



# Columbia University TeenScreen® Program

2005 Overview





**Dear Friends,**

**Suicide remains the third leading cause of death for adolescents.**

**In 2005 more than 400 communities across the country decided to do something in response to this public health crisis by offering voluntary mental health screenings. More than 55,000 parents allowed their teens to participate in a free TeenScreen mental health check-up.**

**An estimated 5,000 teens reported having difficulties with depression, anxiety or thoughts of suicide and met with a trained health professional to discuss their concerns. The parents of these teens all received information on how to obtain a formal diagnosis and if appropriate, access health services in their community.**

**This impressive accomplishment came as a result of the hard work and commitment of school social workers and nurses, community mental health professionals and school boards in 42 states. Program advocates donated time and money. Federal, state and local officials provided innovative support.**

**The first annual TeenScreen Conference, held in New York City in November, brought 175 of these champions together for the first time. Building on last year's success, we are already hard at work organizing the second national conference, planned for this coming fall.**

**Sadly 2005 also saw the passing of Bill Ruane, a most generous parent, partner and businessman who had the original vision to turn the science of screening into a national public health effort.**

**The last year also found the mental health community a target of an ongoing campaign against mental health initiatives, including screening and treatment services. It was heartening to see in every community where opposition was raised, school officials, community leaders, parents and the local media step forward to restate their support for TeenScreen and the youth and families it is helping.**

**In the coming year we look forward to helping current sites reach more teens at risk and working with new communities and organizations committed to youth mental health and suicide prevention.**



**Laurie Flynn  
Executive Director  
Columbia University TeenScreen Program**

## From Science to Service

Newly released data from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reveal that approximately 900,000 youths ages 12-17 made a plan to commit suicide during their worst or most recent episode of major depression, and 712,000 acted on that plan by attempting suicide.

The public health rationale for screening is based on the fact that the major risk factors for suicide (mood disorder, drug and alcohol abuse and previous suicide attempt) are identifiable; depressed or suicidal teens will self-identify if asked; most teens that are identified by screening are not already receiving help; and most who have problems with depression and suicidality as young adults screen positive as teens.

The TeenScreen Program is rooted in more than a decade of scientific research and pilot studies. This work began in the early 1990's under the direction of Dr. David Shaffer, head of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Columbia University. The first step was evaluation of the then current approaches to suicide prevention. This work led to the development of confidential questionnaires that studies have shown are effective in finding youth who are suffering from a mental illness or are at risk for suicide. Once the validity of these questionnaires was established, Columbia University began working with communities to help them provide free, confidential and voluntary mental health screenings.

**"I actually thought about hurting myself, not wanting to be here at all. There were a lot of signs that I just didn't realize then were that kind of a sign. I thought maybe it was just me growing up, being a teenager. I look back and kind of see this fog behind me of how bad things were and I can look back and, you know, just be very thankful that I'm out of that dark woods. That's what my dad and I call it."**

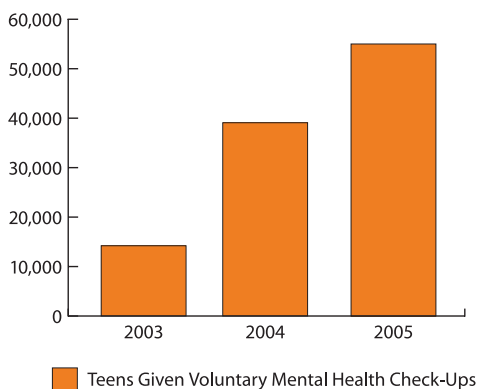
***Courtney  
Ninth Grader, Portland, Oregon***

Since 1999 more than 200,000 parents have been offered these free services and more than 100,000 teens have participated in screening.

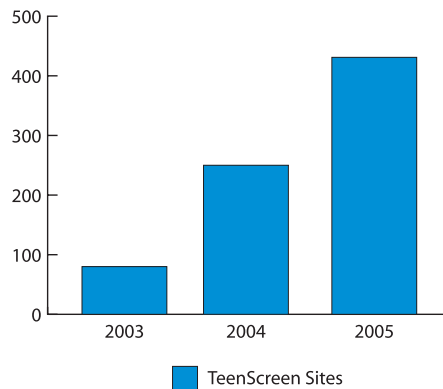
In 2005, with parental approval, more than 55,000 teens in 460 schools and other community settings were screened through the TeenScreen Program. Today free screenings are offered in public and private schools, physician's offices, community mental health centers, teen drop-in centers, foster care programs, residential treatment facilities and after-school programs.

