2015-2016 Report to the Community
Forefront is a place where expertise and partnership come together with a passion to save lives.

**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.

At Forefront, we know most suicides are preventable and that the time to act is now.
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THREE years into Forefront’s journey, we are humbled by all of you who contribute your compassion, time, talent and charitable gifts. At least 50 core volunteers give 5-10 hours each month as Forefront Cares peer mentors, contributors to our media operations, or as advisory board members. More than 1,000 of you are our donors.

Last year, thousands of people attended Forefront trainings and signature events. Our programs expanded into three rural counties, 14 high schools and 13 colleges and universities.

Even as an infant organization, we were entrepreneurial. We helped ensure passage of five significant suicide prevention laws, prompting other states to ask, “How did you do that?” Facebook saw our potential and asked us to help develop a suicide prevention tool that debuted nationally and now is going global.

Developmentally, we are moving beyond our start-up stage, refining our brand and strategies to poised us for further growth and national influence as a mature organization. This year, we will hire a director of training and school programs, a communications and media specialist, and full-time administrative support. Our funding portfolio is diverse, with federal grants, state and county contracts, fee-based training and private donations laying groundwork for sustainability.

Our mission is clear and bold—to support Washington in becoming a model suicide prevention state for the rest of the nation to emulate. Fundamental is this value:

Everybody has an important role to play in suicide prevention. Forefront is helping define and disseminate this as our “buckle your seatbelt” message for suicide prevention.

Forefront’s community includes counselors, doctors, journalists, lawyers, pharmacists, firearm dealers, and police working together to create suicide prevention education designed for their specialty. These partnerships create compelling results. The National Rifle Association told us our initiatives on “means safety” have caused them to consider taking an active role in suicide prevention education.

Much remains to be done. We need to equip systems—particularly healthcare organizations, schools, colleges and providers that serve our veterans—so they are prepared to prevent suicide and respond constructively in its aftermath.

We are building a social movement to prevent suicide and, because of you, Forefront is in the lead.

Jennifer Stuber, Ph.D. Amnon Shoenfeld, MSW 
Executive Director Advisory Board Chair

What Does a Model Suicide Prevention State Look Like?
Fourteen high schools in King County participated in this comprehensive suicide prevention initiative, through a generous grant from the Jolene McCaw Family Foundation. At each school, a team of administrators, teachers, parents and counselors worked to implement training for teachers and parents, formalize relations with community behavioral health providers, and develop plans for suicide prevention, intervention, re-entry and postvention. Forefront provided monthly consultation and technical assistance.

- Over 1,300 staff and parents received training in 2015-16 to learn the warning signs for suicide and how to respond. In the previous year, most schools provided no training to staff or parents.

- The majority of schools started the year with incomplete or no crisis plans; by year’s end, their plans were significantly enhanced and they felt more confident in their ability to respond to a student in crisis.

- These schools initiated more than 150 safety plans for students at risk for suicide.

We are thrilled that every school has returned to Forefront in the Schools for a second year.

“Thank you for all of your help and support! This past year it has become my passion to move suicide prevention and awareness to the forefront, pun intended, of our community.”

Parent on high school team and presenter at their parent education night
National recognition continues for Forefront’s work in suicide prevention policy. In the 2016 legislative session, Forefront provided leadership for passage of a fifth suicide prevention bill. HB 2793 provides for suicide awareness and prevention education for safer homes.

Washington is the ONLY state in the nation to now require that behavioral health and all healthcare providers have basic training to identify and intervene to prevent suicide. Public education and messaging is our next priority.

The statistics behind HB 2793 are staggering. Nearly 70% of suicide deaths in Washington are by firearm or poison, such as prescription drugs. Nearly 80% of deaths by firearm in our state are suicides.

HB 2793 established the Suicide Safer Homes Task Force in partnership with pharmacists and firearm dealers, who hold key positions to raise public awareness about suicide and the need for safe storage and medication disposal. The task force will:

- Survey gun retailers about their experiences and willingness to play a role in suicide prevention;
- Develop trainings for firearm retailers and pharmacists, and educational materials for customers;
- Provide suicide prevention information for use in firearm safety pamphlets and firearm safety trainings including the state’s hunter safety course;
- Test the effectiveness of combining suicide prevention training with distribution of safe storage devices and medication disposal kits in two communities with high suicide rates.

One reason for Forefront’s success in helping to pass suicide prevention laws is our practice of reaching consensus among stakeholders outside the legislative session, which allows us to offer vetted solutions. This year we developed a how-to presentation on our state policy advocacy. We are beginning to share this resource with other groups and states that wish to replicate our success.

