

TSPN CALL TO ACTION

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TENNESSEE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK



TSPN CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM AT TREVECCA COMMUNITY CHURCH



Over 230 people attended TSPN's 10th Anniversary Symposium, held April 29 at Trevecca Community Church in Nashville. The event was highlighted by the presentation of a joint resolution from the Tennessee General Assembly honoring the Network for its ten years of service to the people of Tennessee.

Beth Harwell, Speaker of the House of the State of Tennessee, presented the resolution, which received a public reading on the floor of the State Senate on March 30. It articulates the nature of suicide as a preventable public health problem and recognizes TSPN's suicide prevention efforts. "(S)uch an impassioned yet well-organized and motivated grassroots effort is deserving of our recognition, gratitude, and support... it is appropriate that this General Assembly recognize the life-saving efforts of TSPN and its members while also promoting awareness of and expressing our support for suicide prevention awareness throughout the State..."

All the main presentations at the symposium took place in the church gym. Breakout sessions and workshops were held in classrooms elsewhere in the building.

All symposium photos in this edition are courtesy of TLC Project Trainer Granger Brown.

U.S. Representative Diane Black of Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District also provided remarks. Black was an original co-sponsor of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007, which mandated annual suicide prevention training for all public school staff.

The symposium featured a panel of representatives from state departments, including several state commissioners. These included Many-Bears Grinder, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veteran's Affairs and Doug Varney, MD, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. Also participating were Shalonda Cawthon, Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services; Albert Dawson, Assistant Commissioner of Juvenile Justice representing the Tennessee Department of Children's Services; and Mike Hermann, Director of School Safety and Learning Support Programs within the Tennessee Department of Education.

Additionally, participants heard remarks from Sally Spencer-Thomas, Executive Director of the Carson J. Spencer Foundation and Executive Secretary of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention was established last year to update and advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, developing approaches to engage and educate the public and examining ways to target high-risk populations.

The keynote luncheon was hosted by representatives of the Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project, who described current efforts of the TLC Project to address the training needs of persons within the juvenile justice system. This included an overview of current program implementation, insights from follow-up focus group sessions, and the development of a training program specialized to address the needs of staff working with juvenile justice youth. Presenters were Lygia Williams, MA, Principal Investigator for the project; Jason H. Padgett, MPA, MSM, TLC Project Coordinator; and Jennifer Lockman, MS of Centerstone Research Institute, who manages the project evaluation.

Photos from the 10th Anniversary Symposium are presented on page 2 of this publication. The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network would like to thank all the presenters who made this event a success, Trevecca Community Church for use of their facilities, and the New Life Café for providing breakfast and lunch. Most of all, TSPN would like to thank its members and supporters in Tennessee and beyond for all they have done to confront the problem of suicide in their communities and in the state at large. TSPN looks forward to working with you all in the years to come in our quest to educate the public and save lives.

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TSPN 10TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM IN PICTURES



Above: Emily Hill and Kris Moore share materials from the Behavioral Healthcare Centers with a guest. BHC was one of several symposium sponsors who set up exhibits at the event; others provided handouts and promotional materials in the symposium event packets.



At left: Beth Harwell, Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives, presents a copy of the joint resolution recognizing TSPN's tenth anniversary to Doug Varney, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. The resolution will be posted in the TDMH office.

Copies of the resolution were also presented to Elsie and Jerry Weyrauch, founders of the national suicide prevention movement; Ken and Madge Tullis, co-founders of TSPN; and TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway for posting in the TSPN central office.



Sally Spencer-Thomas, Executive Secretary of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, explains the purpose and function of the Alliance to guests of the symposium.



Clark Flatt, President/CEO of the Jason Foundation, Inc., converses with Scott Ridgway as Ken and Madge Tullis (at right) look on. Pictured at far left is Elsie Weyrauch.



Ridgway (second from left) poses with participants in the state department commissioner's panel. From left to right: Many-Bears Grinder, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veteran's Affairs; Albert Dawson, Assistant Commissioner of Juvenile Justice representing the Tennessee Department of Children's Services; Shalonda Cawthon, Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services; Linda O'Neal, Executive Director of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, who moderated the panel; and Doug Varney, MD, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. Also participating was Mike Hermann, Director of School Safety and Learning Support Programs within the Tennessee Department of Education.

