



News Release

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Youth suicide on steady decline in Washington

September 10th is Suicide Awareness Day

OLYMPIA — The rate of youth suicide in our state has significantly declined. The Washington State Department of Health's Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) reported a 16 percent decline in suicide among the 15-24 age-group over a 10-year period (1993-2002).

Last school year over 34,000 students in more than 870 classrooms around the state received suicide prevention messages from their peers trained by YSPP. In addition to educating students, YSPP held workshops for about 5,400 parents, educators and community members, teaching them how to intervene with suicidal youth.

"Efforts such as this need to continue and must be promoted throughout the state," said Sue Eastgard YSPP Executive Director. "We encourage communities and schools to address this issue; knowing about suicide and its warning signs can save a life." The most common signs are talk of suicide, strong wish to die, signs of serious depression, increased alcohol and/or drug use and grief resulting from a recent suicide attempt by a friend or family member.

If someone you know is considering suicide, there are things you can do. Let them know you care and ask them directly about their thoughts of suicide. Get them help by calling 1-800-SUICIDE, a counselor, church pastor or mental health care practitioner.

Later this month the YSPP will honor two schools for their exceptional suicide prevention efforts. Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale and Tieton Intermediate/Highland Jr. High in Cowiche will receive the Trevor Simpson Award – an award in honor of the teenager who committed suicide and whose parents advocated for suicide prevention across the state.

Get information on [youth suicide](http://www.yspp.org/) on the YSPP Web site (<http://www.yspp.org/>) or call 206-297-5922.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a healthy dose of information.