The growth in the number of sites where screening is offered and the number of teens participating is a testament to the soundness of the research and the effectiveness of the program in identifying teens in need.

**More Than 55,000 Teens Participated in TeenScreen in 2005**



**More Than 200 New Screening Sites Opened in 2005**





Researchers at Columbia University continue to evaluate and improve the screening instruments and the screening effort. Dr. Madelyn Gould, PhD, MPH is one of the nation's leading authorities on preventing the news of one suicide from leading to another in what is sometimes called "copycat" or contagion suicides.

**"It is uncanny how accurate TeenScreen is. There were students whose parents said that they could be screened and we thought, ok, they're popular, involved in extracurricular activities, good family – all of that. And so initially, when some of the numbers were high and indicative of the (need for a) clinical interview, we thought, that can't be right. And then after the interview took place, they confirmed that yes (there was something going on with these youth). This program is so accurate and has been a life saving tool for our school and our students."**

*Madeline Allison*

*Director of Special Programs, Sealy, Texas Independent School District*

This year Dr. Gould published the findings of a study that examined whether asking about suicide during a screening program creates distress or increases thinking about suicide among high school students. Gould's research also looked at the impact of screening on students reporting signs of depression or substance abuse. In a study of 2,342 high school students published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* she found no evidence that screening increases risks to students. The study concluded that screening in high schools is a safe component of youth suicide prevention efforts. Dr. Gould has also been working closely with the TeenScreen Program in advising local school districts on how to best respond to a school suicide.



**"Very often (after a suicide)... schools that don't involve screening will say that they're going to identify the youngsters at-risk based on the level of closeness to the person who has died. What these findings show is that if you limit your definition of someone who is at high risk after a suicide to best or close friends, or even acquaintances or casual friends, you're going to miss a lot of people. The vast majority of youngsters who are the subsequent deaths in a cluster are those who are not best friends, acquaintances or casual friends (with the person who has died)... so these findings really do support why you would want to implement screening after a suicide."**

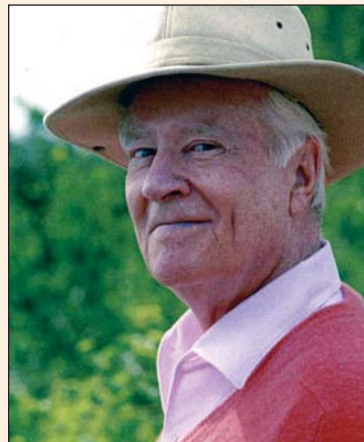
*Madelyn S. Gould PhD, MPH*

*Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Columbia University*

## **William J. Ruane (1925-2005) In Memoriam**

William J. Ruane provided the vision and energy that has made the Columbia University TeenScreen Program a success. Bill saw the potential to save lives in mental health screening and he was excited by the idea of bringing the results of research into communities. Simply stated, without Bill's generous support, this national program would not exist. He was a truly modest man and would have been embarrassed by our public recognition of his vital contribution to our work.

Bill Ruane was born in Chicago and was a true American success story. A member of the "greatest generation," he earned an engineering degree from the University of Minnesota and after service in the Navy attended Harvard Business School on the GI Bill. After nearly 20 years at Kidder Peabody he founded his own firm, Ruane Cuniff and Co., in 1969 and the Sequoia Fund soon followed. His prowess as one of Wall Street's premier money managers is reflected in the fact that the Sequoia Fund has consistently outperformed the stock market for over 40 years.



Amazing as this accomplishment is, it is his philanthropy that truly distinguished Bill. His outstanding generosity focused strongly on those who are disadvantaged in our society, especially children. Nearly always anonymous, Bill was a creative and consistent funder, looking for "partners" who shared his passion. Along with NARSAD, Save the Children, Boys Town, NAMI, the Children's Aid Society, the Archdiocese of New York, the Columbia University Medical Center, and especially the Department of Psychiatry were beneficiaries of Bill's desire to help vulnerable youth. In addition to his abiding support for mental health research and programs, Bill initiated literacy programs in Harlem and recently created a partnership with the New York City Department of Education.

