



NETWORK NEWS

SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK USA

Opening Minds. Changing Policy. Saving Lives

New Look, Same Spirit

To help SPAN USA carry out its work and “open minds, change policy and save lives,” we have revamped our look. The change in the public face of SPAN USA is the latest in a series of efforts to give greater visibility and impact to our mission. This new image has meant changes for SPAN USA communication materials – its Web site, brochure, newsletter, the works.

The updated look, with a brand-new color palette and logo, enhances how SPAN USA communicates its message to the wider community. A broader reach and professional look allow the organization to “make a more compelling case that suicide is a public health problem that affects us all,” said Maury Lieberman, SPAN USA chairman. As it makes inroads within the greater community, SPAN USA works to diminish the taboo around suicide, shift public perception and enlist support for prioritizing suicide prevention on the public agenda.

“Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch created a solid grassroots foundation and reputation for SPAN USA,” said Debra Cabral, vice president of Dittus Communications. Their success enabled executive director Jerry Reed to take the organization to the next level by establishing this re-branding initiative. “SPAN USA has adopted a creative new



image that conveys the message ‘Let’s turn our grief into something positive.’”

One of the most noticeable changes is the SPAN USA logo. Although the look has changed, the spirit of connecting remains. The uplifting arch symbolizes the link from grief to action, science to service and advocacy to change. The ripples emanating from the arch signify how the actions of SPAN USA organizers have ripple effects that continue to have an impact. In particular, the waves symbolize the amplification and reverberation of survivors’ voices as they call for action to reduce suicide and suicidal behavior. The current logo evolved after

designers drafted more than 40 different versions, striving to graphically interpret the organization’s mission, purpose and vital grassroots role.

SPAN USA’s redesigned Web site, www.spanusa.org, unveiled Dec. 22, 2004, incorporates colors that are soft and comforting, yet also current and professional. The revised Web site allows SPAN USA to communicate more effectively with survivors and provides a more visible platform for survivors to express their needs. The new look should make more people aware of and interested in suicide prevention,

GO TO PAGE 3

3 SPAN USA Announces Fundraisers

4 109th Congress Convenes

6 Calendar of Suicide Prevention Events

SPAN USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sen. Harry Reid (Honorary Advisor),
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Dr. David Satcher (Honorary Advisor),
Atlanta, Ga.

STAFF

Jerry Reed
Executive Director
jreed@spanusa.org
Lidia Bernik
Program Coordinator
lbernik@spanusa.org
Karin Schild
Administrative Assistant
kschild@spanusa.org

SPAN USA, Inc.
1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 449-3600
(202) 449-3601, fax
www.spanusa.org

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Wow, what a year for SPAN USA and suicide prevention advocates across the nation. The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (PL 108-355) became the law of the land and received a \$10 million appropriation. We held our ninth National Awareness Event and established five new SPAN USA affiliates (Ohio, Oklahoma, New England, Southwest and Florida). We held our first DC fundraiser, planted our organizational feet firmly in our nation's capital, became a membership organization and launched our quarterly newsletter, *Network News*, to mention just a few activities of the past year.

Looking back and reflecting on our history is rewarding, as much as looking forward and focusing on our future is essential. With the new year comes the opportunity to work with a new Congress, governors and state legislatures; partner with you and continue to build a highly effective grassroots suicide prevention organization supported by the best Web site possible, www.spanusa.org; and bring new members to SPAN USA, adding voices that will allow us to advance our important work. I've always believed the best way to grow is to reflect and build upon the solid foundation of the past while looking forward to achieve new goals, explore new territory and build new relationships.

I thank all of you who built our solid past and for the pleasure of working with such a great group of people on shaping the future of suicide prevention and SPAN USA. We are making progress thanks to each of you. I wish you all the best for the year ahead.

Jerry Reed, *SPAN USA Executive Director*



COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Ideas, strategies, and resources from SPAN USA program coordinator Lidia Bernik

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to check out the newly redesigned SPAN USA Web site, www.spanusa.org, which launched on Dec. 22, 2004. The intent of the redesign was to make the site user friendly for anyone interested in suicide prevention and advocacy – survivors, advocates, media, health professionals, policy makers, SPAN USA organizers and the public-at-large. In an effort to make the site easy to navigate, we included a search tool on the home page, allowing you to locate information quickly.

