



# INSIGHT

A Newsletter for the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition  
March 2015, Volume 4, Issue 2

## Message from the Chair, Betsey Westuba

### Evening of Remembrance and Day at the Capital 2015

The annual Evening of Remembrance on March 18th was filled with music, dancers from FSU, talk, crafts, food, tears and a beautiful ceremony. The presenters included a very courageous 10 year old young man who spoke about his love for his father and how his suicide has affected him.



*Pam Mezzina with 10 year survivor who lost his father to suicide*

gratitude to Pam Mezzina and all of her fellow Big Bend Hospice employees for once again making this event so special!

The following day was the annual Day at the Capitol. People gathered to talk to legislators about the importance of suicide prevention training in the schools and bringing awareness about suicide in Florida. AFSP helped in so many ways! Two weeks before the event, Nicole Gibson (M.S.W. and Senior Manager of State Advocacy with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) facilitated an online training, teaching attendees how to engage with legislators. The training was very informative and professionally done. Thank you Nicole!! Five

There was also presence from the Army and a father whose son had died by suicide while he was enlisted in the Army. Much

AFSP representatives from throughout Florida worked hard to bring a unified presence of advocates and we ended up with over 60 participants contributing to the event. This was quite an increase from the past few years. Thank you to all who worked diligently on coordinating all of the set up, especially Judy Broward! You are awesome! There were 12 vendor tables set up in the rotunda area and organizations from all over Florida came to offer resources and help to those that visiting their tables. Advocates visited and delivered information packets to every legislative office at the Capitol. We had some very encouraging support from several offices and this was reinforced by efforts from our volunteer lobbyist, Mike Cusick. Thank you Mike! Our main initiative was to have language added to a bill that would offer free non-mandatory suicide prevention gatekeeper training to all school staff in FL. Unfortunately, with the legislative disagreement on the state budget, these efforts did not progress as we had hoped. We now have some very good connections however and will be back forging ahead on January 14th.

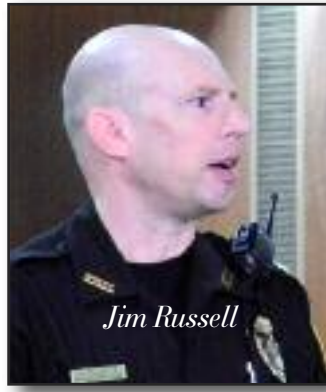


*John Bryant*

The Press Conference was held in the morning of the Day at the Capitol. John Bryant, Assistant to the Secretary of Substance Abuse and Mental Health with DCF, Jim Russell, Deputy Chief of Police



*Liz Colavecchio*



*Jim Russell*

of the Coalition introduced each speaker. A wonderful music group, Belle and the Band performed two very moving songs that helped to make the Press Conference very successful. Several local TV stations did interviews and taped the Press Conference. Dr. Sophia Castro, Suicide Prevention Specialist for the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention at the Florida Department of Children and Families, has been highlighted in a previous newsletter and has been doing a wonderful job! She was also instrumental in helping with the Day at the Capitol. You are doing a great job Sophia and we appreciate you! Thank you! ... Betsey Westuba



*Betsey Westuba being interviewed*



*Belle and the Band performing at the Press Conference*



## ANNUAL COALITION MEETING AND ELECTIONS

On June 9th, the annual Coalition meeting was held. All previous officers have agreed to serve for an additional year. They are:

Chair: Betsey Westuba

Vice Chair: Judy Broward

Vice Chair: Lisa Zeller

Secretary: Laura Meyer

Treasurer: Rene Favreau

Thank you all for your continued dedication!

## DONATIONS

At the beginning of the year, the Benjamin School in West Palm Beach got in touch and asked if a representative from the coalition could come out to do a presentation for a class in philanthropy. Rene Favreau (Treasurer and Director of region 9) was willing to fill this role but unfortunately could not work it into his schedule. Doris Carrol (Director of region 15) stepped up to the plate and presented on suicide on behalf of the coalition. The feedback from the school concerning Doris' presentation was very positive and the students decided to give all that they had raised solely to the coalition. The amount of \$1,380.00 was formally presented to Doris a few weeks later at her business..... Thank you so much Doris for making such a positive impact on these kids!

Close to \$1,300.00 has also been donated on behalf of a loved one lost to suicide. It is extremely sad news that more loss of life has occurred to suicide but we are very grateful to the grieving family to ask that donations be sent to the coalition.

