



Spring 2009



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Erika's Lighthouse (ELH) mission is echoed in the words of Paula Clayton, Medical Director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "*Depression is a common and real illness that interferes with a student's ability to be productive and enjoy friends, family, sports, school or really anything. Recognizing and treating depression is the most effective way to prevent suicide.*"

I am proud to say, five years into delivering our message of early identification and intervention; strong community recognition has come our way. Many people help make Erika's Lighthouse a "go to" organization as we become a powerful resource in the fight to remove stigma and teach about depression. Close to 15,000 middle and high school students have been involved in programs ELH has presented or sponsored. Check out our map in this newsletter and see how the Red Flags program has spread from Grayslake to Chicago. Our teen panel recently spoke with local middle school students who had just completed the ELH sponsored Red Flags curriculum. Their insightful questions about depression and genuine concern for friends clearly showed their expanded knowledge base on the subject. Teachers report the curriculum has not only helped middle schoolers to understand an illness that their friends may be suffering from, but some have been identified with the illness, and received help early, making a significant difference in their well being.

Five years has broadened our outreach to include:

Teens: The Erika's Lighthouse Club at New Trier High School is flourishing on both campuses. Participation has been great and now other high schools want to start their own Erika's Lighthouse chapters. Watch for many new schools to attend our 6th annual Walkathon on May 17, 2009.

College Students: Our teen panel presented to graduate social work students at Loyola University, and graduate teachers in training at Northwestern University. The college students were impressed and wished they had a program like Erika's Lighthouse when they were in high school.

School Professionals: We received a grant from The Mental Health Association of Illinois to provide training for school professionals as part of a Suicide Prevention effort. Our training models the desired attitude, language, and actions to address mental health issues in schools.

Virtual Community: There is something for everyone at erikaslighthouse.org, and about 250 new people visit our website each month. Visitors can take a quiz to see if they might be showing signs of depression. Parents can read an informative article on planning for college. Take a look and send us a message!

Parents: ELH's new *Parent Handbook on Childhood and Adolescent Depression* is our gift to our community. When parents and families are empowered and educated, they will be strong advocates for the child who may be hurting. As the handbook finds its way to parents who will benefit most from it, we feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that we have taken steps to create a web of safety around our children.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter. As our reach into the community grows, our message to **get depression out of the dark** grows stronger. Together, we can create a community which shines a light on the emotional well being of families.

Peggy G. Kubert, LCSW
Director, Erika's Lighthouse

HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

Announcing the publication of Erika's Lighthouse:
Parent Handbook on Childhood and Adolescent Depression



March 5th marked the official launch date for Erika's Lighthouse's new project – our Parent Handbook on Childhood and Adolescent Depression. After over two years of extensive research and development, Executive Board Member, Elaine Tinberg, and her committee are pleased to present our first ever parent-to-parent support and reference guide.

- The handbook was written by parents who have been through depression with their own children.
- It contains practical information that parents can use to determine whether or not their child needs help.
- Also contains information on how to manage the school day, and how to deal with issues at home.
- It is simply written and brief. In a time of crisis, parents need quick, practical advice, rather than long explanations.

When a parent is facing concerns about a child's mental health, it is difficult to know where to turn. There are questions to be answered and choices to make. Through our Red Flags school programs, we have been able to reach thousands of students. With the publication of this handbook, we can now reach their parents as well.

The handbook made its debut at the Winnetka home of Marcia Fields on March 5, and at *The Book Stall* in Winnetka on March 12. See photos on page 2. It is available to parents free of charge through our website: www.erikaslighthouse.org as well as at *The Book Stall*.

WALKATHON - MAY 17

SIXTH ANNUAL ROCK & RALLY WALKATHON

May 17, 2009, at 3:30 pm, New Trier High School, 7 Happ Road, Northfield

Please join supporters of Erika's Lighthouse (ELH) for our 6th annual Walkathon on Sunday, May 17, 2009. With bright T-shirts, music, balloons and participants from all over the surrounding area, this event promotes "getting depression out of the dark," in a fun and lively manner.



