed her to bridge the gap in the relationship between her and her mother in adulthood.
For more information visit [https://www.karibaallen.com/](https://www.karibaallen.com/) or contact Kariba at kariba.langwilliams@avenues.org

**STEMgineering Academy Lesson Activities**

STEMgineering Academy is a STEM program designed to drive STEM equity and engagement with middle schoolers in afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs. The program’s focus is on fun, hands-on activities where kids learn through designing, building, and evaluating.

Some of their activities include:

- **Splash Down!** – Kids design and play a game using squirting water from pressurized containers – an outdoor activity for a warm day
- **Prosthetic Challenge** – Kids design and build a prosthetic leg to specification using household materials
- **Is all Slime Engineered Equally?** – Kids make, test, and then design a new test for polymer properties of their slime

The preparation for facilitators includes video and text guides that are available online. The trainings are easy to use so that someone with little to no STEM background can engage youth in the lesson.

To learn more visit [www.STEMgineeringAcademy.org](http://www.STEMgineeringAcademy.org), or contact Ellen.Furuya@Hofstra.edu

**Self-Assessment for Quality Improvement**

The [Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool](http://www.nystate.net) is designed to be a self-assessment, allowing users to participate in the quality improvement process in a low-stakes way. Stakeholders, such as program leaders, front-line staff, participants, parents, school staff, and more, can observe and rate the program without fear of negative repercussions from funders or other external sources as the responses are only shared with the other stakeholders in the process. This also encourages all users to fill out the self-assessment as honestly as possible. It is imperative to figure out where the program is starting so that the improvements made are targeted, efficient, and effective.

If you are just embarking on this process, don’t worry if your program rates at a one or a two in areas. While programs should eventually strive for a level three or higher, the important thing is to identify areas in need of improvement and create and follow a plan to make those improvements. And, don’t forget to celebrate the areas that area already ranking a three or a four! This process also helps build consensus, communication, and buy in through focus group discussions to incorporate feedback from all stakeholders.

Learn more about self-assessment and how to create continuous quality improvement [here](http://www.nystate.net).
Upcoming Events

6/9: STEM Teacher Expo, Teachers College, New York, NY
STEMteachersNYC's Annual STEM Teacher Expo, a teacher-led forum exploring the future of STEM Education in NYC and beyond. Drawing from their member network, the event will include live demos and displays, an interactive unconference, and presentations from teachers and practitioners working in the field today. Click here to register.

6/12 & 6/19: Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series
This two part train-the-trainer webinar experience provides participants with a copy of the Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series, a three-part digital training tool that includes recorded videos that cover topics including, "Examining Our Own Risk and Protective Factors," "What Resilience Means to Me," and "Introduction to the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey - 23 Questions That Can Change the Way You Look at Life." Trainers and coaches will learn to use this innovative, digital tool to promote adult wellness in a variety of settings, including staff meetings, in-service trainings and parent workshops. Join Nefertiti and learn how you can create an overall culture of resilience. Register here. (Registration closes June 5).

6/24: Strengthening Organizations Through Corporate Engagement, New York, NY
Participants will explore what a corporation values in nonprofit partnerships and identify the varied ways to connect with corporate partners in substantive ways. In this workshop, participants will learn how to establish meaningful and impactful ongoing partners in the private sector and learn how to develop an effective and sustainable structure for continued partnership. Registration begins 6/3/19. Click here to register.

7/1-8/9: STEM Summer Institute 2019, Teachers College, New York, NY
The STEMTeachersNYC STEM Institute brings together educators from around the country for innovative, hands-on, and teacher-led professional development in STEM. Choose from over a dozen workshops in biology, physics, chemistry, computer science, elementary STEM, and more. Work side by side with active classroom teachers and revolutionize the way you teach science using a student-centered active learning approach, shown to increase classroom engagement and understanding of key science concepts. Click here to register and learn more.

7/17: 2019 Site Leader Institute, Troy, NY
Site directors in afterschool programs often have skills at working with children and youth but little to no training in program operation and management. In order to build the best foundation for programs, the Network for Youth Success will deliver training and support to site directors and leaders. The goal of this training is to expose new directors to the knowledge base and skill set of effective afterschool supervision and management. The training will focus on positive youth development approaches and the supervision of those approaches. The training will also review practices on resource management, family and community partnerships, project management, and coaching techniques for supervisors. For more information and how to register, click here.

7/20: Monroe County Girls Sports Festival, Rochester, NY
The Monroe County Girls Sports Festival is a great opportunity for young women, ages 6-12, to showcase their athletic ability, be active, learn about leadership and teamwork, and take on new challenges. The festival supports young women from throughout Monroe County in their pursuit of new experiences and new opportunities. Festival participants will be able to choose four different sports to explore. Local teams and organizations will manage each of the sports and participants are welcome to select any four available sports, but are also encouraged to try a sport they have never
experienced before. Registration is free! Additional information can be found at www.monroecounty.gov/GirlsSportsFestival

7/30: School-Age Care Credential Informational Meeting, Poughkeepsie, NY
The New York State School-Age Care Credential has been developed to promote quality services to children and families by providing specific standards, training, and evaluation of school-age staff members and providers based on their ability to meet the unique needs of this age group. It is an opportunity for adults working with school-age children to gain professional recognition for demonstrating competence in their on-the-job skills. Come to an informational meeting on Tuesday, July 30 from 5:00 - 6:00 pm to learn about the credential and the credential process as well as meet the instructor/advisor, Arlene Rider. For more information or to enroll contact Darla Fulmer at (845) 473-4141 ext. 216 or dfulmer@childcaredutchess.org.

8/4-8/10: Mindfulness Training for Educators, Lake Placid, NY
This weeklong program set in the idyllic environment of a lakeside retreat in the Adirondacks explores teaching for the 21st century. Participants will learn mindfulness practices, meditation, the neuroscience of learning, the nature of mind, and how to cultivate their inner resources. Each day will include experiential learning, as well as a cognitive element – and afternoons will be free to enjoy the many outdoor activities available to us, or to simply relax and read a book. Learn how mindfulness might benefit you in your role as an educator, and re-connect with the ideals that brought you into this field from the start! Click here for more information and how to register.

10/5: North Country Training Institute, Plattsburgh, NY
Join Erin Broderick and Timothy Fowler for a day of school-age training! The North Country Training Institute will cover topics relevant to school-age providers in afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs. This day-long event features four 90-minute sessions (a total of 6 hours of training): guiding positive behaviors, managing transitions, engineering design, and bookmaking. For more information and how to register, click here.

11/8: Regional Network Symposium, Rochester, NY
SAVE THE DATE! Our Regional Network Symposium will be November 8 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Rochester! Look out for more information here and on our website.

11/9: Rochester Training Institute, Rochester, NY
SAVE THE DATE! Our Training Institute will be November 9 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Rochester! Look out for more information here and on our website.

Our 2020 Annual Conference will be in Troy for 2020! Save the date now! Look for more information here and on our website as we get closer to the date!

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Address postal inquiries to:
New York State Network for Youth Success, Inc.
415 River Street
Troy, NY 12180

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