Bill Ruane was a man of remarkable courage – cheerful in times of difficulty and always interested in others. His warmth made him a wonderful friend and he loved to laugh and share stories. But as a true investor, his eye was always on the bottom line. "How many kids have we screened?" he always asked. No matter the number, he always encouraged us to work harder and achieve more. As we prepare to welcome our 500th site, we hope Bill is proud of our progress. We are proud to have been his partners at TeenScreen.



## Leaders in the Effort

Though TeenScreen is tested, in many areas of the country it is still untried. The youth mental health movement in the United States is blessed with visionaries who are working hard to bring effective prevention efforts to our nation's teens. We made time during a very busy year to honor and remember three of these leaders that have advanced TeenScreen's suicide prevention efforts.

### Sharon Smith Outstanding Advocate

Through our experience we know that individual advocates make extraordinary things happen for our children, our communities and our families. Sharon Smith is a former teacher, a mother, an activist, and the wife of U.S. Senator Gordon Smith. Without the compassion, commitment and courage that Mrs. Smith and her family showed after the loss of their son, Garrett, we would not have the opportunity to celebrate the first-ever federal legislation supporting youth suicide prevention. Mrs. Smith, her husband and family took a personal tragedy and shared their experience with others so that their family's loss might save other young lives. It was an extraordinarily powerful message to all of us, to the U.S. Congress, to the President of the United States, and to families all across the country.

We are pleased that Mrs. Smith has joined us as an advocate at the national level by joining the TeenScreen National Advisory Council. In addition, Mrs. Smith shared with attendees at the first annual TeenScreen conference in New York City her personal story and thoughts on mental health screening.



**“How is it that everything could have appeared so calm and normal when underneath that young man a deadly tempest was brewing? Now we know that mental illness does not present in the same ways and in the same packages. While someone may appear to have a very difficult problem, others will look very normal, but actually be living a life of quiet desperation... I can only imagine now what a difference TeenScreen would have made in my Garrett's life. I believe that Garrett would be alive and well today and managing his mental health problems. And that he would be able to continue to have a wonderful life and I would be able to see him become a dad, and do all the things that you would want for your children... My friends, you are the soldiers on the front line of suicide prevention. There are Garretts sitting in your classrooms, playing on your ball fields, working in your businesses, living next door. We must do all that we can to continue our search to find those who are struggling with mental illness and help them. You can make the difference.”**

***Sharon Smith***  
***Advocate, Pendleton, Oregon***

The kind of personal advocacy her family has brought to this issue and the courage that she exemplifies lies at the heart of our effort and is an outstanding accomplishment. It was a privilege and honor to thank our Outstanding Advocate, Sharon Smith.

## **Michael Hogan, PhD**

### **Leadership Award**

Dr. Hogan is the Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and has also served as President of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. President Bush named Dr. Hogan to be the Chair of the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, which created a report that outlined the architecture of a responsible, reliable mental health system, and also highlighted the TeenScreen Program as a model program. Dr. Hogan exemplifies the kind of leadership that will make a difference in states across the country and that has certainly made a difference in Ohio where there are currently 68 screening sites in place. Because of his strong values, that promote a vision of recovery and encourage communities to adopt TeenScreen in Ohio, we were pleased and proud to honor Dr. Hogan with our first Leadership Award.

**“The way that I describe this (the problem of suicide) at home is to say, we just passed, tragically, the 2000th death of men and women of service in the war in Iraq. Well, since that war started, we’ve lost that many people in my state to suicide. In just one state – and where are the headlines?”**

*Michael Hogan, PhD*  
*Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health*

## **James McDonough**

### **Outstanding Public Partner**

Mr. McDonough is the Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections and previously served as the Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, which has been an important partner for the TeenScreen Program. Mr. McDonough also chairs the Florida Task Force on Suicide Prevention. Our partnership with his office and other entities in the state allowed for the opportunity to work through a system of organizations that focus on substance abuse and mental health issues, and led our work in Florida to be a success. We were pleased to thank Mr. McDonough for his great work and to honor him as our Outstanding Public Partner.

