



# News Release

## **RDCRS collaborates with local organizations to support teen's efforts to raise awareness for mental health**

***For immediate release – November 12, 2020***

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) has collaborated with the [Smiles Thru Lindsey Foundation](#) and the [Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre](#) to help increase awareness of mental health issues to teens through the innovative work of a local high school student.

Sophia Arnusch, a Grade 11 student from École Secondaire Notre Dame High School, has been making waves locally and internationally, through her self-published magazine, Sophia Lia, which centers around teen mental health.

Attracting attention from thousands of teenagers, community stakeholders, world-wide influencers, over 40,000 Instagram followers and celebrities such as Bethany Hamilton (who graced the cover of her first issue), Arnusch is striving to break the stigma around mental health and help normalize it. Driven by her own struggles with mental health, Arnusch hopes her magazine, which debuted in August, will provide a community where middle and high school students can go to get advice on all things mental health-related including self-care tips, healthy living practices, an email hotline called Sophia's Hotline, just to name a few.

"Sophia has amazed us with the passion and professionalism she has put into creating such an engaging, informative and timely magazine. Promoting positive mental health is always at the forefront and is even more critical with what our youth are experiencing in today's world," said Principal, Rose McQuay at École Secondaire Notre Dame High School.

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Rick and Cindy More, Founders of the Smiles Thru Lindsey Foundation, have experienced tragedy first-hand related to mental illness, when their daughter, Lindsey, took her own life. They hope to continue to help those suffering from depression and mental health issues by spreading awareness about it.

“We are inspired to say the least of the passion Sophia has for others and a work ethic that will change lives for the better. This project and its effectiveness, is exactly what our Smiles Thru Lindsey Foundation is mandated for and what our amazing Lindsey sought before her death in 2015. Lindsey will be cheering Sophia on every step of the way,” said Founders, Rick and Cindy More, of the Smiles Thru Lindsey Foundation.

As a Division, we are committed to our mission of supporting inclusive communities that foster care and compassion of students, families and staff which is why making the magazine accessible to all students across the Division is instrumental.

“Our focus as a Division this year has been on mental wellness. Getting this magazine into the hands of our students is key to opening up the conversation around mental health, in hopes to bring positive change in our students' understanding and attitudes surrounding it,” said Superintendent of Schools, Kathleen Finnigan at Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

As the editor-in-chief, Arnusch hopes to continue to produce new issues of the magazine and keep mental illness at the forefront of conversations amongst youth.

Mark Jones, CEO of the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre, understands the need to amplify advocacy efforts for mental health, and as a result, their organization generously donated 1,000 copies of the magazine to help make it easily accessible for middle and high school students.

With a forward-thinking mindset, Arnusch is quickly paving the foundation to help create positive change for people living with mental illness.

The second issue of the Sophia Lia magazine is due out later this month. To learn more, visit <https://sophialiamag.com/magazine/>.

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*Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools serves over 10,480 students in 21 schools in Red Deer, Blackfalds, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail, and Olds. It also supports the learning of over 600 students in a Home Education Program. The Division is committed to serving children and parents with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and within the means of the Division.*

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