



Teen Life Counts

A Suicide Prevention and Awareness Program

A Program of Jewish Family Service

3330 West Esplanade
Suite 600, Metairie
Louisiana 70002
(504) 831-8475
(504) 831-1130 fax
jfs@jfsneworleans.org
www.jfsneworleans.org

Board of Directors

Jonathan D. Fawer
President

Joshua I. Rubenstein
Vice President

Gilbert N. Braunig
Treasurer

Nancy B. Timm
Secretary

Catherine Wall Aschaffenburg

Brian Bain

Cathy Bart

Benay Leslie Bernstein

Vivian B. Cahn

Debbie Friedman

Vadim Gelman, MD

Susan P. Good

Jack A. Hudson, DDS

Barbara Hyman

Robin Kanner

Lee Kansas

Fran Lake

Betty B. Lazarus

Sheri Levine

Charles A. Levy, III

Rabbi Yossie Nemes

Julie Wise Oreck

Alexa Pulitzer

Ann L. Rabin

Ricky Rosenberg

Henry M. Rosenblatt

Louis Shepard

Peter E. Sperling

Robert Steeg

Cantor William Tiep

Roselle M. Ungar

Julie Weiner

Jennifer Zurik

Deena Y. Gerber, LCSW

Executive Director



FAQS ABOUT TEEN LIFE COUNTS

Question: What is the Teen Life Counts program?

Answer: Teen Life Counts (TLC) is the most comprehensive school-based teen suicide prevention program in the Greater New Orleans area. The TLC program sends professional staff and 35 trained community volunteers to teach a four-part curriculum on teen suicide prevention to students in local high schools and several middle schools.

Question: Who benefits from Teen Life Counts?

Answer: The TLC program was established in 1984 and has grown tremendously. Originally reaching only a few hundred students, we now reach over 7,000 students in 45 public, private, and parochial schools in Greater New Orleans each year.

Question: What does the Teen Life Counts program teach?

Answer: Students learn how to identify warning signs of depression and suicide, how to talk to a troubled friend, and where to go to get help. They are also taught the importance of breaking a secret to save a life and the danger of alcohol and substance abuse by those who are depressed or suicidal.

Question: How does Teen Life Counts save lives?

Answer: At the end of each presentation, students are asked to fill out evaluation forms indicating whether or not they or their friends need help for depression or suicidal ideation. These students, about 700 annually, are immediately referred to the school counselor. The TLC staff follows up with the counselors to make sure that no student falls between the cracks.

Question: Who coordinates Teen Life Counts?

Answer: Teen Life Counts is coordinated by the professional staff of Jewish Family Service (JFS), a non-profit agency dedicated to providing psychological and social services to New Orleans area families, children, elderly and adults, regardless of race, religion, or ability to pay. Plans are being made with Youth Service Bureau (YSB) to expand this program to the Northshore.

Question: How is Teen Life Counts funded?

Answer: Funding for Teen Life Counts comes from United Way, grants, foundations, individual donations, and an annual fundraising event.

(over)

Question: What does the community have to say about Teen Life Counts?

“Your program has been of great assistance to me in dealing with the mental health issues of the student population. As a result of the program which you presented here this fall, three students with active suicidal ideation were referred to me by other students. We were able to refer them for appropriate psychiatric assistance and thereby avert tragedy. Also, as a direct result of your program 16 students suffering from various degrees of depression, six of whom had considered suicide, referred themselves to me for intervention.... You have helped to save lives here and helped to enable students who might otherwise have become tragic statistics to continue their education so that they may in time contribute a great deal to our larger society.”

Social Worker, Benjamin Franklin High School

“The professionals who facilitate the program are very competent in their areas of expertise. Their willingness to spend time here at Jesuit High School is an immeasurable community service. There is no way to truly measure how many lives are touched by your unconditional positive regard for those in need.”

Director of Guidance, Jesuit High School

“Commendations to the staff and volunteers of Teen Life Counts. I applaud you for your hard work and dedication to suicide prevention and our youth.”

Senator Mary Landrieu

“Our teachers and students were made aware of the overt and covert warning signs of suicide and depression. One noticeable change has been the attitude about suicide. In the African American culture, suicide is considered a ‘rich white males’ disease.’ ‘I feel like killing myself’ is a common everyday expression of displeasure and is dismissed without a second thought. Through education, the teachers and students are more cognizant of the signs of suicide and depression, and are taking immediate action to get help....This program has significantly affected attitude, heightened intervention, improved the quality of life, and saved lives.”

Counselor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School

“The physicians of this country are committed to reversing the startlingly high youth homicide and suicide statistics that exist in the United States; we rank highest among the 26 wealthiest nations. I know you will agree that the answer is prevention through increased public awareness and intervention with youth at risk....Jefferson Parish Medical Society has long been committed to teen suicide prevention through our support of your Teen Life Counts program. We are proud to be associated with such a highly regarded school-based suicide awareness and intervention program that reaches so many teens in our public, private, and parochial schools.”

Executive Director, Jefferson Parish Medical Society