2014-2015 Report to the Community
At Forefront, we know most suicides are *preventable* and that the time to act is *now*.

**OUR MISSION**
Forefront advances innovative approaches to suicide prevention through policy change, professional training, campus- and school-based interventions, media outreach, and support for persons affected by suicide.

**OUR GOAL**
To reduce the suicide rate in Washington State by twenty percent by 2020. Once successful, Forefront will broaden its outreach to other states where the rates of suicide in the U.S. are the highest.

**OUR VALUES**
Everybody has a role to play in suicide prevention. Through education, program evaluation and system-level changes, we can increase timely and appropriate responses that can prevent many suicides.
advisory board & staff

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*Chad Ikeda*
FOREFRONT is seeking to significantly reduce suicides in Washington state and then share lessons learned with other states. Achieving this goal will first require creating a lasting social transformation. Suicide is the 8th leading cause of death among Washington state residents and the 2nd leading cause of death among its youth. The suicide rate is 14% higher in WA than the rest of the nation.

As the Wheel of Change illustrates, to create lasting social transformation in any arena we must work on changing hearts and minds, behaviors, and social structures. In this annual report, we are excited to share this Wheel of Change—how Forefront is making suicide prevention possible. With your support, here are a few of the ways in which Forefront and its many volunteers are working to change hearts and minds, behaviors, and structures.

HEARTS & MINDS: Hopes and dreams, thoughts and feelings, what we believe is possible or impossible; the ideas, perceptions and beliefs that shape our experience.

Forefront is helping change the public conversation about suicide by actively shaping news coverage on behavioral health and suicide. We educate professional and student journalists on how to accurately and authentically report on behavioral health and suicide. We arrange for journalists to speak with experts on suicide prevention. We help individuals with lived experience tell their powerful stories with a prevention and recovery focus.

Forefront offers care and support to individuals newly bereaved by suicide. We offer them information, resources, and a partner to walk alongside on this journey of healing.

BEHAVIORS: What we do and don’t do, our choices and habits, the norms and unspoken agreements by which we interact with others.

Forefront partners with Facebook to provide outreach tools for friends who are concerned about friends on Facebook and for Facebook users who are posting threats of self-harm and suicide.

Forefront trains thousands of behavioral health, school, and healthcare professionals as well as hundreds of lay people in life-saving, relevant suicide prevention skills.

STRUCTURES: The external systems in which we live and work: the processes, practices and cultures of our schools, healthcare organizations, communities and society.

Forefront is working within high schools and institutions of higher education to reduce the number of students at-risk for suicide who fall through the cracks and to help schools care for students and staff in the aftermath of a death by suicide.

Forefront is instrumental in changing state policies to ensure that suicide prevention is a priority within healthcare, veterans’ care, and school systems.

The Wheel of Change is a simple yet profound model for true, systemic change—guiding us to work in an integrated way to shift our inner experience, our actions and external realities. It is a road map for our transformation that is only possible because of your support.

Jennifer Stuber, Ph.D.
Faculty Director

Amnon Shoenfeld, MSW
Advisory Board Chair
EACH OF US at Forefront is so appreciative of all of the generous support, volunteer efforts, and numerous connections that members of the Forefront community bring to our organization. We wouldn’t be where we are today without you.

And where we are is impressive. As a young organization founded in 2013, we have made incredible progress in shaping public policy, supporting those impacted by suicide’s loss, shifting the tone of media reporting, enhancing school and college suicide prevention and response efforts, and providing high quality training to a wide variety of professionals. This 2014-2015 annual report is organized around these five major program areas.

Our second year of work has seen a significant increase in the number of grant and foundation projects awarded to Forefront, high profile work with Facebook, expansion of our internal capacity, and growth of our higher education programs.

I say “we” humbly here, having only joined the Forefront team in late April. The success of our work thus far sits squarely on the shoulders of visionary co-founders Jennifer Stuber and Sue Eastgard; our talented core team of Lauren Davis, Stephen Miller, Katie Simmons, and Sue Lockett John; our volunteers and former colleagues; and our amazing Advisory Board. Needless to say, I feel very fortunate to join such a distinguished group.

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest in our programs. We’re looking forward to the year ahead. We’re also glad to make that journey with you.

Best regards,

Matthew Taylor
Executive Director
FOREFRONT’S advisory board plays an important role in helping organize coalitions of stakeholders concerned about preventing suicide in Washington state to find common ground on suicide prevention policies. As a result, structures are changing.

Washington state is now considered one of the most proactive states in the nation with regard to the prevention of suicide.

A first in the nation, Washington state requires that its licensed mental health (EHSB 2366) and health care professionals (HB 2315) have training in how to assess, manage, and treat individuals who are at risk for suicide. K-12 public schools are becoming more fully prepared to prevent suicide (HB 1336).

