



# Mending The Net

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

AUGUST 2014

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Suicide Prevention Week** 2
- Warning Signs** 2
- New eLearning Module** 2
- New Youth Member** 3
- Next SSPC Meeting** 3
- Rotary Club Partnership** 5

Visit the calendar at [www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org) for suicide prevention activities happening across the state of Alaska.



## Alaska Prevention Team to Visit D.C.

**S**tatewide Suicide Prevention Council member Brenda Moore will accompany a team from Alaska to Bethesda, Md. to participate in the Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance (SMVF TA) Center Suicide Prevention Implementation Academy in September.

The Implementation Academy is a new model from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Its mission is to bring together state and territory delegations to plan new ways to engage people on suicide prevention for veterans. It is also designed to help people working in suicide prevention to share ideas

and new ways to get out the message.

Since 2008, SAMHSA has held Policy Academies to help states and territories strengthen behavioral health service systems supporting service members, veterans, and their families. To date, 46 states, 4 territories, and the District of Columbia have participated in the Policy Academy. The goal of the event is to develop a statewide strategic plan to address suicide among veterans.

This new model of TA will bring together small delegations from up to 15 states and territories. The Alaska team will work with professionals from other areas of the country and share new ideas that have been successful

that could work with veterans in Alaska. The Alaska team will follow up on its plan in several months.

## Veterans Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255  
**PRESS 1**



The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council held its spring quarterly business meeting in Bethel. Some Council members stayed to participate in the Walk For Life sponsored by Drew's Foundation on May 10, 2014. From left: Council member Rep. Benjamin Nageak, Council member Barbara Franks, Drew's Foundation founder Paul O'Brien, Council member Meghan Crow, and others address the crowd prior to the start of the Walk For Life.

## Alaska Set to Observe Suicide Prevention Week in September

The State of Alaska will recognize Suicide Prevention Week, September 8-14, 2014.

National Suicide Prevention Week will be observed the same week. This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual observance.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention invites people to light a candle near a window at 8 p.m. on September 10 to show support for suicide prevention, to remember a lost loved one, and for the survivors of suicide. For more information visit: <http://www.iasp.info/wspd/>.

If you know of any events being planned in Alaska please share them with Eric Morrison at [eric.morrison@alaska.gov](mailto:eric.morrison@alaska.gov) or (907) 465-6518 so they can be shared on the events calendar at [www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org).

## Northwest Arctic Borough School District Invites Public to Training

The Teck John Baker Youth Leaders Training is a student-led and directed program that teaches youth about suicide, bullying, sexual assault, domestic violence, and substance abuse prevention. The program has improved school and community climates and significantly reduced student suicide rates in Northwest Alaska. The Northwest Arctic Borough School District started this program in 2008.

The public is invited to see how it trains over 100 middle and high students in student assistance and empowerment September 11-14 in Kotzebue. Adult mentor training will also be provided with the three-day intensive wellness training of the students.

For more information, please contact Michelle Woods at 907-442-1869.

I A S P

International Association for Suicide Prevention

World Health Organization

September 10, 2014

# World Suicide Prevention Day

● Suicide Prevention: One World Connected

## New Suicide Prevention eLearning Module Available

Teachers will have more suicide prevention training resources this school year.

The Department of Education and Early Development released its Suicide Prevention Part 2 online eLearning Module on August 1. This new training is an adaptation of Gatekeeper, an Alaska designed suicide prevention training. The course has been tailored to help teachers assess and evaluate youth risk and protective factors, recognize the clues and triggers for possi-

ble suicidal action in youth, intervene with a suicidal youth, teach others how to become listeners and give a concerned response to a suicidal individual, and help identify and access resources available to assist a person in crisis.

Suicide Prevention Part 1 online eLearning Module was released last school year to great success. As of June 30, 2014, 1,400 educators were either enrolled or had completed the course.

The new training complies with Senate Bill 137, which requires at least two hours of suicide prevention training for each teacher, administrator, counselor, and specialist that educate students in grades 7-12. The bill was signed into law in May of 2012.

To take the training educators must first register with the DEED to gain access. For more information contact DEED Education Specialist Sharon Fishel at (907) 465-6523 or [sharon.fishel@alaska.gov](mailto:sharon.fishel@alaska.gov).

### Suicide Warning Signs

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself.
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to lethal means, i.e. firearms, pills, etc.
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking.
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes.
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

***If you or someone you know is experiencing these signs call Careline at 1-877-266-4357.***

*Information is from the American Association of Suicidology*

# Casello Joins SSPC as New Youth Member

Governor Sean Parnell appointed 17-year-old high school student Kathryn Casello to the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council as the youth member.

Casello is a senior this year at West High School in Anchorage. She is the captain of the Debate Team and performs in both of the school's Advanced Choirs. She got interested in suicide prevention after attending an Anchorage Suicide Prevention Coalition meeting with her mother.

"I realized then that I wanted to get involved and try to make a difference in youth suicide in Alaska," she said.

This past spring Casello started a community outreach initiative with the help of the Anchorage coalition.

"It has been reported time and time again that youth who have survived suicide attempts have stated that they felt isolated from their peers or felt like they had no one to reach out to," she said. "I received funding for several hundred yellow



Kathryn Casello (left) with some of the bracelets she has been handing out (right).

low wristbands that I passed out to youth organizations both inside and outside of the school system all over Anchorage."

