



Directing Change

Program and Film Contest

Prevention & Early Intervention Youth Engagement Program

2017-2018 Impact Report

The Directing Change Program & Film Contest encourages young people to learn about suicide prevention, mental health, and how to support a friend in an innovative way: a film contest. Researching these topics, applying knowledge to the making of the film, and thinking deeply about impacting the opinions of others requires a level of involvement that has lasting impact.

Creating Stories to Save Lives

Imagine you just listened to a presentation about suicide prevention or mental health. How prepared do you feel? Now imagine you take the information and discuss it with a group of friends. You apply what you learned to write a script, develop a storyboard, and work with actors to play roles showing young people standing up for others or talking to a friend about suicide. You spend days, maybe even weeks, creating a film that you hope will prepare other young people to reach out for help. Maybe youth participate to win cash; maybe to make a difference or share their own personal story with others. Whatever the reason was starting out, by the end of their participation in Directing Change they are prepared to recognize warning signs of suicide and know how to connect a friend, or themselves, with help.

Directing Change is about helping young people work through personal stories of loss, creating stories of hope, and changing the story of a young person who is thinking about suicide.

Dear Directing Change Team

I have been meaning to write you for months now to tell you about a life-saving story that happened with two of my students who participated in the Directing Change film project last year.

We spent a lot of time in my class going over the curriculum from your website and talking about mental illness and suicide prevention. The students were very attentive and interested in how they could help others. There were two girls in my class who worked together on a PSA. I don't want to reveal their names, so I will refer to them as Mary and Annie.

One morning Mary arrived early for school and before class started received a phone call from Annie, who told her that she loved her and wanted to say goodbye. Mary was confused at first and questioned Annie about coming to school. Annie told her she just couldn't go on anymore and hung up. Mary was scared, but remembered what we had talked about in class. She remembered that she needed to go to a trusted adult and tell them. She ran to the office and found the school psychologist and told her about the call. The psychologist called 911 and jumped in her car and drove to Annie's house. The paramedics got there within minutes and although Annie was in and out of consciousness, they were able to determine what she had taken and were able to save her life.

Later that day, Mary came to me and told me the story. She said everything she had learned on her Directing Change project came rushing back to her when Annie hung up the phone, and she knew exactly what she was supposed to do. I got tears in my eyes and told her she was a hero and gave her a big hug. I told her not many people can say they saved a life, but she can. Because Mary had learning disabilities, the film class she was enrolled in was hard for her. But she was able to grasp exactly what she needed to know to save her friend. I can honestly say the Directing Change contest was the most important and valuable curriculum we studied all year. Without Directing Change, Annie would probably not be alive.

Teacher
Los Angeles County

The Directing Change Program and Film Contest

engages young adults throughout California to learn about the warning signs for suicide, the importance of mental health, and how to help a friend through the creation of short films. Throughout the filmmaking process, participants are engaged via all methods of the “learning spectrum” to see, experience, discuss, and apply concepts learned about suicide prevention and mental health. These films are used in schools and communities to raise awareness and start conversations about these topics.

Directing Change Box Office Returns

86%

of youth learned proper response to a friend's suicide warning signs via program

58%

of youth encouraged someone going through a tough time to seek help

86%

agreed even people who seem successful can be hurting on the inside and thinking about suicide

9,000

youth participants since 2012

6,142

Number of films submitted by youth since 2012

325,372

Number of times films have been viewed online since 2012

CAMERA BRAND CAMERA • GLOBE EQUIPMENT ONLY

SUPER8 FILM STRIP • ISO 100 • HOLLWOOD PRODUCTIONS

Findings from a [cross-sectional case-control study by NORC at the University of Chicago](#) demonstrated knowledge, attitude and behavior changes:



Directing Change participants more frequently agreed that suicide is preventable, identified more warning signs and were more willing to encourage others to seek help, beyond their own social circles.

Directing Change participants are more willing to engage in conversation aimed at suicide prevention and have fewer attitudes that contribute to stigma about mental illness.



Teachers report impact on students and school climate such as gaining skills for dealing with mental health issues later in life, noticing social isolation, increased sense of safety and sensitivity to the feelings of others, and knowledge of how to connect peers with resources.

Directing Change provides an effective, tangible, and supportive way to generate open discussion about mental illness, prevent suicide, increase help-seeking, and to reduce stigma and discrimination.



2017-18 Program Highlights

Participation in Directing Change is the catalyst to increase conversations about mental health and suicide prevention in families, schools and communities.

Schools have implemented awareness weeks, broadcasts, and assemblies on these topics and films have been integrated into classroom curriculums.

375 educators representing **98** school districts trained on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in response to AB 2246 mandate.

2,430 program participants.

164 schools and organizations implemented program.

2 *What I Wish My Parents Knew* Parent Workshops hosted.

742 films created by youth for youth.

325 people were trained in suicide prevention and mental health messaging and applied training to judge films.

1,300 students and guests inspired at red carpet award ceremony in Los Angeles County.

276,149 and counting... number of times films have been viewed online.

"The biggest way in which making the film impacted us is the conversations that it opened up. Through the backdrop of filmmaking the three of us had some serious talks about the subject of suicide, its effect on our generation, and the effects it has had on each of us personally."

- Student, Riverside Poly High School- Riverside County

These initiatives are funded by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The program is implemented by Your Social Marketer, Inc.

 **EachMind MATTERS**
California's Mental Health Movement



For program information and to view films visit: www.directingchangeCA.org