On Thursday, April 23, 2015, Governor Jay Inslee signed into law SHB 1138 to create a task force in suicide prevention across Washington state’s 54 college campuses. The task force will examine current suicide prevention practices and make recommendations for future systemic actions to prevent suicide on campuses. This task force will build on the tremendous work that has been done on the University of Washington’s campus as part of the Husky Help & Hope Initiative that was funded in 2014 under the SAMHSA’s Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant. Forefront will be convening the taskforce and making the recommendations to the legislature.

Dozens of volunteers concerned about suicide across Washington state, health care providers and suicide prevention experts have made these laws possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bill Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>HB 2366</td>
<td>Requires licensed mental health professionals to have training in how to access, manage, and treat individuals who are at risk for suicide</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>HB 1366</td>
<td>Helps fully prepare K-12 public schools in Washington State to prevent suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>HB 2315</td>
<td>Requires health care professionals to have training in how to access, manage, and treat individuals who are at risk for suicide</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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Bill signing with Forefront staff, volunteers, advocates and just a fraction of the many people that helped make this bill possible. Photo by – WA Legislative Support Services
THIS YEAR, Forefront continued to change behaviors by offering training that meets the legislative mandate passed in 2012. We offered 55 AMSR workshops to 2,682 professionals. AMSR (Assessing & Managing Suicide Risk) is a 6-hour workshop that showcases the 24 core competencies for handling the common dilemmas that behavioral health professionals face in the process of trying to help an individual at risk for suicide.

Overall, 94% of the community AMSR participants reported being satisfied with the expertise of the trainer, and 90% would recommend this training.

We also offered AMSR to 116 social work graduate students. We believe that it is important to have the knowledge and skills before you graduate and begin your professional career!

In addition to AMSR, Forefront offered SafeTALK training to 300 participants. 73 people participated in a customized 1-hour recognition and referral training, and 43 participated in a customized 3-hour recognition, referral, and safety planning training. Lastly, 50 people attended our Advocacy Day skills training and 24 attended the Education Day training.

“The AMSR training was excellent, and it has informed our practice on a day-to-day basis. Our hope is to be able to have every new staff member who ever joins us obtain the training.”

ELLEN B. TAYLOR, PH.D.
Assistant Vice President for Student Life
Director, Counseling Center
University of Washington (Seattle)
WITH a generous grant from the Mark Torrance Foundation, Forefront has worked to provide no-cost suicide prevention training to frontline service providers working with foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness in King County. Youth experiencing homelessness are at a much greater risk of suicide due to the very nature of their traumatic situation. Tragically, many of these youth do not have the same access to services and resources. Most also struggle to access hygiene products, food, housing and therapeutic care. Instead, they often rely on the hard work of service providers, who are not required to have suicide prevention training.

Forefront is working to provide additional suicide prevention tools to the incredible service providers and agencies working on the frontlines of youth homelessness. We have also been working closely with several agencies to build suicide prevention protocols and procedures that provide an effective and consistent prevention, intervention, and postvention resource for staff and volunteers.

Forefront aims to continue training more of the thousands of youth service providers and volunteers who are helping youth meet their basic needs. We would like to offer more advanced training to key staff who can be an agency asset for not only suicide recognition and referral, but also for suicide intervention.

105 Service Providers

working with foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness in King County have completed a

3-hour safeTALK

suicide prevention training

This training has so much value in recognizing and giving words to how to intervene on the front lines. As someone who regularly intervened as part of my job, I even learned new ways to word things and how important those words are. I am very interested in the next level of training.

YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDER
FOREFRONT is working to change hearts and minds, behaviors, and structures on campus and in schools. At the University of Washington, Forefront led Husky Help and Hope (H3) stakeholders from across campus in developing a robust strategic plan for comprehensive suicide prevention. In the second year of this SAMSHA Garret Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention grant, H3’s accomplishments included:

**CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS BY:**
- In collaboration with Huskies for Suicide Prevention and Awareness (HSPA), co-hosting the second annual H3 Walk, which attracted 400 participants and raised more than $6,000;
- Getting a bi-weekly UW graduate student newsletter dedicated to suicide prevention, which reached over 12,000 graduate students and program advisers; and
- Helping plan and execute Mental Health Awareness Week.

**CHANGING BEHAVIORS BY:**
- Training HSPA students to present Forefront’s newly developed one-hour suicide prevention curriculum to their UW peers and local high school classes;
- Conducting a study on the efficacy of in-person versus online training for campus faculty and staff; and
- Conducting safeTALK suicide recognition and referral trainings for UW students.

