

# New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition November Newsletter

November 5, 2007



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We finally have all the details worked out for our Suicide Survivors Healing Conference. Yeah! Due to unforeseen circumstances, the planning for this conference was completed later than we had hoped, and for that, we apologize. What this means is, we desperately need everyone's help to get survivors registered:

- Please, pass on this newsletter to anyone and everyone you know who comes into contact or works with survivors (counselors, funeral homes, grief groups, churches, civic organizations, etc).
- Print out copies of the flyer and post them around your place of business or favorite hangout.
- Make phone calls to those who don't have internet access.
- Contact your local radio stations, newspapers, and other media outlets and ask them to get the word out.

We have also finally updated our email list to include many of the sign-in sheets that have been piling up from various events around the state. I've also scoured the list to correct any typos and misspellings; and deleted all the duplicates I could find. Hopefully, this means that many new people will now be receiving our newsletters and event updates. However, we know that there are many others out there who could benefit from this information, so feel free to forward this newsletter to whomever you would like. If you've received this as a forward from a friend or colleague, please take a moment to visit our website and sign up. That way, you'll never miss any of our emails in the future.

Sincerely,  
Darleene Edwards

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Vice-Chair and Treasurer

## **MESSEGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Wopila!

I extend a warm handshake to each of you. I have been working with the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition (NMSPC) for several months now. As an American Indian woman, who grew up on a reservation, I was always painfully aware of the high rate of suicide in Indian country. I, too, am a survivor having lost relatives, classmates and community/tribal members. From the second I started working with the Coalition I realized what a tremendous, multi-faceted problem suicide is for individuals, families and communities throughout New Mexico. A recent report by the Office of the Medical Investigator states that in 2006 there were 362 suicides in New Mexico, or one person a day loses their life to suicide. Suicide affects everyone and we are all impacted by this tragedy. Yet, suicide is preventable and one of the greatest tools we have as individuals, families and communities is HOPE.

"Keep Hope Alive" is the theme for this year's Suicide Survivors Conference, sponsored by the NMSPC. Please journey with us on November 17, 2007 as we move from loss to healing, from surviving to thriving, in a day packed with information, support, and healing. This year we join with hundreds of local healing conferences for survivors of suicide loss all across the United States and in the World. November 17<sup>th</sup> is the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual National Survivors of Suicide Day. The conference will include an internet broadcast from the AFSP that will reach out to tens of thousands of people who have lost a loved one to suicide.

November is also a time when we remember and honor our veterans. The NMSPC has been working with veterans and veteran organizations in New Mexico to help respond



to the high rate of suicide among our veterans. A study conducted by Portland State University concluded that US war veterans are twice as likely to kill themselves as ordinary civilians. A Veterans Hotline was established in July. By calling 1-800-273-8255 and letting them know you are a veteran you can get round the clock access to mental health professionals. Also, at the Survivors Conference there will be workshops for veterans and their families.

In closing I want to encourage you to attend the survivors conference and thank you for connecting to the monthly newsletter of the NM Suicide Prevention Coalition, and for all our veterans out there thank you and welcome home!

Gwendolyn Packard



## **"KEEPING HOPE ALIVE"**

### Suicide Survivors Healing Conference

**Saturday, November 17, 2007**

Sponsored by the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition

**Location:**

First Presbyterian Church  
215 Locust Street NE  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
(Near Central and I-25)

**Time:**

8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.  
Registration starts at 8:30 A.M.

**Registration Fee:**

\$15.00 per person  
(includes lunch, snacks, and materials)

Please make plans to attend this important conference that allows survivors to share experiences of loss and come together for support, healing, information, and empowerment. The Conference coincides with the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual National Survivors of Suicide Day which includes an Internet broadcast from the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention that will be reaching out to tens of thousands of people who have lost a loved one to suicide.

For more information please contact:

Gwendolyn Packard, Executive Director  
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(505) 401-9382

[Info@nmsuicideprevention.org](mailto:Info@nmsuicideprevention.org)

Or visit our website at: [www.nmsuicideprevention.org](http://www.nmsuicideprevention.org)  
To view schedule, descriptions of breakout sessions and to register

***Got an Old Backpack?  
Donate it to SEND SILENCE PACKING  
and Help Support College Student Mental Health***

Active Minds, Inc. is working with college students to help prevent suicide and reduce the stigma of mental illness on college campuses. Right now they are in the process of putting together a demonstration to bring light to the fact that so many promising young lives are lost to suicide. They are doing this by collecting 1,100 backpacks to represent the 1,100 college students that die by suicide each year. Once they collect all the backpacks, the collection will become a traveling exhibit to visit college campuses around the nation.

For more information, visit our website at [www.nmsuicideprevention.org](http://www.nmsuicideprevention.org) and click on Find Out.

**Veterans Affairs Suicide Hotline Begins**

To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hotline for veterans. To operate the national hotline, VA is partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Veterans can call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press "1" to reach the VA hotline, which will be staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. who will work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers.