



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I'd like to take this opportunity to urge you to attend our upcoming March 3 presentation by Wendy and Steve Sefcik on teen depression.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Sefcik's story, Wendy and Steve lost their 16-year-old son to suicide. T.J. was an outgoing student, two-sport varsity athlete, and an honors student who had been privately battling chronic depression and crippling mood swings for several years. His parents are determined that their son's death should not go unnoticed, and they have gone public with his story in the hope that they can help other parents whose children suffer from depression or emotional problems, and who may be at risk.

Recently reported national statistics are alarming. It is estimated that 20% of teens will suffer at least one depressive episode before reaching adulthood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, almost 5,000 middle school, high school, and college-age students kill themselves each year in America, making suicide the third-leading cause of death for young adults ages 15–24. In 2012, in their semi-annual survey on youth risk behavior, the CDC reported that 1 in 6 high school students had seriously considered suicide and 1 in 12 had attempted it. Overall, the suicide rate among teens has climbed in the past few years, from 6.3% in 2009 to 7.8% in 2011.

I hope you will all attend this important and enlightening presentation.

Sincerely,

Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
Superintendent