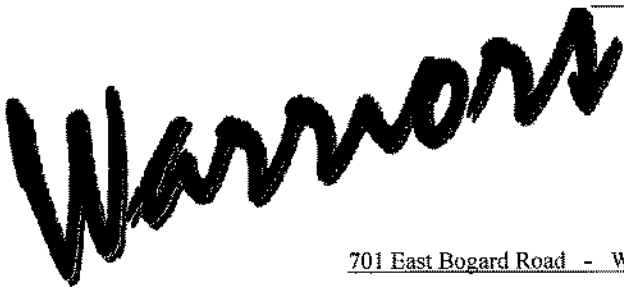


Wasilla High School

The logo for Wasilla High School features the word "Wasilla" in a large, stylized, cursive font, with "Warriors" written in a smaller, similar font below it.

Amy Spargo
Principal

Jeff Nelles
Assistant Principal

Ed Ripley
Assistant Principal

Shari Taylor
Administrative Secretary

Chuck Martin
Activities Director

701 East Bogard Road - Wasilla, AK 99654-7111 Phone: 907-352-8200 Fax: 907-352-8280

April 3, 2015

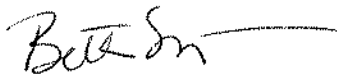
Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On March 30, 2015, Wasilla High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" (YANA) peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach program. The visit to our school included two classes facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains and presented by Kathryn Casello of West HS and the Council's Youth Representative, Amanda Agustin of West HS, Tel Finnerty of Service HS, Katherine Murray of West HS, Becca Nall of Eagle River HS, and Henry Joling of West HS. Approximately 55 students and five staff participated in the two 90-minute presentations.

The YANA presentations were very well received by the students at Wasilla High. The students felt the model of students teaching students was very effective. They specifically liked the correlation of QPR to CPR. They also liked the discussions about the myths and facts of suicide. Our students are excited about the possibility of starting a YANA club at our school, and 26, almost half, of the students attending the presentations expressed interest in becoming a YANA presenter. With this strong interest, we are in the process of purchasing YANA t-shirts and developing an implementation plan.

The students at Wasilla High School greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the "You Are Not Alone" suicide prevention outreach program. This program is well worth continued funding and support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth Smart".

Beth Smart, M.Ed
Counselor
907-352-8241
marybeth.smart@matsuk12.us





HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOLS

Ph. 766-6700 Fax 766-6791

P.O. Box 1289

Haines, Alaska 99827-1289

March 26, 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On February 24, 2015, Haines High School and Haines Middle School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, and Kathryn Murray, West HS sophomore, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The visit included a combined middle and high school wristband presentation for approximately 160 students and staff. This was followed by a youth presented suicide prevention class which about 30 middle school students and 36 high school students attended, along with myself and eight staff members.

Our students and staff were thrilled by the presentation and left both the wristband presentation and the class energized. Often when adults present this content, the students listen, but are not very engaged. Having the peer-facilitated presentation made a noticeable difference. Before the ladies got to our school, we had only a small handful of students signed up for the class. After the wristband presentation, class enrollment tripled in the middle school and increased sixfold in the high school. I am pleased to say that 50% of our middle school and about 43% of the high school are now trained in Gatekeeper QPR. I have noticed an increase in students bring students of concern to my attention more frequently and feeling more confident having important conversations with each other.

Students are starting to initiate plans to improve school climate and caring for one another. The week after the event, I had a group of eight middle schoolers post positive message post-its on every locker in the middle school of their own accord. There is a list of fourteen students who are working at starting a You Are Not Alone club in our middle school and two of our high school students are interested in becoming youth presenters themselves. I recognized at the Alaska School Counselor Association conference last fall how powerful Kathryn's message would be for my students and I am pleased to say that it was even more powerful than I imagined.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Moore
Haines K-12 School Counselor



JUNEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Yaakoosge Daakahidi School • 907-523-1804 • Fax 907-523-1819 • 10014 Crazy Horse Drive, Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On March 31, 2015, Yaakoosge Daakahidi Alternative High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach. The presentation was done by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello of West HS, Amanda Agustin of West HS, Tel Finnerty of Service HS, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The visit included a youth suicide prevention class, which 12 students and 2 staff attended along with a school wide wristband presentation with about 60 students and staff.

