



The Lighthouse Ledger

The Newsletter of I Need A Lighthouse, Inc

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The Heart and Soul of I Need A Lighthouse



I Need a Lighthouse, Inc. (INAL) reaches the community in many ways. The core of our mission, the real heart of INAL, is our high school presentation. Depression is part of the landscape in our high schools. Sometimes it is obvious - expressed as anger and acting out, and sometimes it is hidden behind laughter. A 2003 survey found that, when asked, 20% of teens – 1 out of 5 – stated they had SERIOUSLY contemplated suicide within the past year. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24. Yes, depression and suicide are part of the high school landscape.

When presenting in a school we generally spend 2 days, teaching 4 sessions each day. I have been amazed at the number of students I see nodding, tearing up, or just being intensely focused as we talk about the signs and symptoms of depression and the warning signs of suicide. Even more surprising is the number of students who approach us after the presentation. “I have felt depressed, and I have had thoughts of suicide”; “My Mother is depressed and I don’t know how to get her help”; “My friend/uncle/sister/cousin committed suicide”. These students share their stories with us, and we connect them with someone at the school who can support and link them with ongoing services. We are honored that they are willing to share their stories.

After presenting we leave the students in the capable hands of teachers and school counselors. We may never know the long-term impact of the information we have shared, **but**, every so often we hear from a student that our message has been heard. Kathy was approached last spring on our second day at a local high school. Recognizing the Lighthouse logo on Kathy’s shirt, a young woman stopped Kathy and said, “You really helped me”. Kathy was surprised, and delighted, and inquired how she had helped. “Well, my boyfriend called me Sunday night and told me he was thinking about suicide. After talking with him for hours I hung up, and I couldn’t sleep. I was so worried about him. I came to school Monday and I heard you talk. I knew what I had to do. I told his Mom, and he is getting help”. Her boyfriend was in a local psychiatric hospital and was getting the treatment he desperately needed. We hope that, though we may never hear their stories, there are numerous other teens that reach out to friends and are empowered to intervene to save the life of someone they care about. That is the heart of INAL.

Crisis Hotline Numbers

National Hotline	1-800-273-TALK	1-800-273-8255
	1-800-SUICIDE	1-800-784-2433
Virginia Beach Psychiatric Center		1-800-627-5433
VB Emergency Services Crisis Line		757-385-0888

Fun in the Sunset

INAL's 2nd Annual Sunset & Wine Event

The second annual Sunset and Wine Event was held Monday, September 28, 2009 from 6:00-8:00p.m. at the Church Point Manor House. This event is one way we spread the word about I Need A Lighthouse's work in the community, and celebrate the how much we have accomplished in the past year.



Jerry McDonnell generously donated our beautiful location. Our hosts for the evening were: Rusty Adams & Laurie Butler, Charles & Susan Barker, Scot & Pat Creech, Douglas & Marianne Dickerson, and Jim & Karen Sparks. If you were among the 160 guests present, you know what a classy event this was.

A large canopy tent, donated by Affordable & Luxury Tents, enabled us to be outside on this perfect fall evening. Chef Amy Brandt prepared food donated by SegMark. The menu included a wide assortment of delicious appetizers, and decadent desserts. Elaborate floral arrangements and decor inside and outside the Manor House, lending a special magic to the evening, were perfectly arranged by Pat Creech, Marianne Dickerson, and Cathy Malbon.



With soft guitar music playing in the background outside, guests enjoyed wine, food, and visiting with friends. Guests were encouraged to roam inside the Manor House while the piano player entertained with both music and singing.

Over 30 people volunteered to make the event run smoothly and seemingly effortlessly. As guests reluctantly made their exit, the sky did open up. Those who had not yet left gathered under the tent to extend the party while some guests quickly dashed into the Manor House to enjoy more piano music.



Lighthouse Psychology Clubs

A Lighthouse Psychology Club is coming to a high school near you. Clubs allow students to learn about career opportunities in mental health, and reduce the stigma of mental illness through education. We are proud to partner with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill to coordinate this effort. If you would like more information about starting a club at your local high school please contact us at 757-496-9775



Stop, Walk, Run

Lighthouse's 3rd Annual Beacon of Hope 5k

Lighthouse's 3rd Annual Beacon of Hope 5k **race** was held on a Saturday, October 24th 2009, at the Oceanfront, starting and ending at the Old Coast Guard Station. The day started off with a threat of rain, but the weather cleared and the morning was beautiful and sunny.

We were thrilled to host over 200 participants – more than double the number of racers in 2008. Our partners, Tidewater Striders, kept the event running smoothly for all involved.

A meaningful piece of the Beacon of Hope race is the 1 Mile Memory Walk, where friends and family members touched by suicide come together to honor those whose lives have been lost. It is a powerful testament to the devastation felt by those touched by suicide.



Thanks to everyone who supported I Need A Lighthouse by joining us for the Beacon of Hope. Our 4th Annual 5k Run/Walk will be held on Saturday, October 23, 2010. If you would like to see more pictures of the Beacon of Hope 5k, visit our website at www.ineedalighthouse.org.

www.ineedalighthouse.org

- Information about depression and suicide
- Information on local Hampton Roads resources
- Breaking news related to mental health
- Registration for INAL events
- MAKE A DONATION to support INAL's programs**

There is help. There is hope.

Education + Awareness = Prevention

Teen Mini Conference at Cox High School

What happens when you put 175 students from schools all over Virginia Beach in one auditorium? Add energetic, expert speakers and panelists discussing teen depression and suicide prevention? Answer: A great opportunity for learning and listening, increasing students awareness of mental health issues and empowering them to save a life!



The conference began with a training session by Calvin Nunnally, who recently retired from the Virginia Department of Health Division of Injury and Violence Prevention where he served as the Manager of Virginia's Multi-Site Youth Suicide Prevention/Early Intervention Program. He is currently the Founder and Executive Director of *Know More Bullying Training and Consultation Services*. He trained the students in the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) model of suicide prevention.

Later that morning, Mr. Nunnally was joined by Adam Bradshaw, Associate Pastor of Spring Branch Community Church; Robert Jamison, BA, MS, Director of Guidance at Frank W. Cox High School; Kathy Maurer, RN,BSN-QPR Certified Trainer and Registered Nurse, and Melissa Pence, Psy.D. Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Medicine, Hampton Roads Neuropsychology. The panel addressed students' questions on topics ranging from the roots of depression and available treatment, to the ethical and social implications of suicide.

We were thrilled with the positive response from students and teachers attending the event. The teen mini conference format allows us to address in depth the topics we feel are so critical to our teens' mental health and wellbeing. By giving a forum for teens to have a dialogue about the important topics of teen suicide we hope to empower them to reach out for help when they or their friends are suffering.

We would like to thank Chesapeake Bay Wine Foundation for the generous grant that funded this event. Special thanks also to all of our speakers and panelists, and to Cox High School for the use of their auditorium to house the conference.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

I Need A Lighthouse needs YOUR help to continue our work educating young adults about depression and suicide. Please consider visiting us at www.ineedalighthouse.org to make a donation. Your contribution is tax deductible and all funds serve youth here in Hampton Roads.

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