



# Mending The Net

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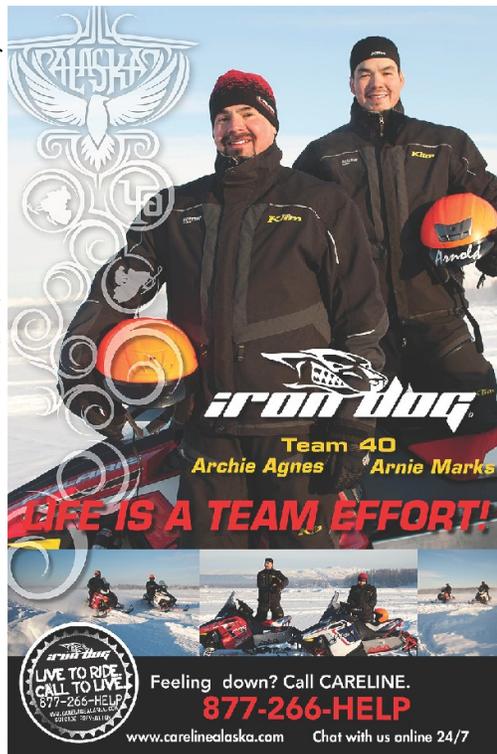
Visit the calendar at [Stopsuicidealaska.org](http://Stopsuicidealaska.org) for suicide prevention activities happening across the state.



## Iron Dog and State of Alaska Team Up Again

The State of Alaska teamed up with Iron Dog racers again this year to promote suicide prevention in villages along the route of the nearly 2,000-mile snow machine race. Team 40, made up of Archie Agnes and Arnie Marks of Tanana, joined the “Life Is a Team Effort” campaign to educate all Alaskans that suicide is preventable.

The suicide prevention campaign includes sports cards and posters of the racers printed by the Alaska Division of Behavioral Health. The cards and posters include contact information for Careline, Alaska’s toll-free statewide suicide prevention hotline. The cards and posters highlight that “Life Is a Team Effort.” There are



calls and online chats from people who are in crisis, concerned about someone else, grieving for someone who died by suicide, or who just feel down. Careline is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Iron Dog/Careline campaign is designed to raise awareness of Careline and encourage Alaskans to take steps to prevent suicide. Alaska’s five-year statewide suicide prevention plan lists steps for individuals, communities and organizations. The plan, posters and cards are available from the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, online at [www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention).

people that can help if someone is feeling suicidal. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, contact Careline at 1-877-266-4357.

The highly trained staff of Alaskans at Careline welcome

## AASG Media Contest Deadline March 31

The Alaska Association of Student Governments is again partnering with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and GCI to hold a suicide prevention media campaign for Alaskan youth age 14-20. Teams or individuals can enter videos promoting messages of hope and prevention. The contest ends March 31, 2012. Winners will be announced at the AASG Spring Conference at Kodiak High School, April 12-14. Winning videos will be aired on radio and television, and there will be other prizes. For more information, or to register, go to [www.aasg.org](http://www.aasg.org).

# Alaska Hosts Second Suicide Prevention Summit

**M**ore than 80 people from all across Alaska gathered in Anchorage January 10-11, 2012 for the second biennial Statewide Suicide Prevention Summit.

Alaskans were invited to form regional teams to attend. Teams were encouraged to include representatives from health care providers, law enforcement, coaches, teachers, emergency responders, school counselors, survivors of a loss to suicide, youth, suicide prevention and wellness coalition members, clergy, mental health providers, substance abuse counselors, behavioral health aides and elders. Six regional teams representing Southeast, Gulf Coast, Southwest, Anchorage/Matsu, Interior, and Northern Alaska attended the

Summit. The six teams worked together coordinate on the implementation of the 2012-2017 State Suicide Prevention Plan, [\*Casting the Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide in Alaska\*](#), released in conjunction with the Summit.

One of the goals of the summit was to improve communication and connection within regions and statewide. Each team created regional action plans that include short-term (six months to 1 year), intermediate (1 to 3 years), and long-term (3 to 5 years) goals to enact the State Suicide Prevention Plan.

**The Southeast regional team** plans to develop a media campaign to destigmatize suicide and seeking treatment, and to hold at least one wellness event in the short-term. As an intermediate goal, the team wants to involve more Alaska Native leaders in cultural activities as a way to boost resiliency. The team will engage businesses, such as bars, liquor stores, and grocery stores, that serve high-risk people to increase suicide awareness. The team will also work to mentor more youth leaders. In the long-term, the team plans to form a Southeast Suicide Prevention Coalition with all existing community coalitions, create a “resource bank” or list of suicide prevention trainers, and create a training for community leaders on available resources.

