



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOU can Help Prevent Youth Suicide in Oklahoma

HeartLine, Oklahoma's Community Crisis Connection is calling for volunteers to help address youth suicide rates in Oklahoma. HeartLine is offering training for its suicide awareness and prevention program, Healthy Education for Life Program (HELP), to assist in reducing Oklahoma's ranking as 13th in the nation in its rate of deaths by suicide.

According to the American Association for Suicidology:

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States with one suicide occurring on average every 16 minutes.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 15- to 24-years-olds.
- The elderly make up 12.4% of the population, but comprise 16% of all suicides.
- 15% of U.S. high school students report serious thoughts of killing themselves in the past year.
- Approximately 811,000 Americans attempt suicide each year.
- It is estimated that five million living Americans have attempted to kill themselves.

Every year in the United States, more than 32,000 men and women take their lives with a gun; two-thirds more than the number who use a gun to take the life of another person. An estimated 5 million Americans are survivors of the suicide of a friend, family member, or loved one. HeartLine needs community volunteers to help expand suicide prevention programming outreach to youth in Oklahoma.

HeartLine's HELP (Healthy Education for Life Program) Suicide Awareness and Prevention Outreach Program is considered an invaluable service to the Central Oklahoma community as it assists schools and community youth groups in identifying students who are at risk. It informs everyone from those who work with young people to students about suicidal warnings signs and how to take action, and includes information on the impact of depression and substance abuse. The video-based program currently reaches approximately 5,000 youth each year. Following the

presentations, over 11% of youth have self-identified that they have considered harming themselves or are currently thinking about attempting suicide.

HeartLine has been serving Oklahoma since 1971, and provides suicide prevention outreach programs, listening and crisis intervention services. HeartLine's Call Specialists are trained in crisis intervention and are available around the clock through HeartLine's phone-based services, including 2-1-1, the 24/7 helpline 848-CARE, and two national suicide prevention life lines 1-800-SUICIDE and 1-800-273-TALK.

"HeartLine believes that education and awareness is the key to prevention," states Tom Taylor, Executive Director. "Letting young people know there is help to get them through their struggles is essential. Youth have not had enough life experiences to know that there are resources and skills for coping with life's challenges and disappointments."

HeartLine offers facilitator training to equip volunteers with skills necessary to present the program to youth in schools. The next training session will be June 28, 29 and 30 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. Pre-registration and attendance at all sessions is required. Contact Emily Newlin at HeartLine by calling 405.840.9396 for details or visit www.heartlineoklahoma.org .

Also, for schools that are interested in providing suicide awareness and prevention education to their students, HeartLine provides the HELP program at no charge in the greater OKC Metro-area and is very flexible with school schedules. For more information, please contact Amy Morgan at 405.840.9396.

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