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Prevention Works!

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release: October 7, 2004

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Local Schools Receive State Award

Presentation Friday, October 15 at Highland Jr. High School

Seattle - "Lifesavers," the suicide prevention team from Tieton Intermediate School (TIS) and Highland Junior High (HJH) has been selected as a recipient of the Trevor R. Simpson award. The award, named in honor of Trevor Simpson who died in 1992 at the age of 16, recognizes school-based efforts to raise awareness about youth suicide. With more than 70 schools across the state conducting suicide prevention campaigns, the TIS/HJH team was named as the winner for schools with a student enrollment of less than 1,000. Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale (Kitsap County) won in the large school category.

According to the Injury Prevention Program at the Washington State Department of Health, two youth die by suicide each week in Washington State. 26% of the eighth graders in Yakima County reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day, as reported in the DOH's Healthy Youth Survey results.

The Youth Suicide Prevention Program of Washington State (YSPP) works to reduce these statistics and partners with schools so that young people and adults can learn to recognize the suicide warning signs, to comfortably ask about suicide, and to call for help when needed so that prevention can work.

Fifty students participated on the TIS/HJH Lifesavers team. and facilitated 30 classroom presentations to teach the warning signs for suicide and intervention steps. Team members also distributed homemade valentine treats to every student and staff member at TIS and HJH, accompanied by personal affirmations and the three intervention strategies: show you care, ask the question and get help. They wrote articles about suicide prevention for their schools' newsletters and wore campaign t-shirts to promote awareness and access to help. In May, 150 students from TIS and HJH attended a suicide awareness walk along with Greenway in Yakima County. Faculty advisor and school counselor Wendy Ross reported that the Lifesavers campaign directly impacted a total of 623 students.

"Efforts such as this need to continue and be recognized throughout the state," said Sue Eastgard, YSPP Executive Director. "Knowing about suicide and its warning signs can save a life."

Community members are encouraged to attend the recognition event, held at 11:15 at HJH, 17000 Summitview Road, Cowiche.