



ERIK'S CAUSE

*Kids like Erik are dying every week –
YOU CAN HELP!*

“Help Stop the Choking Game”

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2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Another exciting year! A special thanks to those who have generously donated. Your dollars allow us to travel to conferences, teach in communities, and stem the tide of this deadly activity. It is heartbreaking that kids still die from this senseless and preventable "game." We continue our dialogue in the press and at conferences, as well as working with schools and communities to integrate awareness.

We invite your help to continue our efforts:

Please consider us among your charitable causes ... share our efforts with family and friends.

Tax-Deductible Donations of any amount are appreciated and can be made at

www.erikscause.org/donate

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Your ideas are as vital as financial support.

Please send suggestions via return email or to erikscause@gmail.com

January:

- We were invited to provide our experience for ***Health and Safety: A Practical Guide Forward*** by David Anderson and Richard Miller, a book for practitioners and students to design communication efforts. Throughout the book are "Messages from the Field" ... practical tips from a variety of contributors demonstrating theories in action. Erik's Cause contributed with Messages from the Field in two chapters: Approaches and A Public Presence (Chapter 5 (Approaches), pp. 13-14, and Chapter 10 (A Public Presence), pp. 22-23).

March:

- **Iron County, UT:** Our program has been in their schools for three years now ... still going strong. Shared some student outcome data with the School Board showing the program's success! Met with teachers for a refresher and feedback. Everyone is thrilled with the results of our training in their community! Also met with officials in neighboring Washington and Beaver Counties to let them know what we have to offer.

April:

- **SAMSHA - Rockville, MD:** We presented our data and training to the staff of SAMSHA's Center for Mental Health Services which was well received.
- **Pittsburgh, PA:** We presented our material to a diverse audience of educational, mental health and law enforcement professionals.

May:

- Hundred, WV: Hundred High School school resource officer discovered kids participating in this activity and taught our program after being trained by us. Students thanked him afterward saying they didn't realize the dangers.
- Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE): We presented an update with new data as well as our training program to about 100 educational administrators from across Los Angeles County at LACOE's Student Support Services quarterly meeting. We remain a resource for LACOE's Student Support Services Division and the 80+ districts who utilize their services.

July:

- CA Safe Schools Conference: We presented a break-out session at the Safe Schools Annual Conference which was well-attended and we've received inquiries from some attendees for further details.

August:

- Program Development: Building upon our context that "Knowledge is Power" we significantly expanded the student program, "upping" our game with additional cutting edge material to help students make even healthier choices! We also revised the pre and post surveys to capture more effective data.

September:

- Iron County, UT: In preparation for their fourth year using our program, we met with the teaching/counseling staff to roll out our new, expanded program. They were very excited and those who have already taught it report that the kids love it too!
- Northwest Hospital Council of Ohio: This wonderful non-profit helps communities with both physical and mental health issues in approximately 44 counties, mostly in Ohio. Part of their services include surveying students. They recently added our choking game question to their student survey which will reach between 5,000 and 30,000 students. We look forward to the results!
- Lennox School District, CA: We presented our student and parent program to the Lennox School District's staff.

October:

- Basking Ridge, NJ: Two presentations made for consideration of implementation: (i) William Annin Middle School and (ii) Pingry School.

November:

- Basking Ridge, NJ: Pingry School decided to move forward immediately with implementation before Thanksgiving and the teachers taught six middle school Health classes. They found the material very user friendly and report that the students were engaged and gained a lot. Plans to continue with remaining middle school Health classes throughout the school year. Discussions also underway to do a community/parent presentation in 2018. Implementation is still being considered by William Annin Middle School.

December:

- Updated Data Doc (attached): Building upon our earlier data document, we've added new data from the four states that have used the CDC's optional choking game question in their Youth Risk Assessment Survey (YRBS). The results are astonishing! See the attached "Data Drives a Compelling Need" for details.
- Proposal to CDC: We are submitting a proposal to revise the CDC's current optional YRBS choking game question along with the rationale to request that they move the question from their optional question list to the regular YRBS.

Stay tuned for 2018 ... !

Our efforts are making a difference and we will continue to work with schools and communities to increase and integrate awareness.

A special thanks to the generosity of those who have donated. Your dollars allow us to travel to conferences, teach in communities, and stem the tide of this deadly activity. It is seven years since Erik died from this "game." We are heartbroken that kids are still dying from this senseless activity which is preventable through education.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season!  ***Judy***