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New form submission

[YSPTF Testimony Form](#)

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Meeting at which you wish to testify:	Dec. 10, Topeka
What hurdles have you experienced and/or lessons learned through your efforts?	Personally I feel that I've learned how to notice the actions of people around me more. For example, one of my coworkers has scares on their arms, some roughly new. So instead of shying away from it I've been trying to figure out a way to contact her and talk to her about it. If she does not want to talk and gets mad at me, so be it. But I want to make sure she knows that I care and that I'm there for her.
What efforts have proven to be successful in your purpose to address youth suicide?	An effort that I have made in the community was putting cards on the registers at my work for people to take if they wanted. These cards have the suicide hotline/text line on the back for those who need it. I put these cards up at the beginning of September, and the stacks were pretty big, all of them were gone by mid-October. The people who has taken the cards aren't just from surrounding areas. Some of them were traveling from other states. I would also like to mention that last year I was in a Rotary Essay Contest and got third in it. I wrote about bullying and the affects it has on others, and how it can lead to Suicide. In this essay I mentioned how the Highland Topeka High School was chosen for the show "Undercover High" and it focused on how much really went on in

	<p>schools. I included my own story and how I overcame it. The girl who won first also wrote about bullying, hers was more about cyber bullying, but included how it lead to someone at her school to commit suicide.</p>
Recommendations or suggestions for the task force to consider:	<p>A suggestion for the task force from me would be to make sure that when people are taught, they are taught by people they know. This will be more of an impact to them. Like how the gatekeepers taught the high school teachers. They seemed to also enjoy it more than previous years. Also during the training make sure they understand that they need to take care of themselves. Since this topic is so tough, they will need to take a breather.</p>
Upload Testimony	Uncovered Secrets of Silence.docx
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Uncovered Secrets of Silence

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Word Count: 933

Recently, a high school in Topeka, has been chosen for a television series called “Undercover High”. This show takes adults, not originally from Kansas, and puts them “undercover” as high school students. Some concerns that have popped up in the series are how the students use technology to bully others and there have also been rape threats.

Everyone has been in contact with bullying through a family member, a friend, or even themselves. One of my very own cousins has recently started homeschooling due to all the drama and bullying that happened to her and her friends at school. She would always talk to me about her problems and all the things she wished she could do to help her friends. My cousin was bullied about how her dad worked as the janitor at her school. In a survey across 39 states, on average “7.2% of students admit to not going to school due to personal safety concerns” (www.americanspcc.org). Personal safety concerns are much higher for those with Hispanic heritage. One of the adults, posing as a minor in high school, was 23-year-old Hispanic women. This adult actor was put into a group message and the boys in this message were talking about raping her. Even being a grown adult, seeing those messages scared her and caused her to want to stay home.

Bullying can effect a person so severely that they are still scarred from it. The wrestling coach at Rock Creek Jr/Sr. High School, Daniel Pray, was bullied about his teeth when he was younger. Daniel did not have enamel, so his teeth were yellow. “Kids would make fun of me. If I was better at something than other people they would say, ‘well at least I don’t have yellow teeth’”. He said, “I think it was more of the mental bullying than physical, but after I got the fake teeth and moved to Rock Creek life got a lot better”. Daniel Pray said that he “doesn’t remember a lot of things but that has been with me ever since”. Daniel is a grown man and told me that he would not smile, showing his teeth, for pictures just because of his past experiences.

Bullying can cause a student to become so fearful that they are silent about what is happening. A girl I know was bullied in grade school, and some of junior high, about her height. She was called all the names in the book; small fry, short stack, shorty. She never asked for help, she never talked to anyone about this problem, and she would not tell anyone to stop because she was scared. As a result of not talking to anyone about her problem, she became depressed and upset most of the time. “19.5% of high school girls, nationwide, deal with depression or other mental illnesses” (Undercover High). I would also like to point out that “43% of bullied students report to an adult if being bullied” (www.pacer.org). Due to refusing to talk to anyone about being bullied, that girl began to think about killing herself. In Kansas, “One person dies by suicide every 20 hours” (www.yellowribbon.org). I am glad she decided not to do that because if she did, the world would be sad and her family would have been devastated since they never talked to her about this kind of thing.

If someone is being bullied or have talked about suicide, there are some tips on what people can do to help. Be aware, supportive and positive; let them know that people are there for them, they love them, and they can turn to them if they need anything. Being non-judgmental and reassuring; make sure that can trust certain people. Give the student your attention; listen to them, let them know someone cares about them not just out of pity. Recently, my school started a Yellow Ribbon Club. These students have been taught on what to do if someone approached them and mentioned suicide or showed signs of depression. The people in charge of this group are the most caring people you would ever meet. They come up with all these ideas to get more students involved and to make sure no one is left out.

Bullying is not a subject that can be “looked over” as just a way of life. It is something that can, and does, happen to anyone and everyone. That girl I was talking about previously, who

was bullied for her height, yeah that girl was me. I was scared of going to school for a while; I did think about killing myself due to it. Throughout the majority of my life, I thought I had to tall to fit in and not made fun of. I thought I had to put on a fake smile and laugh through all the insults that was said to me. Instead, I figured out how to love my shortness, I embraced it. Now I joke along with the “insults” that honestly thought about killing myself over. How stupid was I for thinking about doing that due to those little insults. Sure some of them still hurt but I have grown to love who I am. If I could say anything to the people who have been bullied due to a physical appearance they have, I would say that they need to find whatever it is and love it. They need to “uncover” what it is that people bully them for and embrace it. Just like how the adults in “Undercover High” are helping the students of Highland Park Topeka High School to recognize.

Works Cited

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