Our policy-making success also stems from our annual Suicide Prevention Education Day in Olympia, bringing our message of hope and solutions to legislators. In 2016, 103 volunteers traveled to Olympia on January 25 to meet with legislators from 21 districts about the need to make homes safer from suicide. The first-ever installation of our Suicide Safer Homes Memorial, in front of the Capitol Building, drew instant attention. Headstones recognized the 1,111 Washington residents who died by suicide in 2014. Yellow ribbons honored the 233 veterans.

Forefront also staffed the task force on mental health and suicide prevention in higher education, created HB1138, which passed during the 2015 legislative session. The taskforce’s goal is to improve the readiness and resources of all higher education institutions to prevent suicide. The task force’s findings and recommendations will be presented to the legislature at the end of 2016.
NEXT STEPS

We will certainly be back in Olympia for the 2017 session to shore up our gains in suicide prevention.

We are also helping to launch and steer Washington's Suicide Prevention Action Alliance, created by the governor's executive order as the Department of Health began implementing Washington's Suicide Prevention Action Plan. The Action Alliance is working to make the state's governmental institutions accountable for a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention.
Training Programs

**Total Number of People Trained in AMSR:**
- 1,132

**Of those surveyed:**
- 95% of participants were satisfied with the training
- 96% of the participants found the training to be valuable
- 94% of participants would recommend this training

**Total Number of People Trained in safeTALK:**
- 229

**Of those surveyed:**
- 100% felt prepared to talk directly and openly to a person about their thoughts of suicide.

“Your lecture was like a breath of fresh air, letting me know that there is someone who can contextualize the situation we are dealing with, navigate the system and find a path to the future. I learned more from you in 75 minutes than the year I spent on the Internet. I am so afraid my son will give up all hope.”

Mother of 22 year old who is struggling with mental illness.
Media Programs

Forefront’s role as a go-to news source is helping change the language and conversation about suicide and suicide prevention.

- Forefront staff, experts, affiliated faculty and messaging were featured in approximately 40 news stories and five opinion pieces. Many, including Jennifer Stuber’s Washington Post op-ed, reached national audiences.
- Strong support from Deborah Bach in the University of Washington Office of News and Information and School of Social Work Communication Director Bruce Betz expanded outreach to news media, the UW community and alumni.
- Faculty affiliate Randal Beam interviewed 13 staff and board members for a communication action plan.
- Eighteen UW journalism majors received training in responsible coverage of suicide: high school students at the UW Medical School’s summer “neuro camp” were briefed on stigma reduction and media coverage.
- Diana Hefley of The (Everett) Herald received the 2014-15 Award for Excellence in Coverage of Mental Health and Suicide.
- At least 25 volunteers — feature writers, bloggers, news informants and communication strategy committee members — contributed to media efforts.

- A digital master’s degree team produced a plan for improving website usability and appeal.

NEXT STEPS

Replacing a 1/3 FTE communications coordinator with a fulltime specialist;
Upgrading the website to make it easier for visitors to navigate and act, and for staff to maintain;
Upgrading and integrating Forefront’s “brand” on all communication materials and channels;
Prioritizing and implementing 2016 communication plan recommendations to make best use of staff and resources.

“The key to all of these [Forefront-led suicide prevention] efforts is to end the public silence.”

The Spokesman Review editorial, March 27, 2016
**Forefront Rural Programs and Community Initiatives**

**Suicide Prevention** is a major, underfunded public health challenge, especially in rural areas with greater access to firearms, a high rate of drug and alcohol use and few health-care providers and emergency facilities.

Heeding this need and leveraging grants from Washington Women’s Foundation (WWF) and Office of School of Public Instruction (OSPI), Forefront brought suicide prevention training and services to three rural counties: Okanogan, Stevens and Island. We:

- trained 370 school personnel representing 7 different school districts;
- worked with 82 individuals regarding advocacy and/or means restriction;
- presented Forefront Cares to 46 key professionals -- such as pastors, coroners and mental health providers -- with direct lines to newly bereaved individuals.

Community members and school personnel received trainings in AMSR (6 hr), safeTALK (3 hr) and LEARN (1-3 hrs). Field coordinators worked closely with schools to build crisis response plans and create a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention throughout the school district.

Field coordinators also made schools and organizations aware of Forefront Cares, which provides a care package and mentor to those who have lost a loved one through suicide.

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“Thanks Jennifer! I have been using the training you provided for us. It has helped me to have the words to use to ask some hard questions. Since December we have had several students at the elementary level who have said they are feeling hopeless about life or that they feel like hurting themselves.”

