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Parents Who Have Lost Sons to Hazing Join Fraternities and Sororities to Form Anti-Hazing Coalition

NEW YORK—In an unprecedented partnership, four families who have lost their sons to hazing are coming together with fraternities and sororities to fight it.

Jim and Evelyn Piazza, parents of Tim Piazza; Stephen and Rae Ann Gruver, parents of Max Gruver; Rich and Maille Braham, parents of Marquise Braham; and Lianne and Brian Kowiak, parents of Harrison Kowiak, have joined the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) and National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) to form a partnership that will focus on pursuing and strengthening state hazing laws and significantly expanding education and training for high school and college-aged students. Other organizations within the fraternal community—HazingPrevention.Org, the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) and Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values (AFLV)—have committed their support to these efforts.

“After meeting with Jud and some of his colleagues, the other parents and I saw a sincerity to make change and a real interest to work with us. We collectively agreed forming this alliance made sense,” said Jim Piazza. “While we may seem like strange bedfellows, we all want the same thing—to end hazing, so other parents don’t have to experience what we have.”

When students arrive at college, nearly half have already experienced hazing. This Coalition seeks to address the problem earlier through education, while also strengthening accountability and transparency through new model state legislation.

“The best way to inspire change in college students is to touch their hearts,” said Judson Horras, President & CEO of the North American Interfraternity Conference. “In working with these families, we have seen how deeply their personal stories resonate, and I’ve witnessed first-hand the powerful impact these parents have in helping young men.”

“We can do more together than we can alone to address this societal problem,” said Carole Jones, Chairman of the National Panhellenic Conference. “The fight against hazing requires that an entire community step up, including sorority women, who can and must do our part to create safer campus cultures where students advocate for one another.”

The coalition will:

- Pursue state-based anti-hazing legislation that delivers greater transparency through stronger hazing reporting requirements, strengthens criminal penalties and encourages prosecution, calls for university accountability for bad actors, provides amnesty to encourage people to call for help, and calls for student education.
- Expand awareness and intervention education, including providing a platform for the parents to speak to tens of thousands of college students.
- Engage fraternity and sorority members in educating high school students to confront hazing and bullying.

Just this summer, these parents have spoken to more than 3,000 fraternity members at summer leadership conferences, including at [Sigma Alpha Epsilon's](#) where hundreds of students and alumni moved by the program lined up to speak directly with the parents. Parents are also being invited to speak with sorority women at both the local and national levels.

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The group has already begun discussion with lawmakers, and hopes to work in several states this fall to introduce model legislation. At the federal level, the organizations will continue to advocate for the [REACH Act](#), which—if passed—will require colleges and universities to publicly report hazing incidents under the Clery Act and provide expanded hazing prevention education and resources to students.

“We are in full support of this partnership and look forward to working together in the months ahead to change the hazing culture,” said Steve and Rae Ann Gruver.

Further, this initial group of partners hopes to engage other organizations in the future.

“Our ultimate goal is to ensure no other child is killed or injured due to dangerous and illegal hazing,” said Richard Braham. “It will take more than tougher laws, greater parental awareness and university oversight or a timely display of moral courage and decency to eradicate hazing. It will take all of these things, plus young people understanding that you don’t become a ‘better man or woman’ by watching and remaining silent as your brother or sister is harmed or killed.”

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[About the North American Interfraternity Conference](#)

NIC is a trade association that represents 66 national and international men’s fraternities, with more than 6,100 chapters located on more than 800 campuses in the United States and Canada, with approximately 385,000 undergraduate members and nearly 4.2 million alumni. The NIC has introduced enhanced health and safety standards and programs, including last week’s ban of hard alcohol in fraternity houses and events.

[About the National Panhellenic Conference](#)

NPC is the umbrella organization specifically charged with advocating on behalf of the sorority experience. It is comprised of 26 national and international sororities that are autonomous social organizations. Collectively, NPC sororities are located on more than 670 campuses with approximately 418,000 undergraduate members and nearly 5 million alumnae.

[About HazingPrevention.Org](#)

HazingPrevention.Org™ is dedicated to empowering people to prevent hazing, by providing education and resources, advocating on hazing prevention, and building partnerships with others. Major initiatives of the organization include National Hazing Prevention Week™, Prevent.Zone™ educational online courses, seminars, books, and educational resources that touch the lives of thousands of individuals, organizations, campuses and communities.

[About the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors](#)

Through programs, publications, networking opportunities and other resources, AFA represents the community of fraternity and sorority advisors and is the leading voice in aligning the fraternity/sorority and higher education experiences.

[About the Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values](#)

The Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values (AFLV) accelerates progress in fraternity and sorority communities, reaching more than 300 campuses and 4,000 student leaders and professionals through change-enabling experiences.