



Paul, Sarah "Jay", (founder of SMW), and Kenna Bynum



# SMW Helps Teens Navigate the Social Media Landscape in a Healthy Way

Written by Melani Morose Edelstein

Social media and technology have created a new language and a new landscape challenging society on several levels. Today's technology brings the world great innovations and great uncertainty. Social media remains a formidable and intimidating threat to parents and students alike, creating a new and unique need to educate people on practical and meaningful ways to participate in social media.

Palos Verdes High School freshman Sarah "Jay" Bynum recognized this issue and founded the nonprofit organization Social Media Wellness (SMW) to help her fellow students maneuver through the world of social media.

"Honestly, many teens, including myself, are dealing with damaging effects of unhealthy social media use and still continue with unhealthy habits. SMW is an organization for teens and their parents to come together and foster healthy social media user habits by promoting learning and awareness. It's necessary to facilitate activity that creates a safer and more welcoming space," says Bynum. "I don't have it all figured out and I have been making mistakes like a lot of teens but I see a need and I'm trying to fill it. Social Media Wellness is a start," she says.

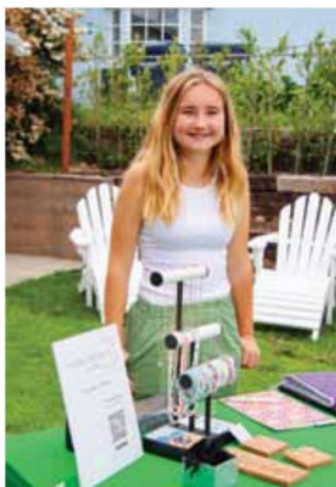
Rather than focusing on all the things not to do, and ways to limit use of social media, SMW focuses on ways to use it in a healthy, encouraging, and edifying way. The organization recently held a kick off event to spread awareness about the significance of social media wellness for teens.

Bynum says amplifying the voices of teenagers in conversations about social media wellness is crucial in today's world and one of the group's top priorities is growing their online following in order to reach and impact more teenagers.

"We also aim to get more teens involved in our initiatives, encouraging them to use social media and their influence to support other nonprofits. We also aspire to expand our reach by speaking at Girl Scout group meetings, local elementary schools, and middle schools, where I can share valuable insights and inspire young minds," Bynum says.



Monica Chernoff, AMFT for teens



Alex Matthews



Corry Mathews, Nutritionist