SafeTALK training in Island County

“Trainer is compassionate and incredibly knowledgeable and fun. Liked how she made the training applicable to our community situation with rural location and wildfire traumas.”

SafeTALK training in Okanogan County

“Great to feel more prepared than before the training, like CPR I feel prepared for the “triage” aspect of someone experiencing a suicide crisis.”

SafeTALK training in Stevens County
Higher Education Programs

Husky Help & Hope (H3)

- Provided suicide identification and intervention training for 500+ university faculty/staff from over 20 departments

“Today I was able to put some of [Forefront’s] training to use with a very distraught student who, upon my asking, said she had considered suicide. So I was very glad to have had the training.”

Chemistry Professor, University of Washington

During its third year, this University of Washington campus suicide prevention initiative embarked on a massive rollout of suicide identification and intervention training to university faculty and staff. Accomplishments include:

- Training over 500 faculty and staff from 20 departments as diverse as Slavic Languages, Chemistry, Applied Mathematics and Anthropology.
- Expanding pre-professional training to include Intro to Social Welfare students and 4th year Bachelors in Social Work students, in addition to Masters in Social Work and journalism students;
- Successfully advocating for the UW Provost to send an all-campus communication declaring suicide prevention and behavioral health as UW priories;
- Working with the Chemistry department to restrict student access to potentially lethal chemicals;
- Hosting an intensive Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) training for UW mental health counselors—a unique partnership resulting in the formation of a DBT skills group at the UW Counseling Center.

This year’s H3 walk was attended by over 700 high school and college students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Prevention in Higher Education Task Force

[We need] to make more an emotionally connected campus, to create brave and safe spaces that are confidential.

Chuck Strawn, Seattle Pacific College

Forefront staffed this task force, arising out of the 2015 House Bill 1138, to examine how 2- and 4-year campuses might develop better suicide prevention policies and programs. A first-of-its-kind statewide needs assessment indicated what resources campuses are using and what technical assistance and resources the state could provide.

On July 14, 2016, at Highline College, task force members and invited experts reviewed the assessment data, discussed promising practices and brainstormed possible recommendations. The task force and Forefront will send final recommendations to the legislature this fall.

NEXT STEPS

This fall, the Task Force and Forefront will forge final recommendations, which are due to the legislature on November 1.
Sobering. I have an important to-do list as a result of taking this survey. I am glad for the opportunity to be proactive as a result of this survey than reactive in an actual crisis event.

A Higher Education Counseling Director

Forefront presented the state’s first two Suicide Prevention in Higher Education conferences this year. On Sept. 28 & 29, 2015, the first conference and took place at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. The conference included a clinical Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) training for campus mental health counselors.

Seven months later, a value-added conference emerged on May 9 & 10, this time at Bellevue College. This conference launched a collaboration of Forefront, the nation’s leading college suicide prevention organization—the Jed Foundation, and the Jolene McCaw Family Foundation. Thirteen campuses embarked on the highly regarded four-year JED Campus comprehensive suicide prevention program and will convene annually for a conference. Participating campuses include Central Washington University, Seattle Central College, and Whitworth University.

NEXT STEPS

As part of the Jed partnership, Forefront is hosting an annual Student Leadership & Suicide Prevention Showcase for high school and college students in the spring of 2017.
**Supporting**

Supporting survivors in the aftermath of a suicide death is at the heart of the Forefront Cares program.

- We filled and mailed “Cares Packages” to 82 newly bereaved individuals. The packages include books on dealing with grief, printed resources and a writing journal, along with comfort items like chocolate, tea and candles. That’s twice as many packages as the year before.

- We paired Forefront-trained mentors with 30 new suicide loss survivors. All mentors have their own experience of suicide loss; they graciously listen and provide short-term telephone support.

- For the first time this year, we offered two workshops showcasing different ways that suicide loss survivors have engaged their healing process through creative expression.

“The package arrived and opening it has been a great blessing. We are overwhelmed by the compassion of the people at Forefront – to think of these items and put them in packages together for people impacted by suicide!”

*Cares package recipient*

“I am truly glad that an organization like yours exists. I couldn’t imagine dealing with this type of loss on one’s own, let alone with someone who hasn’t felt THIS kind of loss.”

*Cares mentee*
Financial Summary

Expenses for July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

- Personnel: 56%
- Supplies: 8%
- University Costs: 5%
- Tuition/Awards: 2%
- Travel: 2%
- Other: 23%
- Consultants: 4%

Revenue Sources for July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

- University Cost Share: 32%
- Revenue Fees: 14%
- State/Federal Grants: 21%
- Foundation Grants: 17%
- Individual Contributions: 16%
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.
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2015 - 2016

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