Although we are proud of our new Web site, maintaining a current and useful site requires constant updating and adjusting. If you know of any resources, events or news that should be added or have any ideas on how the Web site can be further improved, please contact me. I can be reached at (202) 449-3600 or lbernik@spanusa.org. I look forward to your input. Happy browsing. ■



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

SPAN USA is a membership organization composed of survivors, advocates, professionals and others committed to suicide prevention. In the last newsletter, we expressed appreciation to the hundreds of members who have joined since January 2004. However, we omitted some new member names: Molly Draper, Cheryl King, Debra Popiel, Trish Schuster, Shibui Fine Arts, Yolanda Shields, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, and Ken & Madge Tullis.

Youth Suicide Prevention Roundtable

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) along with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors held a Collaboration Around Youth Suicide Prevention Roundtable in Chicago on Nov. 15-16, 2004. The roundtable brought together teams and representatives from Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin. SPAN USA, a conference supporter, invited its advocates from each of the participating states to add their voices to the discussion. This is the third such roundtable hosted by ASTHO focusing needed attention on youth suicide prevention efforts at the state level.



SPAN USA community organizers met in Chicago to discuss youth suicide prevention. From left to right, Heidi Bryan (Pennsylvania), Patricia Franz (Ohio), Janet Schnell (Indiana), Sue Opheim (Wisconsin), Larry Lewis (Michigan) and Jerry Reed (Washington, D.C.).

Upcoming SPAN USA Fundraisers

To support its policy, awareness and education activities, SPAN USA will hold two fundraisers in the coming months.

SPAN USA and the Samaritans of New York are partnering for “New Year, New Friends, New York,” a fundraising event in New York City on Jan. 18, 2005. Proceeds will be split evenly between the two organizations, helping SPAN USA continue to advocate for suicide prevention and mental health at the national and state levels and

allowing the Samaritans to continue operating a 24-hour hotline and suicide survivor support groups in the city. The event, from 6-9:30 p.m. at Safe Harbor at 446 Broadway, New York City, includes refreshments and entertainment. Donations can be made online at www.spanusa.org/samaritans.

SPAN USA will host an additional charitable reception on Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2005, from 6-8 p.m. at the Sewall-Belmont House in Washington, D.C., next to the Senate Hart Office Building.

Honored guests for this event are Sen. and Mrs. Harry Reid and Sen. and Mrs. Gordon Smith. Suicide prevention supporters will join legislators, Hill staff and invited guests to express appreciation for the Reids and Smiths, who have lost loved ones to suicide and have been tremendous champions for suicide prevention.

For more information or to become a sponsor of either event, contact the SPAN USA office at (202) 449-3600.

New Look FROM PAGE 1

attracting suicide survivors who have not yet been reached and generating more grassroots support.

The site’s format was changed to make it more functional, with a simplified design and new search engine. The site now features a Media Center, a

valuable resource for media seeking current and reliable information on suicide and suicide prevention.

Finally, this edition of *Network News* introduces the new look to keep the “public face” of SPAN consistent and memorable.

“All of these changes are to make SPAN USA more accessible, encourage people to read its materials and make

them want to communicate further with us,” Lieberman said.

The new, polished image helps position SPAN USA as a leader sought out by the mental and public health communities, policy makers and the news media. However, the organization’s fundamental concern remains advancing suicide prevention through the voice of survivors. ■

109TH CONGRESS BEGINS NEW CHAPTER

The newly elected Congress will have a legislative clean slate when it convenes in January 2005. Once the 108th Congress concluded its business (see side box), all pending legislation ceased. Thus, there will be a flurry of activity in the opening weeks of the 109th Congress as legislators introduce new bills and re-introduce legislation that stalled in the previous Congress (such as the mental health insurance parity).

There are some important differences in the new Congress. The 109th Congress has a stronger Republican majority, is more diverse (with several more ethnic/racial minorities elected to the House and Senate) and is facing growing pressure to cut spending. SPAN USA will visit each newly elected member and provide briefing materials on suicide in their state and in the nation to educate them about recent policy gains in suicide prevention and enlist their support for future efforts.

Another change is in the congressional leadership. SPAN USA is delighted that Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), an

SUICIDE PREVENTION FUNDING APPROVED FOR FY 2005

Before adjourning, the 108th Congress approved FY 2005 funding for several key initiatives, including:

- \$10 million for the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (P.L. 108-355). Of this amount, \$7 million will fund youth suicide early intervention and prevention planning grants for states, while \$3 million will support continuation of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center.
- \$20 million for state incentive grants to promote transformation efforts within state mental health systems. These state transformation grants should address suicide prevention activities.
- \$2 million for grants to local educational systems or nonprofits partnered with local educational systems to identify and test evidence-based practices for treating teenagers with mental, emotional or behavioral disorders.

honorary advisor to the SPAN USA Board of Directors and a tireless backer of suicide prevention, has been elected Senate minority leader.

