

Dear Student,

Hello! My name is Kaitlin Cartoccio and I am the Health Educator/Municipal Alliance Grant Coordinator at the Bernards Township Health Department. I am writing to you, because you have been nominated as a student leader for the 2021 Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute (LMTI) Summer Leadership Conference sponsored by the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse. Congratulations!! The characteristics of an LMTI student leader include:

- Being trustworthy to peers, parents, and school personnel.
- Being proud to be, or willing to become, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug-free;
- Good listening skills and respecting others and their opinions;
- Being interested in making a difference in the community and school;
- Displaying the potential to develop leadership skills;
- Representing the diversity of the school and community; and
- Enjoy meeting new people and having a good time!

You may have heard of a student group in the community called **Ridge Education Action & Community Health (REACH)**. The mission of REACH is to promote leadership and positivity in the community focusing on mental health awareness and a drug-free lifestyle. During a typical school year, REACH participates in the annual 8th grade Empowerment Day and other meaningful activities. Someone in the community or your school (most likely a team teacher) nominated you to join based upon your potential as a role model and leader for increasing substance abuse awareness and prevention in Bernards Township. Not every student in your grade was nominated, so please feel proud of yourself!

LMTI focuses on leadership-training for high school teens through a life-changing leadership conference. Due to COVID-19 we will not be able to attend LMTI in our typical manner, but the staff have been working hard to create a safe and engaging experience for us. We plan on participating in Summer Leadership Conference Hybrid, which will be a 1-day in-person summit and 3 days of virtual programming packed with dynamic speakers as well as fun and challenging activities that teach leadership skills and prevention planning, enabling you to spark positive change in Bernards Township. After camp you have the choice to join REACH and create the change you learn at camp. To learn more about LMTI, please visit their website at www.njlmti.org. You can learn more about REACH at <https://www.bernardshealth.org/municipal-alliance/municipal-alliance-programs>.

Students will have the option to attend either the Hybrid Conference (1-day in-person summit + 3 days of virtual programming) or the Virtual Summer Leadership Conference with the REACH Action Group Monday, August 23rd (Summit) and Wednesday, August 25th – Friday, August 27th (Virtual)

I know this is a lot of new information! My student leaders and I would love the chance to tell you more about LMTI and REACH and how to get involved. You and your guardians are invited to sign up for an informational Zoom session at <https://calendly.com/kcartoccio/lmti>. If one of these times do not work or you have any questions prior to the Info Session, please call me at (908) 204-2523 or email me at Kcartoccio@bernards.org. **Partial scholarships for the conference will be awarded from the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse towards the total conference cost for those who choose to participate.** Please note that final participation will be on a first come, first serve basis. And of course, this information may be subject to change according to current COVID-19 guidelines.

Please feel free to call or email me with any questions. And again, congratulations! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Cartoccio

Kaitlin V. Cartoccio, MPH, CHES, DRCC

Community Programs Coordinator – Health Educator, Municipal Alliance Grant Coordinator

Ridge Action Group Advisor, LMTI

More Links:

[About REACH](#) – We made this video last year for the Activities Fair. Talks about who we are and what we do!

[Inspire Change Through Youth Empowerment – Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute](#)

[LMTI Summer Leadership Conference 2019 – Week 1](#) – The last time we were at camp all together! Hopefully we can look forward to this for the summit and when camp resumes the full in-person 5 day conference.

[Mental Health: You're Not Alone](#) – We made this video in 2019 to show in RHS Health classes to remind our fellow students that many of us experience mental health challenges. We hope to make more informational videos like this.

[Natural Highs 2018](#) – We usually show a video about our favorite Natural Highs at Empowerment Day. Here's the video from 2018.