**“In the beginning, it became clear that there was a correlation between suicide and other risk factors like substance abuse. We learned from experts in this field, for example, of the 90 percent overlap between mental illness and suicide. Screening is important in that regard, especially for parents. It is the one vehicle that is well-researched, well-tested and can help parents.”**

*Jim McDonough*  
*Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections*



## Support at all Levels of Government

Many levels of government are stepping forward to help local communities implement and expand their TeenScreen programs.

### Federal Support

In September 2003, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act was signed into law. That legislation authorized funding for suicide prevention and early intervention initiatives, including voluntary mental health screening programs like TeenScreen. In September of last year, almost 40 grants totaling \$9.7 million were awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the federal agency charged with implementing the Garrett Lee Smith legislation. Four states - Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and New York - received grants for the implementation of mental health screening using the Columbia University TeenScreen Program.

Amidst very difficult and competitive budget negotiations, youth suicide prevention and campus mental health programs authorized under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act received an increase in funding, bringing the program's budget to \$27 million. The program was the only such initiative to receive a substantial increase in federal funding and this distinction recognizes the importance of our work.

**“Garrett’s law authorized \$82 million dollars over the next three years for youth suicide prevention and early intervention programs including voluntary, confidential screening programs like TeenScreen, a program my wife Sharon and I have been enthusiastic supporters of in our hometown of Pendleton, Oregon.”**

*Senator Gordon Smith  
Father; United States Senator, Pendleton, Oregon*

We remain grateful for the leadership and dedication of Oregon Senator Gordon Smith and his staff in advocating for this increase and a continued federal commitment to suicide prevention. We also thank the numerous legislators and our partners who joined us in supporting the authorization and continued prioritization of the valuable programs funded by this legislation.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also made several million dollars in grants in 2005 to study links between screening programs and community mental health services and the U.S. Department of Education issued grants to local school systems to also help link adolescents to services.

**“We have clearly secured a permanent foothold for suicide awareness and prevention in the transformation of our nation’s mental health system... Together, we can end the silence of suicide and eliminate the stigma of seeking lifesaving mental health services.”**

*Charles G. Curie, MA, ACSW  
Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

### State and Local Efforts

Education and mental health officials in a number of states are also providing assistance to community-based screening programs. Florida, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Mexico and New York are among the states providing coordination and technical assistance to TeenScreen sites. In addition, 35 states include mental health screening as part of their state suicide prevention plan. Many county and city governments and school districts around the country are now active in supporting the use of screening to prevent suicide and improve teen mental health.



## A National Partnership for Prevention

Last November, 175 registrants from 40 states attended the first annual TeenScreen conference in New York City. The conference, titled “A National Partnership for Prevention,” featured prominent mental health researchers and federal and state officials who presented the latest findings on the scientific evidence for screening, federal and state support for local screening initiatives and best practices for local site development, community support and case management.

The second day of the conference began with a “Breakfast of Champions” where the first annual site award winners were announced.

On the first evening of the conference, attendees were welcomed at a reception hosted by the Sallie Foundation, founded in memory of Sallie Kuflik. The event featured actress Tatum O’Neill and was attended by approximately one hundred supporters of the Sallie Foundation. The foundation’s president and Sallie’s brother, Mitch Kuflik, delivered remarks at the conference closing luncheon:

“Even the kids themselves often don’t know the situation that they are in and the risk that they are in,” Kuflik said. “I don’t know the extent to which Sallie even, as much pain as she was in, really understood that suicide was an actual possibility. The fact that all of you are out there finding these kids, to me it’s a very heroic effort. No different than the people we see on TV, the rescue workers - it’s absolute heroism and I am very humbled and very proud to be part of this group and part of this program that is throwing out a life preserver to all of these thousands of kids who desperately need it.”