**The Gulf Coast regional team** plans to find locations to post Careline and national crisis line information in communities,

develop a training plan for Crisis Intervention Teams, and research prevention training models to bring to their communities. Intermediate goals include placing crisis line numbers in phone books and conducting suicide intervention training in communities throughout the region. In the long-term, the team plans to provide speaking engagements for survivors of a loss to suicide and attempt survivors and to implement suicide screening tools in communities to identify at-risk people in order to connect them with services.

**The Anchorage/Mat-Su regional team** in the short-term decided to create a formal suicide prevention coalition for the region, as well as create a matrix of resources. The intermediate goal is identify gaps in resources in the region and highlight where resources overlap. In the long-term, the team plans to implement the regional plan and fill resource gaps.

**The Southwest regional team** set many short term goals: to identify what each school is doing to screen for suicide risks; to identify possible funding to offer gun safes in homes and communities; to research medication disposal programs; and to organize a “phone text event” to raise public awareness. Their intermediate goals are to promote screenings in schools, including local college campuses; have at least two people in each community trained to respond to someone experiencing suicidal ideation; increase awareness of how to reduce access to lethal means of suicide (guns, pills, etc.); and create magnets, posters, and web-based lists of resources. In the long-term, the team plans to create an organized process for engaging with the high-risk



## **Suicide Warning Signs**

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself.
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to lethal means, i.e. firearms, pills, etc.
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities — seemingly without thinking.
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes.
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

***If you or someone you know is experiencing these signs, call Careline at 1-877-266-***



young adult group that is not in school and to work with regional partners to supply locked medication cabinets to households with potentially lethal prescription drugs.

**The Interior regional team** will begin suicide prevention outreach to all of the Interior village schools, hold suicide prevention trainings, and create a community safety resource form for each community in the region. The team’s intermediate goals are to work with school districts to find funding for suicide prevention screening, collaborate with military installations on suicide prevention, expand the regional action plan to include participants from more communities, and explore grief support groups for teens. In the long-term, the team plans to ensure that all high school teachers are trained to recognize suicide warning signs and to host a regional suicide prevention summit.

**The Northern regional team** plans to collaborate better in suicide prevention efforts within the region. The team’s intermediate goal is to expand the successful Youth Leaders program throughout the region. In the long-term, the team plans to ensure that there is suicide prevention training for school personnel and students.

The Summit was made possible through the efforts of the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, the Division of Behavioral Health, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Mental Health Board, and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council will continue to work with the regional teams to enhance coordination between state, regional, and community agencies and individuals to implement the state suicide prevention plan.

Visit [www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org) to see the six regional plans, to learn more about suicide prevention efforts in Alaska, and to read *Casting the Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide*.

**Photo captions**  
 (Opposite page) Members of the Southeast regional team work on a “stream building exercise” to identify resources in the region. (Above) Members of the Southeast regional team work on the regional action plan. (Below) The Anchorage/Mat-Su team discusses the development of a new suicide prevention coalition in the region.



## SSPC Youth Member Visits D.C.

Tessa Baldwin, the youth representative on the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, has taken her message of suicide prevention across the state and beyond. Baldwin has toured Alaska this winter to meet with students as part of the Hope4Alaska suicide prevention program she created. Hope4Alaska is focused on reducing the high rates of suicide among teenagers. The message is very close and personal to her. Baldwin, a senior at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, has lost an uncle to suicide at age five and her boyfriend while a teenager.

Baldwin's message of hope resonates with teens and adults. She was invited in December to participate in the Native American Youth Challenge program in Washington, D.C.. This event included meeting President Barack Obama and dining at the White House. Baldwin also

met with Alaska's senators, Lisa Murkowski and Sen. Mark Begich, while in Washington, D.C.

Baldwin said it was an honor meeting the President, but the highlight of the trip was seeing the sites around the nation's capital.

One of Baldwin's goals for 2012 is to speak to 5,000 Alaskan teenagers about suicide prevention. Visit Hope4Alaska at <http://hope4alaska.tumblr.com/>.



## 5K Prevention Run Set for June 2

The second annual "Every Mile Is Worth It Race" will be held Saturday, June 2 at Sandy Beach in Juneau. The 5K "maze style" course is run to promote suicide prevention awareness and advocacy. All proceeds will go to Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium's Youth Ambassador Program. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the race is at 9:00 a.m.

NAMI-Juneau is joining with SEARHC to create a fun and exciting experience for everyone this year. Slow Foods will also be present to talk about how to create dramatic and lasting change in the food system, foster connections and reconnect with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters of Southeast that produce the regional food. Along with free food after the race, there will be free running hats and bags for the first 75 participants. There will also be door prizes for participants.