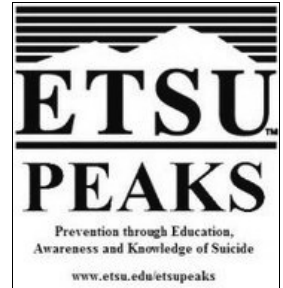


Ken Tullis's "Suicide 101: Basics of Suicide Prevention" was one of several breakout sessions and workshops presented at the symposium.

ETSU PEAKS SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILED IN SAMHSA NEWSLETTER

The most recent newsletter of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) profiles the campus suicide prevention program at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), specifically its social media component.

The March/April edition of the *SAMHSA News* promotes ETSU PEAKS (Prevention through Education, Awareness, and Knowledge of Suicide) as an example of outreach within commuter schools and for schools in rural areas. The project website offers links to articles on mental health and links for advocacy and research. Its Facebook page features tips for dealing with stress and information on project events, as does the program's Twitter account. ETSU PEAKS has a page on the social bookmarking site Delicious, linking visitors with useful articles and resources. Photos from ETSU PEAKS events and projects are available through the photo-sharing site Flickr. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-8255) is prominently featured on most of these portals.



ETSU PEAKS also takes advantage of targeted advertising to maximize its impact. Students visiting program sites during exam periods see ads for the campus counseling center. Friends and relatives visiting the site may see ads suggesting they refer troubled students to the Facebook page.

The social media aspect of the program complements the training sessions provided to health service students and resident assistants installed in ETSU's dorms. It also allows troubled and concerned students to search for the help they need in private.

ETSU PEAKS is funded by a SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant. ETSU is one of several Tennessee universities using this grant to develop and refine their suicide prevention programs; other colleges receiving funds are Vanderbilt University, the University of Memphis, and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

The current SAMHSA News is available online at the SAMHSA website (www.samhsa.gov/samhsaNewsletter/default.aspx).

ETSU PEAKS Links

Project website: www.etsu.edu/etsupeaks
 Delicious: www.delicious.com/etsupeaks
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/peaks.etsu
 Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/etsupeaks
 Twitter: twitter.com/#!/etsupeaks

SUICIDE BECOMES 10TH-LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN U.S.



Suicide became the nation's tenth-leading cause of death in 2009, according to a preliminary report from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to a March 17 report by the Associated Press, suicide had been ranked as the eleventh-leading cause of death behind blood infections. But in 2009, the death rate for blood infections dropped by 2% while the suicide rate remained stable. According to CDC statistics, this is the first year that suicide has been in the top ten causes of death since 1999.

Death rates in the U.S. were down for several illnesses and phenomena in 2009, with overall U.S. life expectancy rising to an all-time high of 78 years and two months. A widely reported dip in life expectancy in 2008 (reported in the January edition of the *TSPN Call to Action*) has since been rescinded by the CDC, which attributes the incorrect numbers to a computer error. US life expectancy between 2007 and 2008 did not drop from 77.9 years to 77.8, but actually rose to an even 78 years.

A full report on 2009 mortality figures will be released later this year. Fatal injury data for the years 1981 to 2007, including national and state suicide figures, are available from the CDC via WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) an interactive online database that provides customized reports of injury-related data (www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html).



JASON FLATT ACT PASSED INTO LAW IN ARKANSAS

Arkansas has become the sixth state to pass a form of the Jason Flatt Act into law. This legislation requires public school staff in that state to undergo two hours of teen suicide prevention and awareness training every five years.

Governor Mike Beebe signed the bill into law on March 30 after its passage by both houses of the state legislature. According to a March 24 press release from the Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI), Beebe took a personal interest in the development and introduction of the Flatt Act, alongside local health providers and advocates.

The bill cleared the Arkansas State House of Representatives by a vote of 88-1 on March 7 and cleared the Senate on March 23 by a vote of 31-0.

