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8 SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR YOUTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROJECT

BOISE – Eight Idaho schools have been selected to participate in the initial phase of the Idaho Lives Project, a partnership between the Idaho State Department of Education and the Suicide Prevention Action Network of Idaho (SPAN Idaho) to reduce the prevalence of suicide among youth ages 10-24 in Idaho.

Today, Idaho ranks among the top ten states for teen suicides and overall suicides. Because of Idaho’s rural geography, many students and families have faced barriers in accessing prevention and mental health services.

“The tragedy of suicide is beyond measure, and unfortunately, Idaho is not immune to this tragedy. With the right training, knowledge and support, suicide is preventable. I appreciate these eight schools participating in this project, and I look forward to working with them to find the best ways we as a state and as local communities can prevent youth suicide today and in the future,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said.

A total of 18 schools applied to implement the program; eight were selected after a blind review process based on their need and readiness to benefit. The selected schools are:

* Priest River Lamanna High School, Priest River
* Lapwai Middle School- High School, Lapwai
* Parma High School, Parma
* Parma Middle School, Parma
* Nampa High School, Nampa
* Silver Creek Alternative High School, Hailey
* Salmon Middle School- High School, Salmon
* Teton High School, Driggs

These eight schools will receive extensive support, training services and $3,000 in funding to implement Sources of Strength, an evidence-based suicide prevention program that utilizes the power of peer social networks to change unhealthy norms and culture to ultimately prevent suicide, bullying and substance abuse.

In addition, the Idaho Lives Project will work directly with the communities surrounding these schools to focus on training mental health providers and other stakeholders to prevent and respond to suicide crises.

“We very much look forward to formal training and programs to help us emphasize to students the power of positive relationships with adults and peers,” said Sharma Thornton, counselor at Silver Creek Alternative High School, one of the selected schools. “We are also excited to gain better experience and training our students on how to maximize their strengths, better use existing school resources, and to maximize community resources. The entire staff and student body at Silver Creek will benefit from this program.”

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The Idaho Lives Project is made possible by the State and Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention Grant awarded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support states and tribes in developing and implementing suicide prevention strategies.

The state was awarded $1.29 million over three years to implement the Idaho Lives Project. This is just the first phase. In the 2014-2015 school year, the Idaho Lives Project will select an additional 10-14 schools to begin implementing Sources of Strength.

For more information about the Idaho Lives Project, please contact Matt McCarter at the Idaho State Department of Education at mamccarter@sde.idaho.gov or (208) 332-6961, or contact Jeni Griffin at SPAN Idaho at jgriffin@spanidaho.org or (208) 860-1703.

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