

Press Release

Lebanon, Ohio
August 10, 2009

Lebanon Optimist Club donates \$3,500 to teensuicide prevention



Pictured are Deanne Whalen and Patti Ahting of Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties and Arla Tannehill, President, Lebanon Optimist Club.

As a result of a generous Lebanon Optimist Club grant, the Suicide Prevention Coalition is currently partnering with Lebanon Junior High School and the Lebanon High School to provide prevention programming to school staff and students. This will enable school staff to effectively identify students who are exhibiting signs of depression, which can lead to suicidal behavior, and link them to the appropriate services. Likewise, students will be educated on depression, effective coping skills, and where to find help. Providing this school-wide system will ensure that students have trained school staff who are able to effectively and immediately deal such issues as they arise. And, more importantly, students know help is available and how to access it.

The Suicide Prevention Coalition of Warren and Clinton Counties convened in 2006 and has grown to include representatives from a multitude of social service agencies, law enforcement, governmental entities, and community members. Their goals are to enhance awareness, increase early intervention and ultimately decrease the incidence of deaths by suicide and suicide attempts locally.

Past initiatives by the Suicide Prevention Coalition include: the development and distribution of brochures, literature and multimedia presentations, collection and analysis of local data, research of evidence based prevention programs, and mailings to local physicians regarding depression screening and suicide prevention.

This strategy is of paramount importance as suicidal behavior among youth is seen across the globe. Local data was collected through the Ohio Youth Survey which was conducted in 10 Warren County schools during the fall of 2008. The results include responses from over

4,500 6th-12th grade students. This survey revealed that an alarming 1 in 20 Warren County students reported having attempted suicide at least once in the past 12 months. The Optimist Club grant will allow the message of help and hope to be shared with Lebanon Youth and provide valuable skills to those who work with the students.

FMI about the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Warren and Clinton County, call Patti Ahting of Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties at 513-695-1695. Literature and speakers are available to employers, community groups, schools, churches and any other interested groups.

FMI about the Lebanon Optimist Club call 513.588.0321 or go to www.LebanonOptimistClub.com