

The Enfield Public Schools and the Town of Enfield in response to the recent losses in our community have been meeting to address the many emotions, concerns, and questions our schools, community, parents, and especially our students have had. The following is a brief review of activities conducted to date in response to the suicides experienced in our community in 2011. We hope this information will keep you informed of our ‘home-school-community’ approach to address the complex issues related to suicide, provide information on suicide prevention and support agencies, and possibly encourage you to become involved with our efforts.

In December, the Enfield Public Schools convened a Task Force of experts in the area of suicide prevention including the State Department of Children and Families, the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the State Office of Child Protection and Advocacy, Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services, representatives from the Town of Enfield Social Services, Town of Enfield Youth Services, and Town of Enfield Police Department. This initial task force helped organized a local Steering Committee representing students, parents, elected officials including the Mayor and the Chairman of the Board of Education, school and town employees and hosted a town wide informational meeting on suicide awareness and prevention led by Dr. Michael Schultz, DCF and concluded with an agency resource fair. In addition, the Enfield Public Schools in collaboration with The Town of Enfield Youth Services initiated individual and group counseling as needed in the schools. Information on the warning signs and resources were posted on the Town and School web pages.

January activities have continued group and individual counseling for any student needing support at school and Youth Services. The Steering Committee has expanded its membership. The Steering Committee reorganized into three sub-committees: Students Supporting Students Subcommittee; Training Subcommittee; and Parental Involvement and identifying students/families at risk subcommittee. The Steering Committee is planning an assembly program for students. Those three subcommittees held their initial meeting on January 20, 2012. Each will meet at least twice prior to March 7th at which time they will reconvene as the full Steering Committee.

Agencies providing intervention to prevent suicide include: 211 (Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services; Community Health Resources 860-683-8086; Joshua Center 860-749-2243; and Town of Enfield Youth Services 860-253-6383. Other Connecticut Resources include the Connecticut Department of Public Health <http://www.dph.state.ct.us>; Connecticut Department of Children and Families – Connecticut Youth Suicide Advisory Board <http://www.ct.gov/dcf>; Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services <http://www.ct.gov/dmhas>; Connecticut Clearinghouse www.ctclearinghouse.org. Parents and youth are encouraged to download two free apps on their cell phones to prevent suicide. The Droid link is

https://market.android.com/details?id=com.mhatexas.askaboutsucide&feature=search_results#? and the iphone link <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ask-prevent-suicide/id419595716?mt=8>. Facebook is now offering a first of a kind service to help prevent suicides. Please report a posted suicidal comment by a friend using either the report suicidal content link or report links found throughout the site. The person who posed the suicidal comment will then immediately receive an email from Facebook encouraging them to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or to click on a link to begin a confidential chat session with a crisis worker.