



KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMS TO BENEFIT FROM PARTNERSHIP WITH ERIKA'S LIGHTHOUSE

July 19, 2021 – Indianapolis, Ind. – [Kiwanis International](#) is pleased to announce a new partnership with [Erika's Lighthouse](#), which will give students involved in Kiwanis Youth Programs — and the adults who lead them — the tools to empower them to learn about mental health.

The partnership will give students in middle and high school access to online tool kits, videos and classroom education and provide club advisors with the materials they need to educate and empower students to promote an inclusive community in their schools. Erika's Lighthouse is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and raising awareness of adolescent mental health and was founded by a couple who lost their teenage daughter to depression.

Erika's Lighthouse targets students in Builders Club, ages 11 to 14, and Key Club, ages 14 to 18. The National Institute on Mental Health advises that the earlier mental health treatment is started, the more effective it can be. Erika's Lighthouse will help students and advisors identify concerns and support schools in getting students the help they need. Bringing the discussion into the schools helps students feel less isolated and gives them an avenue to reach out for help.

“Our students today experience so much in their young lives, from anxiety to depression to thoughts of suicide,” said Michelle Study-Campbell, executive director of Kiwanis Youth Programs, which includes Key Club for high school students and Builders Club for middle school students. “This partnership will provide immediate access to resources while allowing for long-range planning and implementation of studying depression and other mental health issues — making sure students know that their emotional and mental health is just as important as their physical health.”

In the United States, one in six youth aged 6 to 17 will experience a mental health disorder every year, notes Brandon Combs, executive director of Erika's Lighthouse.

“Despite such a prevalence of mental health disorders, conversations surrounding the topic are sparse. Erika's Lighthouse aims to bring these discussions to schools so that students do not have to feel alone in their struggles. The youth programs offered by Kiwanis International — Key Club and Builders Club — are a perfect alignment for our resources,” Combs said.

Key Club has more than 5,000 clubs around the world, with more than 250,000 student members; Builders Club has 1,500 clubs with more than 38,000 members. Each club works with advisors from its sponsoring Kiwanis club and faculty advisors from the schools. Students learn leadership skills while helping their schools and communities with service projects.

Erika's Lighthouse provides educators, students and parents with tools to talk about mental health and encourages students to reach out if they are struggling. The nonprofit offers a suite of programs designed to allow educators to empower teens with an introduction to mental health, depression-literacy, help-seeking and what it takes to promote good mental health. Focused on

grades 4-12, these no-cost, skills-based programs use diverse teen voices to spread awareness and reduce stigma.

About Kiwanis International

Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for students age 14-18, Builders Club for students age 11-14, K-Kids for students age 6-12 and Aktion Club for adults with disabilities, annually dedicate more than 18.5 million service hours to strengthen communities and serve children. The Kiwanis International family comprises more than 537,000 adult and youth members in 85 nations and geographic areas. More information is at kiwanis.org.

About Erika's Lighthouse

A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression is a non-profit organization committed to raising awareness about teen mental health and depression in middle school and high school communities at no cost to schools. Erika's Lighthouse works to eliminate the stigma surrounding depression and empower young people to take ownership of their mental health. Erika's Lighthouse offers a suite of programs designed to allow educators to empower adolescents with an introduction to mental health, depression-literacy, help-seeking and what it takes to promote good mental health. Focused on grades 4-12, these no-cost, video-based, skills-based programs use diverse teen voices to spread awareness and reduce stigma. Erika's Lighthouse also provides countless other web-based resources. More information is at erikaslighthouse.org.

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