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East Valley's opinion columnists are longer than 550 words and best include the author's name and hometown for publication, and phone number and preferred e-mail address for verification.

EAST VALLEY | VOICE

Changing course of suicide in Maricopa County

A teenager who takes her life because of a broken romance. A husband who gives up on life because of mounting debt and the inability to care for his family. A woman who just can't rise from the darkest depths of depression and loneliness. Whatever the reasons behind it, suicide has tremendous consequences.

Consider the fact that a person dies by suicide every 18 minutes in the United States, and an attempt is estimated to be made once every minute. In Arizona, nearly 1,000 lives were lost in 2008 to suicide, making the state sixth-highest in the nation for suicides, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. If you think suicide could not affect your family, you are wrong. The reality is that suicide in Arizona affects every demographic and ethnicity.



SHAWN THIELE COMMENTARY

While each suicide is driven by its own causes and circumstances, one thread ties these stories together — each suicide has a lasting impact on those left behind, leaving a ripple effect of remorse, incalculable guilt and questions with no answers. In many cases, the pain of loss is equal to the shock survivors feel knowing that their loved one felt suicide was the only option.

With suicide as the 11th-most-common cause of death in the United States, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, we are losing our sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, parents and children. The cycle can — and must — end.

Suicide is a complicated behavior that is often misunderstood. It is caused by a combination of factors, such as a sense of disconnect, depression or loss of hope, family history of suicide, and/or a stressful life event or loss. A person considering suicide can exhibit warning signs that should not be ignored, including casually talking about death, acting recklessly, showing a sense of hopelessness, withdrawal and giving away possessions. We are surrounded by the warning signs of suicide every day; the challenge is knowing how to recognize and then address them.

Locally, we can work together as a community to open our eyes, understand the warning signs, show compassion and, ultimately, save lives. While we cannot prevent every death, we can prevent many through successful prevention and treatment pro-

The Vent

Your chance to sound off
E-mail or message to
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"So (President Barack) Obama wants to send the soldiers needed (to Afghanistan) and has five more meetings planned. Each day that he waits is a day the soldiers fighting the war don't have the support they need and may be killed because of it. What a disgrace for a commander-in-chief! You send the troops requested by those fighting war, and then you have your meetings to refine the strategy."

"More U.S. troops die. Why? Undeclared war. No provocation. Afghanistan/Iraq never threatened. No justification for battle. Attacking creates enemies, doesn't eliminate them. Obama pledged he'd stop it; hasn't. We aren't policemen of the world. Defend our own borders. Leave the Middle East."

"The U.S. still has a Third World population growth rate. We don't need any kind of subsidies for childbirth or child care. If anything, we need family planning assistance. It's not your right to breed if you can't afford it."

"To the Venters of Oct. 4 and Sept. 30 regarding the barking dogs, I feel your pain. I have a dog and consider myself a responsible owner because I don't let her bark just to bark. Some owners are rude, inconsiderate, mindless and, I feel, cruel for allowing their dogs to bark all day and/or night."

CHANDLER TRIBUNE • WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2009 • A 23

Worship Directory

PRESBYTERIAN	CATHOLIC	NON-DENOMINATIONAL
Mission del Sol Presbyterian Church (n.s.a.) 1965 E. Warner Road, Tempe (at corner of McDowell) Phone: 928-928-1225 Sunday Worship Service 9:30 & 10:55 Sunday School 9:25 Rev. Dr. Art Campbell, Pastor 480-820-9944 www.missiondelso.org	ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH 3540 W. Ray Rd., Chandler Office: 480-879-1990 www.standrew-cic.org Pastor: Fr. John Coleman Parochial Vicar: Fr. Rick McGuire, CSC Parish Office Open on Sunday Sun - 12:30pm Saturday 5:00pm Sunday 7:30am, 9:00am, 11:00am, 5:30pm	NewLife 2001 E. Chandler Rd. Chandler, AZ 85224 Pastor: Chris 480-960-0200 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 9AM Sunday School 10AM Worship Prayer Groups Monday 7PM, Thursday 7PM www.newlife.org

To place your ad in this space Call Chris 480-998-6392

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cannot prevent every death, we can prevent many through successful prevention and treatment programs.

Magellan Health Services of Arizona recognizes the significance of empowering the community to proactively address suicide prevention and has created the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training program to teach individuals how to respond to suicidal behavior. These two-day programs are open to the public and are usually booked months in advance — a public response that demonstrates the need for such awareness and training programs.

This is just one of many programs available to empower our community to take control of this life-and-death issue. Now is the time to explore this difficult topic with your children, friends and family. If someone you know is exhibiting suicidal behavior, talk to them and call the Maricopa Crisis Line at (800) 681-4814.

Chandler resident Shawn Thiele is chief of child and youth services of Magellan Health Services of Arizona, a private provider that contracts with the state to provide mental health services in Maricopa County.

berk all day and/or night."

"To the Sunday Venter who quoted the Webster's dictionary, look at the comparison of the words 'black and white' in that piece of literature. Evil vs. pure, wicked vs. fair — not as a color, as a judgment — sinister vs. innocent. I'll base my opinion of racist on some other resource."

"I haven't heard one person say that David Letterman should lose his job and be taken off TV. Can you imagine if Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity or Glenn Beck had pulled the same thing Letterman did?"

and rankings

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