The suicide prevention class greatly impacted the students who choose to attend after the wristband presentation. The majority of these had personally experienced a family or friend who had either had suicidal ideation, attempted suicide or completed suicide. Some of the students themselves currently have or have had depression, suicidal ideation or attempts. In the past, these students felt like this was something they had to deal with alone and were not sure whom to turn to for help.

Some of these students displayed strong emotions during the presentation. I checked in with all of the students individually the next day. All of the students had a positive reaction and had positive comments about the presentation. They were glad they chose to attend and felt like they had gained valuable skills and tools that would help them and other people they care about in the future.

Over and over, I heard how this presentation had a stronger impact because their peers did it. Not only were the student presenters highly skilled but also they connected with the students in a way that adults could not in past presentations. Learning about myths and signs of suicides, how to ask someone if they are thinking about suicide, and how to persuade someone there is help available and where to refer them to were all things they may have heard in previous school curriculum. This time the students had a new and deeper level of understanding. The hopelessness these students had felt in the past around the topic of suicide has now been replaced with hope.

I would like to see more peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach done in our school in the future. I am hoping that the Juneau School District will train local students who can do small group presentations in our school on a regular basis. I strongly feel that this program has a lasting and positive impact on our alternative high school students.

Sincerely,

Kelly Niemann
YDHS School



Alaska National Guard Warrior & Family Services

Child & Youth Program

P.O. Box 5800

49000 Army Guard Rd, D-101

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska 99505-2552

Phone: 907-428-6670

Fax: 907-428-6284

Toll-Free: 1-888-917-3608

www.jointservicesupport.org

www.dmv.alaska.gov/family



20 Mar 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On March 1, 2015, the second day of our Alaska National Guard Child & Youth Program "Teen Leadership and Volunteer Symposium", attendees participated in the follow up youth presenter training for the "You Are Not Alone" peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach. The Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Teen Presenters were Amanda Augustin, West HS student and Tel Finnerty, Service HS student, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. There were 10 students, 3 adults, a victim advocate from the National Guard and a Military Family Life Consultant present.

The teens in attendance were primarily teens who have participated in our program for a number of years, although not all the teens knew each other prior to the symposium. The attention our teens (and adults) paid to the teen presenters was impressive. The teens were articulate and had a particularly good "tag team" approach, especially after we found out near the end of the training that this was their first official time team-teaching! Deb Casello's assistance was perfect, supportive without being interruptive, and clarifying if anything was not clear.

The simplicity of the information within the peer-delivered model makes this a must for teens across the state! Since the people closest to people who may, and in some cases do, complete suicide, it makes sense that a simple-to-use method of empowering EVERYONE to be able to be aware of signals and signs of suicide in a colleague, friend or neighbor—and ways to respond and then help get them to appropriate help paramount. There was some discussion afterward of a teen from Juneau being interested in becoming a QPR peer instructor, as well as some potential interest with a couple other teens.

The Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator, Joan Boltz, attended a QPR Train the Trainer course on 19 Mar 2015. She did so to be able to be another adult who can accompany teens who are part of the QPR peer trainer cadre. As is said in the QPR Train the Trainer course, "QPR" can be thought of much like "CPR", as a community member tool to empower people to help someone until professional help takes over. Such a great analogy!

I am writing to let someone at the state level know how grateful we are with the experience of the teens providing other teens with QPR information. What a great win-win! Since my coworker Melissa Williams and I travel to several areas of the state to serve our National Guard teens, and we know how high the rate of suicide in our state is among the teen to early twenties population, we are hopeful to help in a small way to help disseminate even further the important QPR information.