Walkers will meet at 3:30 p.m. on the south side of New Trier High School, Northfield campus, and follow a course through the forest preserve. A suggested \$20 donation includes refreshments, music by The Mix (101.9 FM) and an event T-Shirt. There will also be chances to win raffle prizes including Cubs tickets, Great America Passes, and iPods.

"It makes me feel good to know all these people care about me!" said a young participant who had recently been diagnosed with depression.

Ginny Neuckranz, ELH President says "The walk is all about shining the light on this common but often misunderstood illness that can affect any age group, any socioeconomic level. Families and friends coming together in support of people who have depression helps break the stigma that sometimes surrounds it. It is wonderful to be surrounded by a crowd of people who care-and it really is a fun Rally."

Around six hundred people of all ages participated in 2008. For updated Walkathon information and sign up materials, go to ELH on the web!

ELH JOINS FORCES WITH LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Within the past year, the following high schools : New Trier, Loyola Academy, John Hersey, Elk Grove Village, Niles West and Glenbrook South have all welcomed ELH into their health classes. Our teen panel, in conjunction with director, Peggy Kubert, and teen coordinator, Heather Steward, have presented to and shared the teen video with over 2,000 high school students.



"This is an awesome program," said one New Trier freshman. "I never really understood what depression was before this."

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Deborah Lazar

Deborah Lazar, co-sponsor of ELH's Club at New Trier, is a librarian at New Trier High School. She lives in Evanston, where she video chats with her son in Japan and her daughter in Boston.

Dan Daly

Dan Daly, ELH sponsor, teaches Biology at New Trier High School, and has a private tutoring business. Away from academics, he enjoys natural philosophy, neuroscience, travel, music and photography.

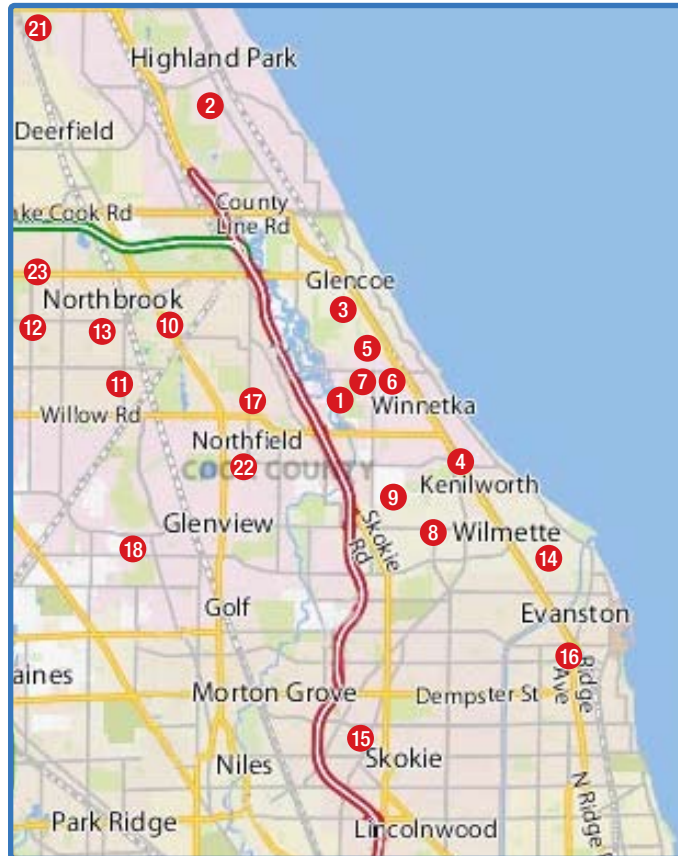
Heather Steward

Heather Steward, Teen Coordinator for Erika's Lighthouse, is also a High School Outreach Worker for Haven Youth and Family Services. Heather lives in Bucktown with her three roommates. She enjoys working with teens at New Trier High School, shopping, reading, cooking/dining out, and watching live sporting events.

