

**For Immediate Release**

**More information Contact:**

Iris Brunner  
Development Director  
Family Service Society, Inc.  
765-662-9971 ext 103  
[ibrunner@famservices.com](mailto:ibrunner@famservices.com)

## ***13<sup>th</sup> Annual Circle of Friends Event Features Mental Health Advocate, Ross Szabo***

**Marion, IN (July 17, 2017)** - Family Service Society, Inc. hosts the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Circle of Friends event, which takes place on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at Indiana Wesleyan University's Barnes Student Center. The event is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and features mental health advocate and speaker, Ross Szabo (ZAY-Bo).

Circle of Friends is the second largest fundraiser of the year and is critical for aiding Family Service Society, Inc.'s ability to meet the needs of clients across the community. Formatted as a luncheon, corporations and individuals pay sponsorships then bring with them friends and supporters to learn about the agency and the mission we serve. Each year there is a different focus that is mission centric to our organization and this year's focus is on the relationship between mental health and substance abuse.

Szabo's passion for mental health comes from his personal experience and during his talk, he will weave his personal story into his message—"Mixed Drinks, Mixed Emotions: Substance Abuse and Mental Health." Szabo's goals are to break down the stereotypes surrounding expression of emotion in order to help people function at their highest level and to teach useful coping mechanisms.

"There's never been a better time than now for our community to come together and hear the wisdom of someone who has walked in the shoes of many around us who struggle with mental health and it's intimate connection with addiction," says Lisa Dominisse, President/CEO of Family Service Society, Inc. "We have a responsibility to stand in the gap with those who are struggling. With education and outreach, as well as treatment, our expectation is our community will rise to a place where getting help happens before lives come undone by mental illness."

Szabo has spent over half his life finding ways to make mental health approachable to everyone. As the former Director of Outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign, he had the opportunity to work with some of the top mental health professionals in the country to create the first ever youth mental health speakers' bureau, develop an effective high school program to increase help seeking behavior and presented a positive mental health message to over 1 million people.



According to Travis T. Apgar, Robert E. Engel Associate Dean of Students at Cornell University, "Ross Szabo is a leader of the mental health movement. His presentations break down the barriers and stigma which surround the topic of mental health and motivate students to think differently. Our community members are now more willing to ask for help, to recognize the signs that their friends may be in need of help, and to seek help for them."

To sponsor the event or reserve your seat please visit, [www.wedoauctions.net/cof](http://www.wedoauctions.net/cof) or contact Iris Brunner, (765) 662-9971 x 103 or [ibrunner@famservices.com](mailto:ibrunner@famservices.com). For more information about Ross Szabo, please visit <http://rossszabo.com>.

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**About Family Service Society, Inc.**

Family Service Society, Inc. exists to encourage, empower and educate children, adults and families to change their lives for good. Since 1919, FSSI a 501(c)3 community based agency located at 101 S. Washington St, Marion, IN has helped children, adults and families find help for life's problems through clinical services, home and school –based programming, Healthy Families and Hands of Hope. FSSI is a regional leader, in over 14 counties, by offering innovative therapeutic services, delivered with integrity, to positively impact the emotional well-being of children and families to create generational change.