Respectfully,

Joan L. Boltz
Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator
Alaska National Guard Child & Youth Program



**Kodiak High School
722 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615**

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On January 21, 2015, Kodiak High School students participated in the follow up, youth presenter training for the "You Are Not Alone" peer-to-peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The original visit in November of 2014 included a school wide wristband presentation to about 750 students, followed by an invitation to a 45-minute suicide prevention Q&A. Over 125 students voluntarily attended and a suicide prevention class was given after school the same day. Seven students were inspired to become more involved by becoming youth presenters.

The "You Are Not Alone" training was well received by the seven individuals. A total of three students presented the suicide prevention program during an introductory health class to their school peers. Each of the three students had practiced the slides and did an exceptional job delivering the program.

It was a privilege to help train our youth presenters. They conducted themselves in a professional manner and were able to effectively deliver an important program regarding suicide prevention to their peers.

Sincerely,

Lucy Murdock

Counseling Intern
Kodiak High School
Kodiak Island Borough School District



Counseling Department

Robert Service High School
5577 Abbott Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-4399
Phone: (907) 346-2111
Fax: (907) 346-2314

February 18, 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On February 17, 2015, Service High School students participated in the follow up youth presenter training for the "You Are Not Alone" peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, West HS student Katherine Murray, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The original visit in January 2015, included a youth presented suicide prevention class. Nine students were in attendance with two school counselors. Students were inspired to become more involved by taking the youth presenter training.

The Service HS students who participated in the presentations and training are very motivated to educate their peers on Suicide Prevention. The group is committed to developing a plan to integrate the "You Are Not Alone" outreach program into the culture of Service High School. I am excited to work with this enthusiastic group of young people to bring awareness to the occurrence and prevention of suicide to Alaska's young people. The group is empowered by their peers at West High School who shared their expertise with them in the last two months.

Danielle Dalton

Service High Counselor

907-742-8111



COLONY HIGH SCHOOL JROTC
9550 East Colony Schools Drive
Palmer, Alaska 99645
(907) 861-5542/5549



March 15, 2015

Statewide Suicide Prevention Council
431 North Franklin Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

On December 10th-12th, 2015, Colony High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach. Two of the days were presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, and West HS senior Amanda Augustin. One day was presented by Rebecca Nall and Anastasia Belcher, from Eagle River HS. The outreach was facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. All the students in the JROTC program at Colony participated.

The work these individuals did with our Cadets will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on how they approach and deal with adversity in their life. Several of our students have dealt with misfortune throughout their life and the coping mechanisms that were taught during the training will surely make them more resilient when hardship strikes again. The instruction was engaging and informative and students regularly tell me what a positive impact the training has made in their life.

As a direct result of the training, we are in the process of starting our own You Are Not Alone club at Colony High School. One of our Cadets recently met with our school Principal and Guidance Counselors to get their "buy in" and discuss the procedures for forming the new club. Our administrators at Colony High School are excited about this new club and fully supportive. We also have a Military Family Life Counselor at Colony High School who is working one on one with our Cadets to get the school wide club up and running. Our goal is to submit the grant request in the coming weeks and have our first meeting before the end of the semester.

In closing I would like to say that I'm very thankful for the work that the peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach team does for our community and I'm excited about the opportunities ahead for Colony High School students once our own club gets up and running.

Sincerely,

LTC (Retired) Gerald R. Diotte Jr.
Senior Army Instructor
Colony High School Army JROTC

HOUSTON HIGH SCHOOL

P.O. Box 940315
Houston, AK 99694

Bill Johnson, Principal
Justin Ainsworth, Assistant Principal
Dave Porter, Activities Director

(907)892-9400
(907)892-9460 fax



February 18, 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On February 10, 2015, Houston High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The visit included the youth presented suicide prevention class for about 30 students and 4 staff members. The previous week Houston HS had a school wide wristband presentation for their 350 students during an assembly.

This peer to peer prevention program has been well received by our students, and we have several students that are aspiring to become presenters to share the message with their classmates at Houston High School, and peers around the state. We just received our YANA t-shirts to distribute to students that wish to be part of a YANA club. Also, we have 2 staff members attending a train-the-trainer presentation on March 19th, so that we can keep this program sustainable within our own walls, knowing that the outreach will go beyond the school walls.