The Youth Ambassador Program is a leadership program for high school juniors and seniors in Southeast Alaska. The focus of the program is lowering stigma and boosting suicide prevention efforts in the region. It is a partnership

between the SEARHC Behavioral Health/Suicide Prevention Program and the Southeast Alaska Suicide Prevention Task Force, "1 is 2 Many."

If you would like to volunteer, learn more information, or make a donation to the Youth Ambassador Program, contact Megan Gregory at SEARHC, 463-6645 or by email at [mgregory@searhc.org](mailto:mgregory@searhc.org).



Receive a bag like this if you're one of the first 75 runners in the Every Mile Is Worth It 5K event.

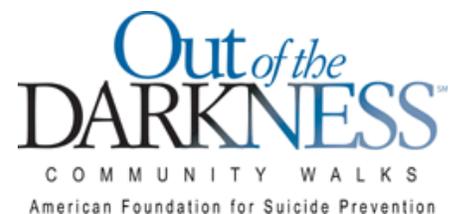
## AFSP-Alaska to Host "Out of Darkness" Walk in Fairbanks, Anchorage May 12

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention-Alaska Chapter will host "Out of the Darkness" community walks May 12, 2012 in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Alaskans will join thousands nationwide to raise money for AFSP and research and education programs to prevent suicide, save lives, increase national awareness about depression and suicide, advocate for mental health issues, and support survivors of suicide loss.

The Fairbanks "Out of the Darkness" walk will be at the Wilderness Shelter in Pioneer Park on Saturday, May 12 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Check-in will be from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Registration will end at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 11, 2012. Donations can be made through July 1, 2012. For more information call Diana Grum at (907) 978-9438 or email her at [dgrum25@hotmail.com](mailto:dgrum25@hotmail.com).

The Anchorage "Out of the Darkness" event will be held at the Delaney Park Strip, beginning at the West End, on Saturday, May 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Check-in will be from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Registration ends at 11:45 p.m. on Friday, May 11, 2012. Donations will be accepted until June 30, 2012 For more information contact Dennis Lasley at (907) 250-1890 or [dennis.afspak@gmail.com](mailto:dennis.afspak@gmail.com).

AFSP is a national non-profit that invests in suicide prevention research, education, demonstration projects, and policy work. For more information visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).





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The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council advises the Governor and Legislature on issues relating to suicide. In collaboration with communities, faith-based organizations, and public-private entities, the Council works to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals and communities.

**William Martin, Chair**, Juneau  
**Meghan Crow, Vice-Chair**, Bethel  
**Barbara Jean Franks**, Anchorage  
**Melissa Stone**, Anchorage  
**Brenda Moore**, Anchorage  
**Anna Sappah**, Anchorage  
**Christine Moses**, Bethel.  
**Phyllis Carlson**, Juneau  
**Teresa Baldwin**, Sitka  
**Alana Humphrey**, Anchorage  
**Sharon Norton**, Homer  
**Pastor Lowell W. Sage Jr.**, Kivalina  
**Senator Johnny Ellis**, Anchorage  
**Senator Fred Dyson**, Eagle River.  
**Representative Anna Fairclough**, Eagle River.  
**Representative Berta Gardner**, Anchorage

## New State Suicide Prevention Plan Available Online

Alaska's new statewide suicide prevention plan, *Casting the Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide*, is available from the [Statewide Suicide Prevention Council website](http://StatewideSuicidePreventionCouncil.org) as well as [www.stopsuicidealaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidealaska.org). The five year plan was released January 10, 2012. The 2012–2017 plan was developed with input from meetings held across the state. A public comment period on the draft was held in the Fall of 2011.

The plan is a call to action that emphasizes that every Alaskan has a role to play in preventing suicide. It marks a shift in focus from just intervention to prevention — not just how best to reach out to people in crisis, but how best to keep people from reaching a point of crisis. The plan has six goals:

1. Alaskans accept responsibility for preventing suicide;
2. Alaskans effectively and appropri-

ately respond to people at risk of suicide;

3. Alaskans communicate, cooperate and coordinate in suicide prevention efforts;
4. Alaskans have immediate access to prevention, treatment and recovery services;
5. Alaskans support survivors in healing; and
6. Quality data and research is available and used for planning, implementation and evaluation of suicide prevention efforts. The plan also lists a set of specific strategies for accomplishing each goal.

The plan includes a checklist of concrete actions that individuals and families, communities, and the State can take to reduce suicide in Alaska.

The Council is responsible for advising

legislators and the Governor on ways to improve Alaskans' health and wellness by reducing suicide. It is required by statute to complete a statewide suicide prevention plan.

For more information about the plan, contact Eric Morrison, the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council Assistant, at (907) 465-6518 or [eric.morrison@alaska.gov](mailto:eric.morrison@alaska.gov).