Along with numerous groups at West High School, some of those events included a meeting of the First Alaskans Institute, the Out of Darkness Walk in Anchorage, a Sprit of Youth Leadership event, and many others.

"The project was a huge success and will be continuing this school year as well," she said. "I am so excited to begin working more with the Statewide Council!"

Casello plans to expand the community outreach initiative this year to include the University of Alaska Anchorage, Service High School, and South Anchorage High School.

## Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Set for November

Communities throughout Alaska are planning events for International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day this winter. Every year, survivors of suicide loss gather together in locations around the world as a community to promote healing and to connect with others who have had similar experiences. This year, International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day will be Saturday, November 22, 2014.

Each location where an ISOS Loss Day event is held welcomes survivors of suicide loss, providing a safe and healing space where everyone can comfortably participate in a way that is meaningful to them. Join with others to listen to a diverse group of survivors discuss their losses, how they coped, and much more.

Events have been planned for Fairbanks, Klawock, Kwethluk, and Toksook Bay. To learn more about these events visit [www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org) or the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

If you are interested in organizing an event in your community and need some help, contact Statewide Suicide Prevention Council project assistant Eric Morrison at (907) 465-6518 or [eric.morrison@alaska.gov](mailto:eric.morrison@alaska.gov).

## SSPC to Host its Next Meeting on Aug. 26

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council will hold its next quarterly meeting on Tuesday, August 26. The meeting is open to the public and will be held via video conference from conference room 880 in the Frontier Building in Anchorage and conference room 416 in the Alaska Office Building. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. and is also open to the public via teleconference by dialing 1-800-315-6338 code 4656518#.

Public comment will be taken from 9:15 to 10:00 a.m. The meeting will involve regular business of the Council as well as numerous presentations. Some of the presentations include an update of the Division of Behavioral Health suicide prevention efforts by Program Coordinator James Gallanos. Council member Sharon Fishel will also provide an update of the Department of Education and Early Development's School-Based Suicide Prevention Grant Program. Courtney Dreher, the new coordinator of the Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Program in Alaska, will also provide an overview of the work the federal agency is doing for veterans in Alaska.

To view the agenda visit [www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org) or the SSPC website at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/SuicidePrevention/Pages/default.aspx>. For more information about the meeting or for a copy of the agenda please contact Eric Morrison at (907) 465-6518 or [eric.morrison@alaska.gov](mailto:eric.morrison@alaska.gov).

The Council will host its next quarterly business meeting October 20-22 in Seward.



431 N. Franklin Suite 204  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801

Phone: 907-465-6518

Fax: 907-465-4410

E-mail: [eric.morrison@alaska.gov](mailto:eric.morrison@alaska.gov)

J. Kate Burkhart, Executive Director  
Eric Morrison, Project Assistant

[www.stopsuicidealaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidealaska.org)

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council advises the Governor and Legislature on issues relating to suicide. In collaboration with communities, faith-based organizations, and public-private entities, the Council works to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals and communities.

William Martin, Chair, Juneau  
Meghan Crow, Vice-Chair, Bethel  
Barbara Jean Franks, Anchorage  
Albert Wall, Anchorage  
Brenda Moore, Anchorage  
Fred Glenn, Kenai  
Christine Moses, Bethel.  
Sharon Fishel, Juneau  
Sue May, Anchorage  
Kathryn Casello, Sitka  
Cynthia Erickson, Tanana  
Alana Humphrey, Anchorage  
Pastor Lowell W. Sage Jr., Kivalina  
Representative Benjamin Nageak, Barrow  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Sitka.  
Senator Anna Fairclough, Eagle River.  
Senator Berta Gardner, Anchorage

## Alaska Rotary Clubs Partner with SSPC

The Downtown Anchorage Rotary Club is partnering with the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to help raise awareness about suicide. Alaska Rotarians have made the goal to train members of 35 clubs in the two-hour Alaska Gatekeeper QPR suicide prevention model. Deborah Williams of the Anchorage Downtown Rotary Club said the trainings are currently being organized. The Anchorage Downtown Rotary Club expects to have more than 200 members trained by January 2015.

The clubs are also working on creating a suicide prevention public service announcement to bring more awareness to the issue. The goal is to have the PSA air on Alaska television channels beginning in the Spring of 2015.

“We are developing other plans, including fundraising, and are so pleased to be working on this project,” Williams said.

The Council also provided the clubs with suicide prevention pamphlets, Careline magnets, and more to help get the message out to its members.

## Wellness Tips

**Physical Activity:** Moving around and getting the heart rate up causes the body to release endorphins (the body's feel good hormones). Exercising provides some stress relief.

**Reading:** Escape from reality completely by reading. Reading can help you to de-stress by taking your mind off everyday life.

**Friendship:** Having friends who are willing to listen and support one through good and bad times is essential.

**Humor:** Adding humor to a stressful situation can help to lighten the mood.

**Hobbies:** Having creative outlets such as listening to music, drawing or gardening are great ways to relax and relieve everyday stress.

**Sleeping** The human body needs a chance to rest and repair itself after a long and stressful day. Sleeping gives the body this chance so that it is ready to perform another day.

**Nutrition** Eating foods that are good for you not only improve your physical health, but plays a major role in your mental health. When your body gets the proper nutrients, it is better able to function in every capacity.