

All of Us Can Do Our Part To Reduce Suicide Statistics

By KATIE FEEKS

May 5 to 11 is Suicide Prevention Week. Each year, during the first week of May, the American Association of Suicidology renews its efforts to educate the public about issues surrounding this national tragedy. Suicide affects all of us, and we can all play a part in reducing the heartbreaking statistics.

Statistics show suicide as the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24, and an article on suicide in the Sunday *New York Times* Magazine on April 28, 2002, cited an even more alarming statistic: suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. The highest rate of suicide, in any age group, is among the elderly over 75.

These statistics, however, really do not define the scope of the impact on our society. They do not reflect the grief and suffering experienced by millions of survivors, be they family, friends, or colleagues in the school or work place who try, not only to cope with the loss, but struggle with the continual self-examination, "what didn't I see or hear?"

People who commit suicide are often suffering from depression or mental illness. They are in the midst of a painful situation, and the feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness make suicide seem the only answer.

The majority of them do not really want to die, they just want to end the pain and cannot see another way out of their problems.

What are some of the warning signs? Some indications may be: talking about suicide; talking about death and dying; withdrawal from

friends or social contacts; loss of interest in work or school; loss of interest in personal appearance; drastic changes in behavior, or expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness.

More than 80 percent of people who commit suicide communicate their intent to kill themselves before they die.

CONTACT We Care responds to calls to 1-800-SUICIDE. A trained telephone crisis worker answers the call, providing non-judgmental listening, reassurance, support, and, if the situation warrants, help for the caller.

What can you do? Listen. Listen, and listen some more. Learn about the warning signs. Allow your friend to express his or her feelings of hopelessness; be direct and talk openly about suicidal thoughts; don't debate the validity of the thoughts; encourage the person to seek professional help; show you care by accompanying the person to appropriate crisis intervention resources; help them get help.

Join the local efforts to remove the stigma attached to mental illness and substance abuse. The reluctance to address these issues has created a major barrier to treatment, treatment that could potentially reduce the incidence of suicide across our nation.

We can all impact suicide statistics. Let's listen to the message of Suicide Prevention Week, work to eradicate the stigma attached to mental illness and substance abuse problems, and reach out to those seeking help and support.

Mrs. Feeks is the Executive Director of CONTACT We Care, headquartered in Scotch Plains. She is also a member of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Ministerium.



Katie Feeks



TALENTED ENSEMBLE...The Friends of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield held its 10th Anniversary Spring Concert on Sunday with The St. Paul's Choir, joined by world-renowned soloists and members of the Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. The program included a performance of a newly-completed edition of Mozart's *Requiem*, as well as Vivaldi's *Concerto in D major for Two Trumpets and Violin*.

Holy Trinity Seniors To Meet on Monday

WESTFIELD - The regular meeting of the Senior Social Club of the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church will be held on Monday, May 13, at 1:30 p.m. in the gymnasium/auditorium of the interparochial school. Attendees are asked to use the side entrance on First Street.

Dr. Karen Enslie of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Union County will present a program entitled "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?"

Registration for the group's catered luncheon on Monday, June 10, will also be taken at this meeting.

On Thursday, May 23, club members will travel to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. The bus will leave from B.G. Fields Restaurant in Westfield and return there for dinner after the performance.

Members may sign up for the organization's Monday, June 24 trip, which will be a ride aboard the *Spirit of Philadelphia*. Further information will be available at the May 13 meeting.

Program to Focus On Heart Disease Among Women

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Public Library will host a program on Women and Heart Disease on Thursday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. in the downstairs conference room.

Cyndi Hermezy, a Cardiovascular Clinical Nurse Specialist at Overlook Hospital in Summit, will be the guest speaker. The library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue. All are welcome to attend.

Discussion to Focus On Use of Science In Interpreting Bible

WESTFIELD - Members of the public are invited to take part in a discussion of how science can aid in interpreting the Bible at the First Congregational Church in Westfield next Thursday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Participants will examine certain Biblical passages in light of contemporary scientific understanding, with the goal of discovering new insights into the passages.

Individuals will have an opportunity to look at the Tree of Knowledge in Genesis and the story of how Jesus walked on water.

The discussion will be led by the Reverend John A. Mills, Director of Wisdom's Light, a ministry promoting positive dialogue between religion and science. It will take place in the Coe Room in the basement of the church.

The First Congregational Church is located at 125 Elmer Street. For directions, please call (908) 233-2494. More information about the Wisdom's Light ministry is available at <http://wislit.home.att.net>.

