

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**SEVENTH ANNUAL SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AT THE CAPITAL**

*~ Promoting awareness about this devastating public health problem ~*

**TALLAHASSEE-** According to the Florida Department of Health, 2,570 Floridians lost their lives to suicide in 2007 at a rate of 7 people per day. Of those, 231 were between the ages of 10 and 24. Tragically, many Florida families and communities have been affected by the suicide deaths of their loved ones, friends, classmates, co-workers and neighbors. Two events are being held to address this silent epidemic.

The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention and Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council are hosting an Evening of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil to remember loved ones we have lost to suicide on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 7:00 PM Lake Ella Park in Tallahassee, Florida. Prior to the ceremony, attendees will be provided with the opportunity to write messages and memorials about their loved ones on a memory board that will be displayed annually on Suicide Prevention Day at the Capital. Attendees are encouraged to bring photos and other mementos to attach if they wish their loved ones to be part of this memorial.

Suicide Prevention Day at the Capital is a statewide event in which the Office of Suicide Prevention and Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition are joined in Tallahassee by advocates, survivors, grassroots organizations, other state agencies, and youth to bring suicide to the forefront as a public health issue. This year Suicide Prevention Day falls on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Beginning at 9:00 AM, multiple advocacy and human service organizations will be hosting educational display tables in the Capitol Plaza Rotunda. A press conference will begin at 2:00 PM in the lower level Cabinet Room featuring Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp, Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon, Director of the Office of Drug Control William H. Janes, Senator Evelyn Lynn and Senator Ted Deutch.

The 2007 Florida Legislature passed a bill which was signed into law by Governor Crist that created the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention within the Office of Drug Control to coordinate and provide oversight to statewide efforts. This law also established the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council to advise and make recommendations to the statewide office. The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is charged with implementing the *Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy* statewide and assisting communities in carrying out suicide prevention efforts locally. The *Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy* outlines an action agenda for prevention suicide and sets a goal to reduce suicides in Florida by one-third by 2010.

To learn more about Suicide Prevention Day and other suicide prevention initiatives, please visit the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention website at <http://www.HelpPromoteHope.com>.