Thank you for supporting this program that PROACTIVELY addresses the suicide issues in our state.

Sincerely,

Shelli Lincoln, School Counselor



Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success.

Nome Public Schools

PO Box 131~Nome, Alaska 99762~Phone: (907)443-2231~Fax: (907)443-5144



February 16, 2015

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On February 3, 2015, Nome-Beltz Jr/Sr High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by the Council's Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, West HS student Katherine Murray, and facilitated by trainer Deb Casello of the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains. The visit included separate school wide wristband presentations for the high school, which has approximately 180 students, and junior high school, about 80 students. This was followed by a youth presented suicide prevention class offered to high school students. Approximately 25 students and myself, the school counselor, were in attendance.

Our students listened to all presentations with rapt attention. They were very appreciative of the opportunity to learn about and talk about the subject. I have been thanked by the students for having the presentation at our school. As a result of the event, we have started a You Are Not Alone Club at the high school. We have also applied for, and received a grant from Rotary Club to support those activities. At our first meeting the group decided to order You Are Not Alone Club t-shirts to wear on our meeting days. We will also be spreading positive, supportive notes around the school to remind students that they have many good qualities and that they indeed are not alone. As our Club builds, there are students who are interested in becoming QPR trainers to train more students in school.

As a counselor, I have seen many programs come through our doors. This presentation engaged our students and has empowered them to make it their own. I look forward to many years of benefits from this event.

Sincerely,
Janeen Sullivan
Nome-Beltz Jr/Sr High Counselor



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

Dear Governor Parnell and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

On October 15, 2014, Avail Alternative High School's Peer 2 Peer Natural Helpers Group, participated in the Youth Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Class. It was presented by Council Youth Rep, Kathryn Casello and facilitated by Gatekeeper trainer, Deb Casello.

The goal of the training was to have our Peer 2 Peer youth be able to better identify suicide warning signs amongst our entire student population. My co-facilitator and I had attended the Gatekeeper training the month prior and had heard some really positive feedback about Kathryn and her work around suicide prevention. I realized after the presentation Kathryn delivered to our Peer 2 Peer group, the positive feedback was very well deserved. She provided an extremely thorough and relevant training to our youth. It was delivered in an engaging way that kept our student's attention and provided them the opportunity to participate in a supportive environment. Kathryn is wise beyond her years and was able to engage with our very diverse group of students, it was well organized and seamless. We could have chosen from a variety of different presenters and suicide prevention programs; however, I believe having a peer provide the information helps youth relate to the subject matter. Deb did a great job at the beginning of the training setting the safety guidelines and explaining who was in charge of what. We did have a youth who needed to leave after becoming upset but since there had been discussion prior to getting into the material, everyone knew exactly how to handle the situation.

It is no secret to those who are fortunate enough to work with Alaska's youth, that suicide is a huge concern. We also know that to truly address suicide, we need to come at it from many different angles. Having youth suicide presenters is a creative and important piece of the strategy. I am excited to have met Deb and Kathryn and look forward to moving forward with them as part of the AVAIL community.

Lara McDonald, LBSW
Anchorage School District
Social Services/Transition Coordinator
AVAIL High School
Phone: 742-4939
Fax: 742-4933
Cell: 748-5677

Educating All Students for Success in Life

Anchorage School Board Eric Croft, President
Kameron Perez-Verdia, Vice President
Kathleen Plunkett, Clerk

Bettye Davis, Treasurer
Tam Agosti-Gisler

Pat Higgins
Natasha von Imhof

Superintendent Ed Graff



West Anchorage High School

1700 Hillcrest Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99517
(907) 742-2500
FAX (907) 742-2525

"Home of the Eagles"

Dear Governor Parnell and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council:

On October 3, 2014, West Anchorage High School students participated in the "You Are Not Alone" peer to peer youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by Council Youth Representative, Kathryn Casello and fellow West Anchorage High School student, Katherine Murray and facilitated by the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains' Community Resource Advisor, Deb Casello. There were almost 2000 students in attendance along with teachers and staff. In addition, on August 20, the same team presented to the 500 plus members of the Class of 2018 during West Anchorage High School's Ignition Mentors' Freshman Orientation Program.

