



# Mental Wellness Initiative in Washington County

## Vision

To provide active collaboration for mental health through awareness, screening, education and supportive programming for all ages, with positive results in Washington County.

## History

Since 2000, five local Teen Health Fund projects in Washington County have focused on depression, suicide prevention and positive youth development in Forest Lake, Mahtomedi, Stillwater, Oakdale and South Washington County.

The original funding for these projects was from the Minnesota Tobacco Endowment Funds. Since the Endowment Funding was eliminated by the State legislature in 2003, program maintenance funds have been provided through a portion of the Washington County Local Public Health Grant. Each community has also approached local foundations for supplemental program funds.

A county-wide youth website was established in 2001 by and for youth, addressing youth depression awareness and suicide prevention. In 2005 and 2008, the expanded Washington County Youth Live Healthy Live Happy- website was updated with more health promotion information and activities involving youth throughout the county ([www.wacy.org](http://www.wacy.org)).

The Department of Public Health and Environment continues to support the prevention efforts of the local Teen Health Funds and the Mental Wellness Initiative by providing staff for technical assistance.

## Current Members

- Representatives from Human Services Inc.
- Youth Service Bureaus
- Century College Mental Health Committee
- White Bear Community Counseling Center
- Suicide survivors
- Citizens
- N. St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale Teen Health Fund
- Forest Lake Schools Suicide Prevention Team
- Mahtomedi Teen Health Fund
- South Washington County Teen Health Fund
- Stillwater Teen Health Fund
- Stillwater High School Wellness Center
- White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church
- Promoting Positive Parenting Collaborative
- Chemical Health Action Collaborative
- Washington County Dept. of Public Health & Environment

## **Past Five Year Accomplishments**

- Yearly funding to five local community groups for local youth suicide prevention efforts such as: community education, student, parent and school staff education, peer helper training and support groups; Yellow Ribbon programs, depression screening in three school districts
- Youth website development and update; distribution of website promotional materials to five school districts, private and charter schools
- Parents as Partners: A Parent's Guide to Suicide Prevention booklet distribution to parents
- Mental Wellness Initiative formation to include more partners and broader vision
- Development of comprehensive county wide adolescent online resource list
- Collaboration with partners to provide community education to i.e. Techniques for Reducing Stress in Children and Teens and a Stress Buster Fair for Parents and Children
- Local foundation support from Pursley Foundation, Oliver's Fund and Target Corporation
- Community presentations by Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
- Promotion assistance for National Alliance on Mental Illness MN walk for two years
- Collaboration on trainings with the Chemical Health Action Collaborative Training Committee
- Email distribution list on mental health issues and training to county partners

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