

Kansas Attorney General's Office – Attn. Crystal

120 S.W. 10th St.
Topeka, KS 66612

To: Task Force Initiative on Suicide

From: The grieving family of a Teen Suicide.

I cannot begin to tell you how hard it is to lose a child to suicide, or how hard it is to write this letter. There is plenty of blame and guilt for all of us in the family.

Gabriella Nicole Neary was a vibrant young lady. She was on track to graduate early and had shown a desire to become a lawyer. She loved playing the French horn and performing with the marching band. She adored her cats and loved her family. She was loved by her family and encouraged to succeed at whatever she wanted to do in her life.

On December 1st, 2017 she went into her closet, closed the door and hung herself.

She was seventeen years old.

What went wrong? Why did this happen? What, if anything, could we have done differently?

At age 13, Gabriella was raped by a 20 year old man. He spent approximately one year in jail, was paroled for three years and required to register as a sexual predator; small consequences in the eyes of her family and his victim. Perhaps that sparked her desire to become a lawyer, as she felt the justice system failed her.

Following this incident, her family sought help and counseling to help Gabriella get past these traumatic events, but I am not sure victims can ever recover.

Gabriella's home life could have been better. There was a lot of fighting and arguing between her mom and dad. They separated and later divorced. Gabriella initially stayed with her mom, but later moved in with her dad and his fiancé in Neodesha, KS. A home where there was a lot less fighting and turmoil. She continued to attend school at Independence High School until her car broke down.

With no transportation available, the decision was made that Gabriella would transfer to Neodesha High School until her car could be repaired. Repairs were scheduled to begin on December 2nd, one day after her death.

The bullying began at Neodesha High School in small town, where six months earlier, another young woman had ended her life due to bullying.

After her death, a message was found on Gabriella's phone. The message said "Just kill yourself. No more problems with boys. No more problems with parents, school or friends. Just kill yourself!" And she did.

Words can kill a spirit.

I want people to know words hurt. That old adage "sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me" is dead wrong. You cannot take back words once they leave your mouth. We need to communicate with young and old that what we say matters. We need to be careful of what we say to our fellow citizens.

My heart breaks time after time as this year passes. I hear a song on the radio that was sung at her funeral and I cry. A memory pops up on my social media and I cry. I glance up and see her picture and I cry. I have a large extended family and she was my first loss. It hurts so much.

I think what a waste. What did I miss? Why didn't I know she was hurting? Why didn't I spend more time with her?

No problems for Gabriella now. Her friends and family are left behind to deal with the aftermath. It is the living that continues to struggle. It's her mom, dad and stepmom, her siblings, grandparents and extended family left behind who wonder how we could have done better. We ask ourselves why she did this. What was so bad that she felt death was the only solution? What can we do to keep this from happening to another family?

Respectfully submitted for your consideration by Gabriella's grandmother -

Norma Tallman

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