## 2016 DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The 2016 Day at the Capitol is scheduled for January 14th. We are hoping to extend the event by a day and half this coming year so we can offer some training. There will be more details on this at a later date.

Collaboration is much needed throughout the state of Florida if we really want to make an impact to the prevention and awareness efforts of suicide. Brainstorming and sharing ideas and programs that are working can really help to make positive progress in moving forward. Please consider attending the 2016 Day at the Capitol events!

## IT VOLUNTEER

The latest news is that we have had a volunteer offer his time and IT expertise to help market the coalition for increased membership and donations. During the annual coalition meeting, we asked for volunteers to form a committee to collaborate with Dylan Murphy who is the volunteer. Steve Roggenbaum (PhD Candidate of Curriculum and Instruction at Univ. of South Florida and member of the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council), Judy Broward (Vice Chair and Director of Region 13) Pam Mezzina (Manager of Bereavement Services at Big Bend Hospice and Director of Region 2) and Ali Martinez (Director of Alachua County Crisis Center and Director o Region 3) have all agreed to serve on this committee. A huge THANK YOU to you Dylan and the committee members for offering your time to improve our internet exposure and marketing!

*If you or someone you know is suicidal, in crisis or emotional distress, please reach out for hope by calling:*

*1-800-273-8255 (TALK) 24 hours a day; 7 days a week*

*<http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/>*

# FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

## NATIONAL NEWS

According to US News and World Reports June 5, 2015 article by Lisa Esposito, <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/2015/06/05/strides-in-suicide-prevention>

*“Americans are paying more attention to suicide prevention. Lawmakers are passing bills to improve mental health care for U.S. military veterans and service members. ....”*

*‘Momentum for youth suicide prevention continues from several directions, Madigan says. Along with*

*AFSP, groups such as The Jed Foundation (college-level); The Jason Foundation (high school) and The Trevor Project (LGBTQ youth) are all trying to work together toward the same goal: fewer deaths of young people by suicide.*

*Suicide-prevention training for school personnel is a big legislative push. Six states – Alaska, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska and Tennessee – currently mandate annual training through the Jason Flatt Act. Additional states mandate training, but not on a yearly basis, while others encourage but don't require it. ...“*

## REGION NEWS

Please send in any updates pertaining to your area to be added to our next newsletter... we need to hear what is going on in our state so we can work together to prevent suicide. If something is working or not, please let us know!!Thank you!

Much gratitude to each and every one of you for your continued efforts in suicide awareness and prevention! We are making a difference one life at a time...

but don't require it. ...“



The Coalition is organized in 15 Regions for the administration and coordination of all activities within the State. Each Region has a Region Director to help coordinate and communicate the activities for the Region.

## Region 1

**Counties of:** Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton.

**Region Director:** Raela M. Vilanueva

Region Director Raela Marie Vilanueva participated in her 10th Overnight Walk for AFSP on June 27 in Boston with the DREAM Team. AFSP where Raela

was to speak at the opening ceremony to share her story of losing her brother, dealing with family members dealing with depression (including her own), and sharing the story of the DREAM Project CD. She has a new version of the song of her dream about her brother:

[https://soundcloud.com/raela\\_marie/the-dream-revised-2014](https://soundcloud.com/raela_marie/the-dream-revised-2014)

## Region 2

**Counties of:** Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington.

**Region Director:** Jason Zauder

bird Run and Walk J R Alford Greenway. South End of Pedrick Road, Tallahassee

A 5k run/walk and 1 mile fun run/walk promoting suicide awareness and intervention. Mark your calendars now and make plans to spend your Labor Day with us at this inaugural event for NAMI Tallahassee. Phone: 850.841.3386 (voice-mail) or <http://www2.nami.org/MSTemplate.cfm?MicrositeID=361>

### Trauma, Grief, and Loss Coalition for Youth Meeting

July 16, 2016 from 10-12 pm at DISC Village, 3333 Pensacola St. Tallahassee, FL 32304  
Cindy Foster from NAMI Tallahassee will present "Ending the Silence". Contact: Pam Mezzina at [pam@bigbendhospice.org](mailto:pam@bigbendhospice.org). Free.

amounts of money each year to help get the organization going and continues to this day to support it's wonderful work. Although she is no longer the Executive Director, she supports FISP and conducts a support group of suicide survivors that meets on a weekly basis. She often speaks out through advocacy and letters to the editor to protest unfair actions and to support individuals who are being treated unfairly. She is also active in community organizations and causes. I would like to include the names on this tribute of people who appreciate her advocacy for the FL Initiative for Suicide Prevention.