WE HAD A GREAT TURNOUT AT THE MARCH 5 LAUNCH PARTY FOR ERIKA'S LIGHTHOUSE HANDBOOK



SCHOOLS USING RED FLAGS CURRICULUM



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| 1. Washburne Middle School, Winnetka | 14. St. Francis Xavier School, Wilmette |
| 2. Edgewood Jr. High, Highland Park | 15. St. Peter School, Skokie |
| 3. Glencoe Central School, Glencoe | 16. Pope John XXIII School, Evanston |
| 4. Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth | 17. Sunset Ridge School, Northfield |
| 5. Sacred Heart, Winnetka | 18. Springman Middle School, Glenview |
| 6. North Shore Country Day, Winnetka | 19. Emmons Grade School, Antioch (not pictured) |
| 7. St. Faith Hope and Charity, Winnetka | 20. St. Matthias Transfiguration Catholic School, Chicago (not pictured) |
| 8. Wilmette Jr. High, Wilmette | 21. Bannockburn School, Bannockburn |
| 9. Marie Murphy Jr. High, Wilmette | 22. Christian Heritage Academy, Northfield |
| 10. Northbrook Jr. High, Northbrook | 23. Sager Solomon Schechter Day, Northbrook |
| 11. Maple Jr. High, Northbrook | |
| 12. Wood Oak Jr. High, Northbrook | |
| 13. Field Middle School, Northbrook | |

NIYAMA YOGA SENDS GOOD KARMA OUR WAY

Niyama Yoga Studio of Wilmette proudly presented ELH with two checks for \$300 and \$275, after initiating ELH as a recipient of its popular “Karma Yoga Sundays.” Every Sunday afternoon from 12:15-1:45, the studio offers a class free of charge, with a donation to either Erika’s Lighthouse or Hands on Help Foundation. Niyama has pledged to keep ELH as one of its designated charities throughout 2009. So, get out your yoga mats and spread the good karma! Niyama Yoga is located at 742 12th St., Wilmette. (847) 251-8176. niyamayoga.com

A String of Lights Created

As middle school students learn through the Red Flags program, the “beacon of hope” becomes a string of lights throughout our community. Each child’s new and educated look at depression brings us closer to our goal of losing the stigma, and bringing depression out of the dark. Here’s what middle schoolers are saying:

“Now I know (depression) is a brain disorder – not just being sad.”

“Claire’s Story gave me a completely different view. Depression is bigger than I thought and should be taken seriously.”

“I used to think it was weird if people got depressed. I was wrong.”

Erika’s Lighthouse Receives Challenge Grant for Parent Handbook

In March ELH received an anonymous \$5,000 challenge grant for our newly published Parent Handbook. This means that every donation that we raise from the public will be matched dollar for dollar by our donor. You can make a donation to help us reach our goal by returning the enclosed envelope. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Good Book

Parents with kids in college may want to check out

College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It

by Richard D. Kadison and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo.

This book includes a how-to chapter for parents, with guidelines to help them be proactive in safeguarding their college-aged children’s mental health.

New Tribute Cards Show That You Care and Support ELH

We are pleased to offer our new Erika’s Lighthouse Tribute Cards, a thoughtful way to acknowledge a special occasion or to send comfort during times of sadness.

They’re nice to keep on hand to commemorate a birthday, anniversary, engagement, or new baby. They make wonderful teachers’ and graduation gifts, too.

The cards are printed in blue ink on white card stock with room for your own message. Each card/envelope is \$5.00 with all proceeds going to Erika’s Lighthouse. To purchase your card(s), please call Debbie Haback at (847)835-9004.





P.O. Box 616
 Winnetka, IL 60093
 www.erikaslighthouse.org

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AT LARGE

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