Summary of Mental Health Initiative Programs

January 2017:

Jonathan Katz from the Jewish Board of Family and Children’s Services spoke to the congregation at Shabbat services about the importance of mental health and discussed the resources available for people with mental health challenges and their families. He also talked at the teen service on the same day.

May 2017

The Mental Health Initiative sponsored a well-attended discussion on depression –its symptoms, causes and treatments. The facilitator was Ellen Ritz, a nurse and prominent member of The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), which is an advocacy organization for people with mental illnesses and their families.

August 2017

The initiative held a training session on Mental Health First Aid, which is a mental health version of physical first aid. It addresses how laypeople can respond to a mental health crisis. This event will be led by Jennifer Keren, a member of the initiative who had been trained as a Mental Health First Aid instructor by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

December 2017

The Mental Health Initiative sponsored a SafeTALK suicide prevention training. A professional trainer, Ellen Stoller, delivered a three-hour training to 19 Hillcrest members and neighbors. The goal of this workshop was to instruct the participants in how to identify people who may have suicidal thoughts, and to connect these persons with the resources that they need for safety.

Other Mental Health Initiative Activities

* Three eblasts were sent to the entire congregation about mental health issues
* A bookmark with mental health resources and a message against stigma was created by the Initiative and distributed to attendees at High Holiday services
* A bulletin board was created in the Moreida auditorium which contains mental health and mental illness information.