"I've been working for years to make suicide prevention a national priority," said Reid. "This year, we made some real progress when we passed the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act and won funding for programs to prevent youth suicide. That bill was passed with the support and hard work of everyone

at SPAN USA. But while it's a good step forward, we still have a lot more work to do. Suicide is still a far too common tragedy in America."

SPAN USA supporters look forward to working with Reid, as well as the many friends of suicide prevention, during the 109th Congress. The upcoming legislative session is an excellent opportunity to build on recent momentum and strengthen relationships with those legislators who supported its passage.

As it outlines SPAN USA's agenda for the 109th Congress, the public policy committee will consider such items as:

- continued funding for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- full funding of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (\$27 million in FY 2006)
- resources to support the Centers for Disease Control's role in helping communities mobilize to prevent suicide
- passage of mental health insurance parity laws

Advocates can learn the latest about suicide prevention and mental health legislation, as well as contact their federal and state legislators, by visiting the SPAN USA Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/spanusa>. Also, sign up for the Action E-List to receive timely legislative alerts at <http://capwiz.com/spanusa/mlml> ■

Membership Opportunity Send a contribution today or become a SPAN USA Member to help America's most effective grassroots suicide prevention organization continue its important work. For more information about SPAN USA membership, see www.spanusa.org/join.html. Mail to: SPAN USA, 1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005

Become a SPAN USA Member:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

My Contribution is...

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

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- \$150 Organizational Membership
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I would like a S M L XL SPAN USA Tshirt

ADVOCATES IN ACTION

Advocates in Action continues its profiles of SPAN USA board members. These profiles highlight the wealth of experience and commitment available to guide SPAN USA as it strives to increase awareness and prevent suicides.

ARANA GREENBERG, San Clemente, Calif.

Arana Greenberg was introduced to SPAN USA through Neal Mazer, former SPAN USA board member. After working with Mazer and his Alsios Institute, Greenberg learned of SPAN



USA's efforts and wanted to contribute. Greenberg's background includes serving as the director of Volunteer Clinical Services for the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center in the early 1970's, as well as training in clinical psychology and community mental health. For the last 25 years, she has been involved in technology planning worldwide for private and public sector entities. She currently volunteers as an EF Foundation international education coordinator for foreign exchange students visiting the United States.

Joining the board shortly after SPAN USA's move to Washington, D.C., Greenberg has observed the teamwork of board chairman Maury Lieberman and executive director Jerry Reed. "The transition has been amazingly successful largely because of Maury's leadership. He is a great listener, a gifted and inclusive leader."

With her passion for helping youth and international connections, Greenberg looks forward to an active role on the board. She recently became board treasurer.

SEAN JOE

Ann Arbor, Mich.

Sean Joe, a leading researcher on suicide in the African American community, joined the SPAN USA board in 2003. Joe's interest is in expanding the organization's relationship with

researchers by making them more aware of SPAN USA. He also is committed to reaching out to survivors who are ethnic/racial minorities, who experience more loss and injuries to suicide and suicidal behavior. Joe believes SPAN USA's presence in Washington, D.C., improves the ability of survivors to raise policy issues and promote change. He also knows that SPAN USA must maintain its grassroots focus so that survivors and communities continue to have a strong and unfiltered voice.



Based at the University of Michigan, Joe is involved with other efforts to stimulate research on race and suicide. He serves on the scientific advisory board for the National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide. He also co-chairs the Emerging Scholars Interdisciplinary Network Research Study Group on African American Suicide, a network of junior investigators studying suicides among African Americans. He lives in Ann Arbor with his wife and two young sons.

DAMON THOMPSON

Washington, D.C.

Damon Thompson had a front row seat for several milestone events for suicide prevention. He worked with then-Surgeon General David Satcher and helped publish the landmark Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health in 1999. Thompson also attended the first national suicide prevention conference in Reno, Nev., where he participated in the early discussions about the eventual National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. From this vantage point, he "saw how effective SPAN USA was in bringing people together from across the spectrum and how wonderful things happen."