### Site Awards

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Four TeenScreen sites and their program coordinators were singled out at the first annual TeenScreen conference for their accomplishments:

**TeenScreen Innovation Award** -*For outstanding development of community support and site expansion*

Michael Brose, MSW  
Mental Health Association (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

**TeenScreen Innovation Award** -*For using the resources of a traditional suicide hotline service to find teens before there is a crisis*

Margie Wright, LMSW  
Suicide and Crisis Center (Dallas, Texas)

**TeenScreen Outreach Award** -*For expanding screening programs in Clark County, the nation’s fastest growing school district*

Gary Waters  
Nevada State Board of Education (Clark County, Nevada)

**Model TeenScreen Program** -*For integrating the screening program into a city’s mental health services system and piloting screening in physician’s offices*

Marian Sheridan, RN  
Fond du Lac School District (Fond du Lac, Wisconsin)



## National Organizations Supporting Screening

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Managed Behavioral Healthcare Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation  
Children and Adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Consumer Organizing and Networking Technical Assistance Center  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Girls and Boys Town  
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services  
International Society of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses  
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Education Association  
National Empowerment Center  
National Mental Health Association  
National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse  
President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health  
School Social Work Association of America  
Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network USA  
Tara National Association for Personality Disorders  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



# TeenScreen National Advisory Committee

**Anne Bass**

Advocate

**Marilyn Benoit, M.D.**

Immediate Past President,  
American Academy of Child &  
Adolescent Psychiatry

**Deeda Blair**

Director Emeritus, Albert and  
Mary Laskar Foundation

**Robert Boorstin**

Senior Vice President, Center  
for American Progress

**Terry Branstad**

President, Des Moines University  
Governor of Iowa, 1982-1999

**Robert Chase**

Immediate Past President,  
National Education Association

**Nancy Domenici**

Advocate

**Patty Duke**

Actress and Author

**Joe English, M.D.**

Chairman, Department of  
Psychiatry & Behavioral  
Sciences, St. Vincent  
Catholic Medical Center

**Stephen Graham**

Advocate

**Michael F. Hogan, Ph.D.**

Director, Ohio Department  
of Mental Health  
Chair, President's New  
Freedom Commission on  
Mental Health

**Mitchell Kuflik**

Partner, Brahman Capital  
Corporation

**Constance Lieber**

President & CEO, National  
Alliance for Research on  
Schizophrenia and Depression

**Stephen Lieber**

Chairman, Saxon Woods  
Advisors, LLC

**James McDonough**

Secretary, Florida Department  
of Corrections

**Suzanne Murphy**

Advocate

**Sylvia Nasar**

Knight Professor of Business  
Journalism, Columbia University

**Robert Nau**

Vice Chairman, American  
Foundation for Suicide  
Prevention

**Herbert Pardes, M.D.**

President & CEO, New York  
Presbyterian Hospital

**Father Val Peter, J.C.D., S.T.D.**

Executive Director Emeritus,  
Girls and Boys Town

**Robert Postlethwait**

Former Commissioner,  
President's New Freedom  
Commission on Mental Health

**Kenneth Purdy**

Former Chairman, Prime  
Tanning

**Rona Purdy**

Past President, National  
Alliance for the Mentally Ill

**Jeanne Robertson**

Advocate

**Joy Ruane**

Advocate

**William J. Ruane**

1925-2005  
Founder, Columbia University  
TeenScreen Program

**David Shaffer, F.R.C.P.,  
F.R.C., Psych.**

Director, Division of Child  
and Adolescent Psychiatry,  
Columbia University

**Michael Silverberg, J.D.**

Senior Litigation Partner,  
Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin,  
Krim & Ballon

**Sharon Smith**

Advocate

**Robert Sobel**

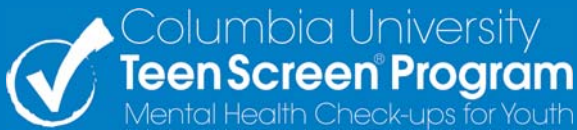
Partner, Brahman Capital  
Corporation

**Michael Usdan**

Senior Fellow, Institute for  
Educational Leadership

**Mary Wallace**

Advocate



### **For More Information**

Please contact us if you would like to receive more information about bringing mental health screening to your community, or if you would like to receive our Site Development Workbook to begin the site development process.

The Columbia University  
TeenScreen Program  
1775 Broadway, Suite 715  
New York, NY 10019  
Tel: 1-866-TeenScreen  
1-866-833-6727  
Fax: 646-443-8190

Web site: [www.teenscreen.org](http://www.teenscreen.org)  
E-mail: [teenscreen@childpsych.columbia.edu](mailto:teenscreen@childpsych.columbia.edu)

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