**CHANGING STRUCTURES BY:**
- Developing protocols for identifying and intervening with students at-risk and outlining best practices for supporting the campus community in the aftermath of a suicide;
- Holding the first UW staff debrief to discuss student suicide deaths and recommend improvement;
- Enhancing and standardizing suicide-related data collection across campus entities;
- Successfully advocating for UW to double their funding for the Suicide Intervention Program; and
- Championing a Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) resolution calling on the UW administration to prioritize suicide prevention and behavioral health.

At the secondary school level, Forefront received generous support from the Jolene McCaw Family Foundation to initiate work with 14 public, private, and parochial high schools in King County. The project will help the schools create comprehensive suicide prevention, intervention and postvention (response after a suicide death) programming and procedures. A yearlong series of on-site technical assistance with each school will begin with a two day learning academy in September 2015.
FOREFRONT works with news media, website content, and social media to change hearts and minds plus behaviors.

During 2014, the social media giant, Facebook, approached Forefront about helping improve its response to posts about suicide. Forefront helped the company develop resources for those who are concerned about friends posting about suicide, and those who are posting about suicide themselves. The company launched these new tools on its Compassion Research Day (pictured right) with the help of new promotional videos developed by Forefront.

Here are a few of the ways Forefront helped change the public conversation about suicide and prevention last year:

- It became the go-to resource for a growing number of journalists’ covering suicide-related news and initiatives. In addition to scores of stories about its Facebook collaboration, at least 22 published interviews, appearances, or op-eds featured Forefront staff or affiliates.
- Forefront staff and allies led 4 workshops (3 for student journalists, and 1 for volunteer advocates) in safe, responsible coverage of suicide.
- Insight Blog added 5 regular contributors and several guest writers with commentary on news, research and issues.
- The communication team launched First Person, an online showcase for personal essays on how suicide has affected individual contributors and their families.
- It acknowledged excellence by presenting its annual reporting award to Jacob Jones of the Inlander, for two stories on the criminal justice systems and mental illness in Spokane.

"Responsible media reporting is a critical component in preventing suicide...there is so much more to be done."

JOURNALIST WAYNE LYNCH
Insight Blog
SUPPORTING SURVIVORS in the aftermath of a suicide death continues to be a significant hearts and minds focus for Forefront. We provide “Cares” packages – books and resource information, along with items of comfort, like chocolate and tea – to individuals and families who are newly bereaved by suicide. We also train volunteers to provide short term telephone support for recent loss survivors. Our volunteers have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide and are paired with someone with a similar loss relationship.

“Thank you so much for the care package. Hearing from your group provided a bit of comfort in this time of indescribable pain. The tea and chocolate brought a smile, some of your reading material, tears.”

44 Forefront Cares packages sent
12 new FF Cares volunteers joined the 12 active volunteers from last year
8 newly bereaved survivors were paired with a trained volunteer for a total of
27 telephone support sessions
financial summary

Total Budget: $656,894
looking ahead

FOREFRONT’S JOURNEY to change hearts and minds, behaviors, and structures has been amazing thus far, but there is so much more to do.

Among many other activities, Forefront will:

1) **EXPAND** our policy and education outreach to address harm reduction issues such as promoting safe storage of guns and medication during times of crisis;

2) **WORK** intensively with several rural communities to strengthen coordination between schools, community coalitions, health care providers and law enforcement;

3) **GROW** the Forefront Cares program to train more suicide loss survivor peer support teams and share more care packages across Washington;

4) **BROADEN** our coordination with colleges and universities across the state.

Our thanks to every member of the Forefront community for your support and interest in our work. Together we are making a difference.
how can you contribute?

Share your passion for the cause of suicide prevention in the form of volunteer service and financial contribution.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done.

**DONATE**
Individual donations are essential to driving forward our life-saving mission to prevent suicide.

Make a financial contribution to Forefront today. All of our donations are processed through the UW Foundation and are tax-deductible.

**VOLUNTEER**
Provide telephone-based peer support counseling to individuals newly bereaved by suicide.

Work on state policy initiatives.

Engage with local news media about mental health and suicide prevention.

Help with planning future Forefront educational and fundraising events.

**CONNECT**
Receive information about Forefront events and news via email.

Subscribe to Forefront’s Insight Blog to receive timely updates on mental health and suicide prevention.
acknowledgments

Contributions to Forefront: Innovations in Suicide Prevention

From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

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Toka Valu
Julie Van
Micia Vergara
Ashley Walls
Maliah Washington
Constance Wellman
Solveig Whittle
  In honor of Kyril Faenov
Jacquie Witherrite
  In memory of Jake Stanton
Eric Wood
Kirsten Wysen
Megan Yuasa