Tennessee was the first state to pass a version of the Jason Flatt Act into law. TSPN members actively promoted this legislation, which at the time of its passage was the most progressive legislation on the subject of youth suicide prevention education in the country. The bill's lead sponsor in the Tennessee Senate, Diane Black, was elected to Congress last year representing Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District. Since the bill's passage in 2007, versions of the Flatt Act have been adopted by California, Illinois, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The bill is named for Jason Flatt, son of JFI President/CEO Clark Flatt, who died by suicide at age 16.

More information about JFI is available at the agency's website (www.jasonfoundation.com). Additionally, Clark Flatt presented a workshop during this month's 10th Anniversary Symposium, on the subject of engaging faith-based groups in suicide prevention projects.



JFI President/CEO Clark Flatt was photographed with Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam during a February 23 meeting to discuss youth suicide prevention initiatives (photo courtesy of JFI).

REBBIE JACKSON JOINS "PICK UP THE PHONE" TOUR



Photo of Rebbie Jackson courtesy of zap2it.com.

Singer and Jackson family member Rebbie Jackson is participating in the "Pick Up the Phone" tour sponsored in part by the Kristin Brooks Hope Center.

The oldest sibling within the Jackson family is best known for appearances in her family's 1976-77 variety show "The Jacksons" and her 1984 R&B album and single "Centipede". Although semi-retired, she joined other family members in performing at Michael Jackson's memorial service in 2009.

As she explained on a March 10 appearance on NBC's "Today", Jackson's daughter Yashi Brown suffers from bipolar disorder, and Yashi's struggles taught her mother about the pervasiveness of mental health stigma. "There's a secrecy about it... Hush-hush. Sweep it under the carpet so to speak," Jackson observed during her interview.

Jackson's first tour date on behalf of "Pick Up the Phone" was on February 25 in Washington, DC. She has played venues in Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, and has an appearance scheduled at the "Festival for Humanity" concert in Vernon, New Jersey on May 29.

The Kristin Brooks Hope Center (www.hopeline.com) founded the National Hopeline Network (1-800-SUICIDE) and continues to raise awareness for suicide prevention and mental health treatment. Co-sponsors include the Vet2Vet Veterans Crisis Hotline (www.veteranscall.us) and the mail art website PostSecret.

TSPN REGIONAL CALENDAR

No December meetings are scheduled unless otherwise marked. Dates in **bold and in Persian indigo** 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
May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, and November 17

Memphis/Shelby County Region

monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:00 AM
The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, 1900 Union Avenue, Memphis, 38104
May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18 and November 15

Mid-Cumberland Region

monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM
Non-Profit Conference Center, 293 Plus Park Boulevard, Suite 201, Nashville, 37217
May 12, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8

Northeast Region

monthly, 4th Tuesday, 10:30 AM
Boone's Creek Christian Church, 305 Boone's Creek Road, Gray, 37615
May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23, September 27, October 25, and November 22

Rural West

monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM
Behavioral Health Initiatives, 36C Sandstone Circle, Jackson, 38305
May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, and November 16

South Central

monthly, 2nd Monday, 10:00 AM
Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia 38401
May 9, **June 13**, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, and December 14

Southeast Region

monthly, 1st Thursday, 10:00 AM
Downtown Chattanooga YMCA, 301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, 37402
May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1

Upper Cumberland Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM
Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Systems, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502
May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, October 27, and **November 17**

Intra-State Department Meetings

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Third Floor Conference Room, Cordell Hull Building, 425 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, 37243 (3:00 PM)
May 18, August 17, and November 16

Advisory Council

June 8-9 (Montgomery Bell State Park Inn, Burns)
September 7 (location to be announced)

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
May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2

Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Wednesday, 3:00 PM
May 25, June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26, and **November 16**

Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 3rd Monday, 1:30 PM
Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478
June 20, September 19, and **December 12**

Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Friday, 1:30 PM
Hickman Community Hospital, Senior Care Building, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033
May 20, June 24, July 22, August 26, September 23, October 28, **November 18**

ADVISORY COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

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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