

## Moving Toward a Better Feeling

Souhegan High School kicks off "Mental Health Awareness Week" by emphasizing the connection between movement and the mind.

By [Robert Michaelson](#) | October 3, 2011



The road to happiness and relaxation can seem long, but the best thing to do is to keep running forward.

Students at Souhegan High School will be encouraged to put their feet to the ground to improve their own mental health during "Mental Health Awareness Week."

The school's new focus makes the connection between exercise and mental health.

This initiative revolves around the increasing amount of research pointing toward the role of movement and cardiovascular exercise in alleviating mood and anxiety disorders, according to a press release from Souhegan. Studies show that attention, focus and learning are also enhanced from exercise.

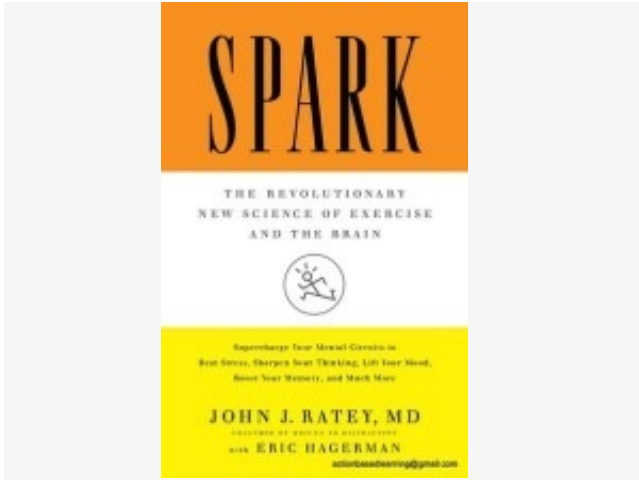
The week will kick-off on Wednesday, Oct. 5, with guest speaker, Jason Holder Ed.D.. Holder will help motivate the 1,000 Souhegan students and staff to fulfill the school's challenge of the week, which is to **move a thousand miles** between Wednesday, Oct. 5 and Friday, Oct. 7.

The track will be available early mornings, during lunch and advisory time, as well as right after school to encourage walking and running. Students and staff are encouraged to bring running equipment and suitable clothing.

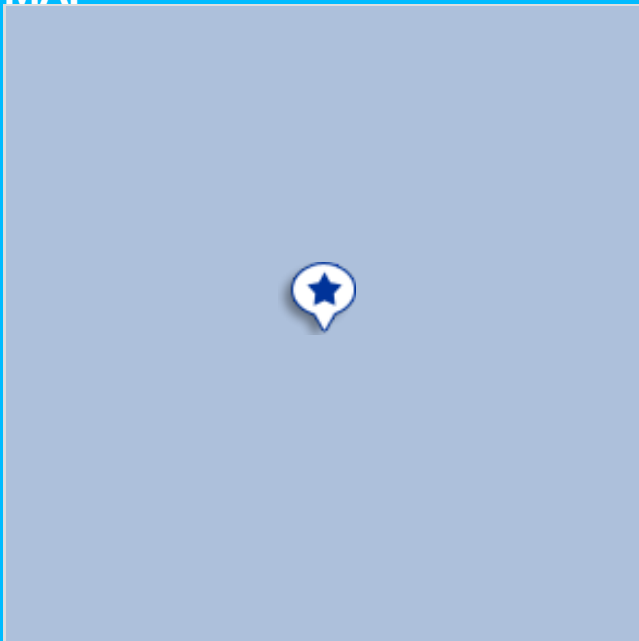
The Mental Health Awareness Team will track progress on a 'MILOMETER' in the main entrance of the school. Advisory activities will focus on movement and its benefit for mental health and learning.

"I tell people that going for a run is like taking a little bit of Prozac and a little bit of Ritalin," writes [John Ratey](#), M.D. in his book Spark, "because, like the drugs, exercise elevates these neurotransmitters. It's a handy metaphor to get the point across, but the deeper explanation is that exercise balances neurotransmitters – along with the rest of the neurochemicals in the brain. ... Keeping your brain in balance can change your life."

Souhegan has also just launched "Let's Move In School," a school-wide initiative of the Wellness Department to encourage movement throughout the school day.



## MAP



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