Both presentations were received positively by our students. As a result the team will be training interested students to give the wristband presentation which will be incorporated into the Freshmen Orientation for future classes. West students have inquired about the possibility of starting a "You Are Not Alone" club and they will be meeting to organize and share their vision of how they want the club to develop in the next two weeks. The Ignition Mentorship Class is interested in participating in the Youth Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training which will enrich the class curriculum and add to the WHS Ignition slogan "to get your SWAG (Stop West Aggressive Groups) on".

It is exciting to know that our students are taking the lead in peer to peer outreach and living Ghandi's charge to "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Lourdes

Lourdes Crawford, M.Ed., Ed.S.
WHS Counselor/Department Chair
(907) 742-2562

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou



Anchorage School District

Eagle River High School

8701 Yosemite Drive, Eagle River, AK 99577-6500

Phone (907) 742-2700 Fax (907) 742-2710

Martin Lang, *Principal*

Dear Governor Parnell and members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

On September 25, 2014 a group of 23 Eagle River High School students and I attended the Gatekeeper Youth Suicide Prevention class. It was presented by West Anchorage HS & Council Youth Rep, Kathryn Casello, and West Anchorage HS student, Katherine Murray, and facilitated by Gatekeeper trainer, Deb Casello.

What an amazing experience this was for our students and for me! In my 15 years as a high school counselor I have had the unfortunate experience of losing a number of students and co-workers to suicide. At times I have questioned my abilities to be aware of the warning signs and the belief that I can make a difference. These outstanding presenters reminded me of the importance of being present and available to all people regardless of what they might be thinking or saying.

As a result of the class, some of the students are very interested in becoming youth Gatekeeper presenters and will be getting more involved in youth suicide prevention.

Below are comments from some the students who attended the class:

"I learned that there were so many people with the same concerns in mind, and that we were taught by teenagers who had gone through the same things we have, it was very moving and motivational"

"I would definitely recommend this class to anyone. Even if I felt that someone was struggling with depression themselves, they may learn coping skills and ways to share. Also, helping others can help you learn to deal with your own hurts. Having students teach the class was very engaging and helpful."

"I liked how the training was mostly presented by kids. I also liked all of the good supporting people and the people who were willing to share (and the food)."

"I would absolutely recommend this class. There was a lot of great information on how to spot signs of suicide and be less judgmental and be more careful with jokes especially."

"I think it made a huge positive influence. I felt like I could understand, connect and relate to the students who were talking rather than adults."

I would recommend this class to others because everyone should know this information. It may come in handy in the future."

"The students presenting were relatable, and for us students, a parent or teachers' perspective many not be anywhere near our experiences. I feel that students are put in a tougher position because we have to reach out for them."

I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with Deb Casello, Kathryn Casello and Katherine Murray.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lahn

Counselor

Eagle River H.S.

(907) 742-2709



Dean of Students Office
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

3211 Providence Drive
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T 907.786.1214 • F 907.786.1291
aydos@uaa.alaska.edu

Sierra R Mills, MA, Counselor-in-Residence
UAA, Dean of Students Office
West Hall, Room 100CPI
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK
99508-4614
October 16, 2014

Dear Governor Parnell and members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

During September 2014, The University of Alaska Anchorage students participated in three suicide prevention events. Each event included the "You Are Not Alone", peer to peer, youth suicide prevention outreach. They were presented by West Anchorage HS student/Council Youth Rep. Kathryn Casello and West Anchorage HS student, Katherine Murray and were facilitated by the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains Community Resource Advisor, Deb Casello.

UAA residential and commuter students were involved, along with counselors, staff, and community members. The "You Are Not Alone" focus for suicide prevention was significantly powerful for students and youth, and we have received enormous support and feedback. Members of the community, other departments within UAA- such as Native Student Services, Student Health and Counseling Center, the Care Team and the Alcohol and Wellness educator, as well as student clubs and organizations and volunteers, were encouraged to participate and share the joint effort of building community connections and encouraging help seeking behaviors.