Free Rabies Clinic On Tap in Fanwood

FANWOOD - The Fanwood Board of Health will conduct a free Rabies Clinic from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 14, at the borough's Department of Public Works building on North Avenue in Fanwood.

The program will be offered for the inoculation of both cats and dogs. No appointments are necessary.

If bitten by any animal, individuals are advised to consult their physician immediately and to contact their local health department to report the incident.

To reach the Westfield Regional Health Department, which serves Fanwood, Mountainside and Westfield, please call (908) 789-4070.

Rev. David B. Joslin to Visit St. Paul's For Confirmation

WESTFIELD - On Sunday, May 12, the Right Reverend David B. Joslin, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, will join the community of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield for a Service of Confirmation.

The confirmands have been preparing for the occasion for many months through study of Christianity, the Episcopal



Rev. David Joslin

Church and other faiths, led by the Reverend Andrew C. Hamersley, Rector.

Many confirmands also visited other religious institutions for worship services with their sponsors.

A reception will be held following the service, honoring the young people and adults who are confirmed. St. Paul's Episcopal Church is located at 414 East Broad Street.

Church Youth to Participate In Benefit Carhop Saturday

WESTFIELD - The youth of the First United Methodist Church in Westfield will hold a carhop on Saturday, May 11, from 4 to 8 p.m. in the church parking lot.

Profits from the event will benefit RISE, a program whereby the church sends teams of youth and adults each summer to participate in the Risingville Intercommunity Service Effort.

The group travels to Steubben County, N.Y., where participants perform home repair and renovation work for elderly and disabled homeowners.

The community is invited to attend the carhop. Hot dogs, hamburgers and cheeseburgers will be served by skating waiters and waitresses.

The church is located at 1 East Broad Street and the parking lot is accessible by Ferris Place Road. For further information, please call the

church office at (908) 233-4211.

Torah Center Reveals Shavuot Celebration

WESTFIELD - The Union County Torah Center, located at 418 Central Avenue in Westfield, has announced its upcoming celebration of Shavuot, the two-day festival commemorating the giving of the Ten Commandments and the Torah on Mount Sinai.

A special reading of the Ten Commandments will take place on the first day of Shavuot, on Friday, May 17, at 6:30 p.m. An ice cream party for children and a dairy Kiddush for the adults will follow. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge.

Shavuot will be ushered in on Thursday evening, May 16, and will continue through Friday and Saturday. For more information on the Torah Center festivities, please call (908) 789-5252.

Caregivers of Older Adults Invited to Attend Meeting

BERKELEY HEIGHTS - A meeting of P.R.E.P. (People Responsible for Elderly Persons), a caregivers' support group sponsored by SAGE Solutions, will take place on Wednesday, May 15, from 7 to 9 p.m.

The meeting will take place at SAGE Spend-A-Day Adult Day Health Center, located at 550 Springfield Avenue in Berkeley Heights.

Dr. John Gregory, Director of Palliative Care at Overlook Hospital in Summit, will speak on "Essentials of Palliative Care." A question-and-answer session will follow the presentation.

He will cover such topics as "dying well," an exploration of palliative care, the role of hospice in palliative care and advance care planning.

P.R.E.P. holds monthly meetings and is offered free of charge to anyone

who assumes the responsibility of caring for an older adult.

Participants have an opportunity to meet others with similar concerns about their aging loved ones; share common problems and solutions; discover what community resources are available and learn effective problem-solving and coping skills.

For more information, please call Ellen McNally, SAGE InfoCare Director, at (908) 273-4598.

Good News

A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel

Proverbs 15:18

The Gospel

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ART EXHIBITION

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In conjunction with the Somerset Art Association, Watchung Ridge Assisted Living will host an Art Exhibit featuring the works of a variety of artists from the Somerset County area.

The Art Exhibit will feature an eclectic mix of mediums and subjects, and all pieces will be available for purchase.

Join us:

Sunday, May 19th, 12 noon to 4 p.m.

- Meet the artists, discuss their craft, and observe art coming to life as the artists bring their easels and set to work on their newest creations.
- Enjoy refreshments in the Watchung Ridge Café.

Call 1-908-754-8180 today to RSVP and for directions to our community.

Watchung Ridge Assisted Living Community is affiliated with Presbyterian Homes & Services, Inc.; not-for-profit, non-sectarian corporations - your assurance of the highest quality in senior living and service.



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