He joined the SPAN USA board in



2003 and remains impressed with survivors' "strength, candor and willingness to be open about their experiences and speak up to overcome stigma." Thompson is excited about the establishment of more SPAN USA affiliates and the potential for change as affiliates and the national office partner to work toward common goals. In addition to his involvement with SPAN USA, Thompson is a vice president with Lipman Hearne, a communications consulting firm that works with nonprofits, associations, foundations and educational institutions.

KURT WEYRAUCH

New York, N.Y.

Kurt Weyrauch has been intimately involved with SPAN USA since its beginning. He remembers when his parents, Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch, convened a family meeting almost 10 years ago to first talk about the need for an organization supporting survivors and promoting public policy change. The loss of Terri Ann Weyrauch, Kurt's sister and Jerry and Elsie's daughter, was the catalyst for the family's discussion and the eventual founding of SPAN USA.

Weyrauch notes that SPAN USA is a unique organization because it "taps into and mobilizes the energy of survivors – their anger and loss." Calling SPAN USA a "gadfly of an organization," he sees the organization poised to capitalize on the coming of age of suicide prevention. As a current board member, Weyrauch predicts the SPAN USA board will become more active in fundraising to support the organization's growing education and policy initiatives. In addition to being an advocate, Weyrauch works in residential real estate in Manhattan.

Weyrauch said that his continued involvement with SPAN USA is "my living memorial to my sister. It's a way of trying to prevent further loss and give something back." ■



RESOURCE ROUNDUP

WISQARS DATABASE UPDATED

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's WISQARS database has recently been updated with 2002 mortality data. The interactive WISQARS database allows users to obtain deaths and death rates by a single year of age or by five-year age groups from 1981 through 2002. For more information, see www.cdc.gov/mcipc/wisqars.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

Meeting of the Michigan Suicide Prevention Coalition

Jan. 27, 2005
Mott Children's Health Center, Flint, Mich.
The statewide coalition meets to re-draft Michigan's State Suicide Prevention Plan.
Info: Larry Lewis, spanmich@comcast.net.

FEBRUARY

National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide Conference

Feb. 11-12, 2005
Minnesota
Info: www.nopcas.com

SPRC Suicide Prevention Regional Planning Conference

Feb. 28-March 2, 2005
Suicide Prevention Resource Center and Public Health Service Regions IX and X
Marriott Downtown, Portland, Ore.

The conference is for planners and advocates interested in advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Plan through the development and implementation of state suicide prevention plans. Info: www.sprc.org or (877) GET-SPRC (438-7772).

MARCH

In Harm's Way II: Tactics for Psychological Survival in Law Enforcement

March 8-9, 2005
U.S. Attorney's Office, FDLE's Criminal Justice Executive Institute, the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute, and Survivors of Law Enforcement Suicide
Hilton Hotel, St. Petersburg, Fla.

This seminar for local, state and federal law enforcement officers demonstrates the commitment of the federal government along with the state leadership to provide information on psychological survival in this field.

Info: Donna Schulz,
donna.schulz@justice.usdoj.gov

Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition's 3rd Annual Day at the Capitol

March 30, 2005
Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Governor's Suicide Prevention Task Force
The Capitol, Tallahassee, Fla.
Florida advocates set up displays in the rotunda to educate legislators and garner support for upcoming state suicide prevention legislation.
Info: Pam Harrington, r-harrington@comcast.net

APRIL

2005 American Association of Suicidology Conference

April 13-16, 2005

Omni Interlocken Resort, Denver/Broomfield, Colorado

Info: www.suicidology.org/

MAY

New York's 7th Annual HOPE Candlelight Vigil

May 19, 2005, 6-9 p.m.
Samaritans Suicide Prevention Center
Steps of the New York State Capitol
Info: Mary Jean Coleman, mjcsolo@aol.com

2005 National Injury Prevention and Control Conference: Injury and Violence in America: Meeting Challenges, Sharing Solutions

May 9-11, 2005
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, National Association of Injury Control Research Centers, State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association
Denver, Colo.

Info: www.cdc.gov/mcipc/2005conference

OCTOBER

First National Conference for Survivors of Suicide Attempts, their Friends and their Families

Oct. 17-19, 2005
Sponsored by the Organization for Attempters and Survivors of Suicide in Interfaith Services and supported by SPAN USA
Memphis Marriott Downtown, Memphis, Tenn.

Opening address by Dr. David M. Satcher, director of the Center for Primary Care, Morehouse School of Medicine and former U.S. Surgeon

Info: www.oasis.org/events.html



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