## Region 10

**County of:** Broward

**Region Director:** Rene Barrett

Rene Barrett from region 10 (Broward county) was honored on 2/13/15 at a fundraiser with the FL Initiative for Suicide Prevention (FISP) for her outstanding service in suicide prevention for the past 20 years.

Rene was one of the primary founders of FISP and was the first Executive Director. With the help of her efforts, the Board of Trustees was formed with prestigious and successful individuals interested in Suicide Prevention. She raised significant

**FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION  
COALITION MISSION  
STATEMENT:**

*Collaborate to develop and implement  
suicide prevention, intervention and  
postvention strategies and programs.*

**OFFICERS OF THE FLORIDA  
SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION**

Chair .....Betsey Westuba  
Vice Chair .....Lisa Zeller  
Vice Chair.....Judy Broward  
Secretary .....Laura Meyer  
Treasurer .....Rene' Favreau  
Newsletter Editor .....Judy Broward

**REGIONS OF FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION**

**Region 1 - Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton**  
Region Director - Raela M. Villanueva. 850-554-1827  
(cell), ms.raela@gmail.com

**Region 2 - Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf,  
Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Tay-  
lor, Wakulla and Washington**  
Region Director – Pam Mezzina, (850) 878-5310 x 799,  
Pam@bigbendhospice.org

**Region 3 - Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist,  
Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee & Union**  
Region Director – Ali Martinez, Director  
352-264-6792, amartinez@alachuacounty.us ,  
www.alachua.fl.us/government/depts/css/crisis/

**Region 4 - Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau & St Johns**  
Region Director – Lisa Zeller, 850-570-0233,  
lisa.zeller1@gmail.com

**Region 5 - DeSoto - Pinellas - Sarasota**  
Region Director Elizabeth Lurie, Cell: 727-793-4171  
beth0702@gmail.com

**Region 6 - Hillsborough - Manatee - Pasco**  
Region Director Betsey Westuba, Cell: 813-406-4621,  
bwestuba@suncoastyr.org,

**Region 7 - Brevard, Orange, Osceola & Seminole**  
Region Director – Tara Sullivan, Central and Northern  
Florida Area Director – American Foundation for Suicide  
Prevention  
407-415-8757 tsullivan@afsp.org

**Region 8 - Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry & Lee**  
Region Director Vicki Snyder Clark, 239-850-1159  
vsnyderclark@gmail.com

**Region 9 – Palm Beach**  
Region Director - Rene Favreau, The Center for Informa-  
tion & Crisis Services (211), PO Box 3588, Lantana, FL  
33465-3588, 561-818-3856 c, rene.favreau@gmail.com

**Region 10 – Broward**  
Region Director - Rene Barrett, 954 257-4568. 954 927-  
1124 – Fax. myadvocate@bellsouth.net

**Region 11 – Dade and Monroe**  
Region Director - Diana Flores, Switchboard Of Miami,  
190 NE 3rd Street, Miami FL 33132, Tel: (305) 358-  
1640 x162, Fax: (305) 377-2269  
24-Hour HELPLine: (305) 358-4357 or 211, TTY: (305)  
644-9449 or 211, opt 4  
<http://www.switchboardmiami.org>

**Region 12 - Flagler & Volusia**  
Region Director - Lisa Grubbs, 386-767-2883  
heavyhittercharters@cfl.rr.com

**Region 13 - Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion & Sumter**  
Region Director – Judy Broward, 352-213-6308, gator-  
judy2@gmail.com

**Region 14 - Hardee, Highlands & Polk**  
Region Director – Director Betsey Westuba, Cell: 813-  
406-4621, bwestuba@suncoastyr.org,

**Region 15 - Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee & St Lucie**  
Region Director Doris Carroll director@drugfreepartner.org



# Membership Form

(Print this form)

Individual (\$25)

Corporate/Organization (\$100)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Florida County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Which committee(s) would you be interesting in serving on?

Youth Suicide \_\_\_\_\_

Middle Age Suicide 35 – 54 \_\_\_\_\_

Elder Suicide \_\_\_\_\_

Support Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Police Suicide \_\_\_\_\_

Veterans & Armed Forces Suicide \_\_\_\_\_

Bullying & Cyber Bullying \_\_\_\_\_

Work Place Suicide \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Print and Send to:**

Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition

Attn: Mr. René Favreau

710 Valley Forge Rd

West Palm Beach, FL 33405

561-818-3856c

561-547-1195h

Email: [rene.favreau@gmail.com](mailto:rene.favreau@gmail.com)