The coordination with the community, and the peer-to-peer outreach, had a positive impact for all students and community members alike, and continues to do so. With the change of focus and safe messaging, it has brought not only awareness, yet specific suicide prevention tactics with the "who helped you" and the "you are not alone" campaign. The Statewide youth Representative, Kathryn Casello, and student Katherine Murray, who were involved in the peer to peer outreach, with passing out yellow wristbands with the message "You are Not Alone" with the Careline number on it, were in many ways the most powerful aspect of the event. As youth speak out and normalize this mission, they help de-stigmatize help seeking and are significant role models to encourage the benefit of reaching out for help.

This suicide prevention focus, is a duty and mission that is ongoing. With the over 500 wristbands handed out with the care line number on them, the message is spreading. However, it was the partnership with Anchorage's Chaplain from Police and Fire, Deb Casello, and the Statewide Youth Rep. Kathryn Casello, that brought this message to life and continues to have a positive impact. Students at UAA continue to wear the bright yellow wristbands, share them and pass them out to others. Students have also reported that due to the wristband, with Careline number, that not only are they being worn, yet have been used as intended. The 24 hour hotline has been called and most likely, has saved lives.

The Dean of Students Counselors continue to make the "YOU ARE NOT ALONE" wristbands available, and students continue to use them. Thank you so much for your time and dedication to the prevention of suicide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sierra R Mills', is written over a horizontal line.

Sierra R Mills, MA, Counselor-in-Residence

October 16, 2014

Dear Governor Parnell and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

During the week of September 12, 2014, Northwest Arctic Borough School District student leaders participated in the Tech John Baker Youth Leadership Retreat. One small part of this conference was the presentation of the "You Are Not Alone", peer to peer, youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by Council Youth Rep, Kathryn Casello and facilitated by the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains', Community Resource Advisor, Deb Casello.

There were 135 students in attendance, representing eleven different villages, along with teachers and staff. Having Kathryn present to our students was very effective in that students connected to her as she delivered her message, whereas having adults try to get the message across isn't as successful. Another advantage is that our student were able to recognize that suicide is not just an issue that we have to deal with in Northern Alaska, but everywhere as well. Our students in our region as well as those from others would benefit from getting suicide prevention training and becoming trainers in their own schools as well as community.

The students in our region continue to wear the bracelets and as of last week, I had one student tell me that she had given two of them out to two adults and that made her hopeful.

I hope that her message continues to be heard by our youth across Alaska and the country. She has the charisma and gift to deliver the message in such a way that our youth listen and engage to and get motivated by.

Sincerely,

Andie Zink
Itinerant School Counselor
Teck John Baker Youth Leader Advisor
NWABSD
azink@nwarctic.org

10/16/2014

Dear Governor Parnell and Members of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council,

During the week of September 12, 2014, Northwest Arctic Borough School District student leaders participated in the Tech John Baker Youth Leadership Retreat. One small part of this conference was the presentation of the "You Are Not Alone", peer to peer, youth suicide prevention outreach. It was presented by Council Youth Rep, Kathryn Casello and facilitated by the Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains, Community Resource Advisor, Deb Casello.

There were 135 students in attendance, representing eleven different villages, along with teachers and staff.

I was very impressed by the passion and poise with which Kathryn Casello spoke to the Youth Leaders during her presentation. Personally, I was in awe of her strength; the courage it takes to speak about a topic as emotional and traumatic as suicide with authority to 135 students and adults who have experienced it to detrimental effects is incredible. I believe that her words had a tremendous affect on the students present. The Youth Leaders from Selawik commented that it was good to see that someone their age was working so hard to spread awareness, and that they would love to have something like Kathryn's presentation happen in Selawik.

It has been planned for student leaders from the villages to be trained in January 2015, via teleconference, to give the presentation at their village schools.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Margaret E. Abbott
Secondary Social Studies Teacher
Davis-Ramoth School
Selawik, AK