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LACDMH Promotes Mental Health Awareness Month with Congresswoman Napolitano and LA Laker Metta World Peace

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) partnered with Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park and Sunburst Youth Academy Foundation on Saturday, May 21, 2016, to raise awareness about mental health.

The event featured special guests, performances, informational booths, and free mental health resources.

Sergeant Cotton from the Sunburst Youth Academy Foundation welcomed the crowd and introduced Crystal Lewis, who sang the National Anthem as a Color Guard presented flags.

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Sgt. Cotton introduced LACDMH Acting Director, Robin Kay, Ph.D., who spoke about the stigma associated with mental health and why it's important to get help early. Dr. Kay then introduced distinguished speakers and local politicians.

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, co-chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, addressed the importance of raising awareness around the stigma associated with mental health.

Metta World Peace, Los Angeles Laker, spoke openly about his journey and struggle with mental health and took questions from the audience. As founder of Xcel University, he discussed the work being done to encourage kids to further their education and advocacy for mental health awareness and quality mental health services for everyone.
"If kids can't (learn to) make their own decisions, someone else will," he said. In response to being asked what message he wanted to impress most as his legacy, he said that kids need to have a healthy body and mind, stressing self-care, including healthy diet and exercise.

Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Department then hosted an interactive activity to highlight skill building techniques from their theatrical production, "It's Stop Time," focusing on conflict management for upper elementary students and their families. The audience learned to use the "Stop" "Breathe" "Choose" method for managing conflict.

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A variety of informational booths focused on mental health services and provided information and resources, including NAMI, Pacific Clinics, LACDMH, Five Acres and SPIRITT Family Services.

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