A study by the Network’s Mid-Cumberland Region has identified the Natchez Trace Parkway Bridge as the most common location for suicide jumps in Middle Tennessee. The bridge, which carries the Natchez Trace Parkway over State Route 96, has been the site of 13 suicides in 17 years. It stands 155 feet tall and overlooks a deep valley, no one has ever jumped from the bridge and survived.

“I’ve always lived in this area and I’ve always heard since the bridge [was] first built, that if someone wants to commit suicide that’s usually where it happens,” said Keisha Beal, who lives near the bridge, in a WTVF Newshannel 5 interview broadcast July 20. Beal’s daughter actually witnessed a suicide jump last year as the school bus she was riding passed under the bridge.

The subcommittee researching the bridge recommended installing a suicide barrier, such as a higher railing or a net underneath. Realizing the National Park Service (NPS) might not approve this idea, NPS’s decision prompted both the Newshannel 5 report and several editorials in the Tennesseean as a stopgap measure. The signs would be paid for by local businesses recruited by TSPN. But this suggestion was rejected by Chief Ranger Mark Foster, who doubted whether signs or barriers could do anything to prevent suicides at the bridge.

NPS’s efforts to prevent suicides at a Nashville-area bridge are gaining both popular support and attention from local media. The project has been covered by both WTVF-TV and the Tennesseean this month.

TSPN ACTS TO STOP SUICIDES AT NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY BRIDGE

TSPN thanks Nicole Ferguson of WTVF for her coverage of this issue. The Network encourages its members to contact NPS to share their views about the Natchez Trace Parkway Bridge at [202] 208-6843 or via the NPS website (www.nps.gov).
SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH PROJECTS TAKE SHAPE

TSPN has scheduled several events across the state in connection with this year’s Suicide Prevention Awareness Month observance.

The Mid-Cumberland/South Central regional event will start at 5:30 PM on September 7 in Centennial Park in Nashville; it will include a picnic dinner catered by Bacon & Caviar and the Christie Cookie Company.

The Southeast Region is planning a full-day suicide prevention conference on September 10. More information about this conference is available from Southeast Regional Chair Tim Tatum at (423) 339-4351 or via e-mail at tim_tatum@chs.net.

The “Light of Hope” event, an annual project of TSPN’s Upper Cumberland Region, is planned for 6 PM on September 16 at the Putnam County Courthouse Square in Cookeville. Organizers are still soliciting volunteers for this event; all inquiries should be addressed to Vickie Bilbrey at (931) 403-2917 or vickie.bilbrey@payrollsolutions.com.

The Northeast Region will hold its annual Memorial Walk at Duck Island within Warrior’s Path State Park at 4 PM on September 19. Participants will meet at Shelter 4 prior to the walk itself.

Within the Memphis/Shelby County Region, TSPN will partner with Memphis STEPS and the University of Memphis chapter of Active Minds for the campus’s “Feeling Blue Day”, set for September 23 on the University of Memphis campus. Members should note that the September meeting has been cancelled to allow for full regional participation in this event. More information is available from Mollie Anderson at (901) 240-9720 or mollie.b.anderson@gmail.com.

The Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance and TSPN’s East Tennessee Region are organizing a QPR training session at Pellissippi State Community College on September 29, intended as part of a larger training project involving the college. More information about this project is available from East Tennessee Regional Chair Anne Young at (865) 970-0500 or via e-mail at annyoungh@cornerstonesofrecovery.com. Anna Shugart, who chairs the Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance, is also available to field inquiries at (865) 991-2306 or ashugart@bnnet.com.

Finally, the Network plans to distribute 20,000 church bulletin inserts statewide in September and is aiming for 100% participation in the mayoral proclamation Suicide Prevention Awareness Month project. The city and county proclamation documents are available for free download on the website; members are encouraged to engage their local mayors and county executives in supporting the observance.

More information on Suicide Prevention Awareness Month events and projects will be announced via the TSPN mailing list and in the September edition of this newsletter.
JFI RECRUITS RASCAL FLATTS, CELEBRATES ILLINOIS ACT

The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) is celebrating the recruitment of Rascal Flatts as its newest Celebrity Ambassadors and the passage of a Jason Flatt Act in Illinois.

The members of Rascal Flatts have signed on to promote its B1 Project, a new youth suicide prevention education initiative. The band is including youth suicide PSAs at concerts stops during its "Nothing Like This Tour", currently in progress with stops planned in 16 states and Canada. The B1 Project also involves school-based PSAs, distribution of posters to schools, and a Facebook outreach component.

"Having been personally affected by suicide, it's important for me to do all that we can to create more awareness and prevention, particularly with teenagers," explains band member Jay DeMarcus in the band’s June 23 press release. "We are proud to be partners with the Jason Foundation and we are looking forward to doing our part in trying to help them save even more lives."

Additionally, JFI recently secured passage of the Jason Flatt Act in Illinois. JFI President/CEO Clark Flatt joined Governor Pat Quinn and other legislators and activists for the signing ceremony on June 26. Similar to Jason Flatt Acts in four other states (including Tennessee), the bill mandates two hours of suicide prevention training annually for all public school teachers in grades 7-12. The bill passed both the Illinois House and Senate unanimously.

AAS ANNOUNCES WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) has announced a series of webinar training programs for professionals. Registration is currently open for the first one, which addresses suicide risk reduction in primary care settings.

"Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk in Primary Care" is intended for primary care physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other staff members who may find themselves working with at-risk patients.

"The 90-minute webinar includes video segments and downloadable suicide prevention tools." The 90-minute webinar includes video segments and downloadable suicide prevention tools. 1.5 CME credits are available for participants.

