

## **The Home News Tribune, East Brunswick NJ**

### **North Brunswick Counselor- Stephani R. Fried, LPC –Helps Students with College Admissions**

By Staff Writer: Jared Kaltwasser

Stephani R. Fried knows the college admissions game has changed in countless ways in the years since she herself was filling out applications and checking the mail for acceptance letters.

"It's a 180," she said. "I don't even think I could make any comparisons to when I was choosing a college."

Fried, a licensed professional counselor for 30 years, branched into college counseling and advising about two years ago. She said one of the reasons the process can be so stressful for parents and their students is that the landscape has changed so much.

"Often parents haven't gone to college," she said. "Often they have, but it was very, very different 35 to 40 years ago, or even 20 years ago."

Fried said finding the right college is about more than college rankings and reputations. She works to help students think about their individual dreams and goals, and find the college most likely to foster their growth.

"I have found that kids often come up with ideas, but they haven't really sat down and teased them out," she said. "I'm going to help you figure out what makes your heart sing."

Fried is a mother of two children -- one a college graduate and engineer, the other a theater student at New York University. Fried said she's inspired by young people and works to inspire them about the possibilities ahead.

Aside from helping students analyze their career goals and interests, Fried works with students on other aspects of the admissions process, from choosing the right courses while still in high school, to preparing for standardized tests, getting the right letters of recommendation, writing a personalized admission essay and nailing the admission interview.

Fried also works with special-needs students, something that came naturally after working with special-needs clients in her original counseling practice.

"I've worked with so many students over the years, I'm just really inspired to encourage and help them," she said. "I really believe that for every child who wants to go to college, there is a great college for them."

Fried said there is a great range between colleges when it comes to their readiness to accommodate special-needs students, but she said many colleges are welcoming special-needs students and more colleges are coming on board.

Fried said one of the biggest hurdles for all parents -- and students -- is to realize that most of the anxieties and stresses families feel during the college-search process are completely normal.

To illustrate, Fried held her palms a few inches apart.

"The range of normal isn't like this," she said, then stretched her arms out wide to her sides. "The range of normal is just like this. It's gigantic."

And if it takes some reassurance to convince parents of that, Fried has no problem answering a last-minute call or email.

"I will support the parents and the students up until the day they go to college," Fried said.

## **STEPHANI R. FRIED, LPC COLLEGE COUNSELING SERVICES**

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