This session will be facilitated by Matthew B. Wintersteens, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Director of Research in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson University/Jefferon Medical College. A practicing psychologist in Pennsylvania, Wintersteens received his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Tennessee and interned at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

The webinar premiered on July 22 with repeats scheduled for September 23, October 6, and October 21. More details about registration and scheduling are available at the AAS webinar website (www.suicidology.org/web/guest/education-and-train/rssr-pc-webinar).
This free online tool provides access to thousands of services, programs and resources at the national, state and community level. The Web site has a fresh look with many key features that include an improved search engine, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) news feeds, subscriptions to e-mail updates, and new subject areas such as “Homeless Assistance.”

The National Resource Directory is designed to serve a broad base of users including transitioning Service Members, Veterans, Wounded Warriors, and their families and caregivers. In addition, it is a useful tool for service providers who support Veterans and Service Members, such as Department of Defense Recovery Care Coordinators and AFW Advocates, Veterans Affairs Federal Recovery Coordinators, health care providers and case managers at Veterans Service Organizations.

The new features allow the military and veteran community to identify and stay informed about the thousands of resources that are available to them as well as browse for information they may not have known about it the past. Additionally, a faster, more accurate search engine provides the tools to sort results by subject area, audience and government or non-government resources to ensure users locate exactly what they want, without having to sort through thousands of links themselves.

The new National Resource Directory is simple, easy-to-navigate and even more relevant to the needs of the wounded warrior, veteran and caregiver communities. It also contains “In the News” and “Spotlight” features to highlight important news and updates. To tell friends and family about the new National Resource Directory, use the “Bookmark and Share” function to post updates on more than 200 social media networks such as Facebook or Twitter.

To learn more about the National Resource Directory’s new features, and to explore the thousands of resources provided, visit the Web site at www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov.

Despite their best intentions, parents are often unaware of the risk factors for suicide, according to a survey published in a recent edition of Pediatrics. They are especially likely to ignore or downplay the use of alcohol or drugs as a warning sign.

Researchers from Kansas City University and three children’s hospitals convened focus groups consisting of 66 teens (ages 13 to 18) and 30 parents, polling them on their awareness of suicide risk factors and their interest in suicide prevention. While parents generally agreed that youth suicide was a problem overall, they often did not believe it was a major concern in their own community—in spite of vast amounts of research showing that youth suicide occurs among all income levels, racial groups, and backgrounds.

Furthermore, many of the parents surveyed regarded the use of alcohol or drugs as normal teenage behavior and not an indicator of possible suicide risk. Most of the youth disagreed, noting how it could be used to self-medicate or even self-injure. Also, parents in the study generally admitted a lack of understanding how to determine if a teenager was suicidal.

On the other hand, both adults and teens recognized that firearms should be kept away from depressed and suicidal teenagers—standard recommendations by mental health experts are to have them locked up at all times.

Also, both cohorts in the study were interested in information on how to spot suicide warning signs and how to prevent suicide attempts. The January 12 U.S. News and World Report article on the study listed several online resources for suicide warning signs, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.com] and the National Alliance on Mental Illness’s teenage suicide page [www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Helpline1/Teenage_Suicide.htm].

No December meetings are scheduled unless otherwise marked. Dates in **bold** and in *dewberry* indicate alternate meeting dates intended to accommodate state holidays or other previously scheduled events.

**East Tennessee Region**
- Monthly, 3rd Thursday, 12:00 PM
- Mental Health Association of East Tennessee, Inc., 9050 Executive Park Drive, Suite 104-A, Knoxville, 37923
- August 19, September 16, October 21, and November 18

**Memphis/Shelby County Region**
- Monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:00 AM
- The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, 1900 Union Avenue, Memphis, 38114
- August 17, October 19, and November 16

**Mid-Cumberland Region**
- Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM
- Terrace I Conference Center, 293 Plus Park Boulevard, Suite 201, Nashville, 37217
- August 12, October 14, and November 12

**Northeast Region**
- Monthly, 4th Tuesday, 10:30 AM
- Boone’s Creek Christian Church, 305 Boone’s Creek Road, Gray, 37615
- August 24, September 28, October 26, and November 23

**South Central**
- Monthly, 1st Tuesday, 10:00 AM
- Mental Health Cooperative, 100 Berrywood Drive, Columbia, 38401
- August 3, September 7, October 5, and November 2

**Southeast Region**
- Monthly, 1st Thursday, 10:00 AM
- Downtown Chattanooga YMCA, 301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, 37402
- August 5, September 2, October 7, and November 4

**Upper Cumberland Region**
- Monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM
- Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Systems, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502
- August 26, September 23, October 28, and November 18

**Advisory Council**
- 10:30 AM, September 15, Curb Event Center, Belmont University, 2002 Belmont Boulevard, Nashville, 37212

**Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance**
- Monthly, 1st Friday, 12:00 PM
- Blount County Health Department Conference Room, 302 McGhee Street, Maryville, TN 37801
- August 6, September 3, October 1, and November 5

**Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force**
- Monthly, 4th Wednesday, 3:00 PM
- Metro Public Health Building, 311 23rd Avenue North, Nashville
- August 26, September 23, October 27, and November 18

**Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force**
- Bi-monthly, 3rd Monday, 1:30 PM
- Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478
- September 20 and November 15

**Hickman County Suicide Prevention Task Force**
- Monthly, 4th Friday, 1:30 PM
- Hickman Community Hospital, Senior Care Building, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033
- August 27, September 24, October 22, and November 19
If you are interested in getting involved with TSPN on a local level or have other questions, contact the chairperson of your region as indicated by the map provided below:

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