



ERIK'S CAUSE

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

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“Help Stop the Choking Game”

2014 Highlights and a Peek at 2015 Plans

We've had quite a year in 2014 with reach as far away as Romania, Spain, and Australia! 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.

2015 brings exciting opportunities to explore grant opportunities and strategize ways to collect statistical data to demonstrate the need for prevention education that is so evident anecdotally in the news and across the internet.

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**

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Your ideas are as vital as financial support.

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

Highlights of 2014 include:

- **Formal Implementation of Our Curriculum:** In Cedar City/Iron County School District (Utah) for 5th, 7th, and 10th Grade Health Classes! Statistics from the pilot classes in March showed 8% of 7th graders admit to having played it and 35% know of others who have played it. As one counselor said, "The numbers are always larger than those who actually admit it on paper!"
- **Pre and Post Training Surveys on Survey Monkey:** To aid in the collection of data from presentations being monitored and stored by an independent party, School Security Roundtable.
- **Application for NIJ Grant:** This federal grant proposal was to develop knowledge about school safety. We knew it was a long shot ... even though the grant was not awarded, the gifts of new talent joining our efforts and a sharper focus of our goals was well-worth the process. Special thanks to Trish Russell, MD, David Anderson, PhD, Thomas Andrew, MD and School Security Roundtable in addition to Jennifer Wood, Mike Bleak and Amy Bleak (our Iron County partners) for their invaluable efforts in this process. A truly collaborative effort and a very positive step forward.
- **Formidable Press:** The main page of Yahoo as well as an incredible KSL (Utah) segment highlighting the bold efforts of Cedar City to be the first in the nation to formally address this problem, as well as other interviews across the country. More exciting press expected in early 2015!
- **UC Davis Medical Center Study:** Spearheaded by Kendall Butler, RN. Stephanie and Judy presented trainings to approximately 400 middle and high school students in Utah and Northern California at which data was collected. Initial raw data shows significant impact of our training. Report expected to be published sometime in 2015. A special thanks to Kendall and Eric Butler, whose work provides a vitally needed study to help decision-makers understand the magnitude of the issue as well as provide the first measure of the impact of our curriculum.
- **Bi-Lingual Presentations:** Hawthorne School District (CA) generously translated all our material into Spanish so we could present our education to parents as well as children in their district. We are

continuing to do this during the current school year, and we are allowed to use the program in Spanish and English elsewhere as needed.

- **Los Angeles County Office of Education:** ("LACOE") invited us to present to decision-makers, as well as train school nurses and counselors. We also briefed the County Coordinators for Child Welfare and Attendance for the Southern half of California.
- **San Bernardino Unified School District:** Awareness/briefings to counselors and CWA personnel. Efforts to continue in 2015.
- **International Symposium:** Paris, France, sponsored by APEAS. Presentations by Stephanie Small, LMFT, Judy Rogg, and Det. Mike Bleak (among many others).
- **Law Enforcement Awareness:** Detective Mike Bleak continued his incredible training efforts and has elevated awareness to the law enforcement community.
- **And Much More ...:** We keep detailed progress updates of all our endeavors. The above reflect major highlights. Additional detail is available.

Initial Plans for 2015:

The recent feedback from the NIJ grant evaluators underscores the crucial need to collect statistical data to prove the wide scope of the problem. But the "Catch-22" remains: studies are needed to collect the data in order to study it; but one needs existing data to demonstrate the need for the studies. Anecdotal data appears to be insufficient to win over decision-makers. We will be strategizing to determine how best to achieve this. Current plans include:

- **Monitor Progress in Iron County, UT:** Data gathered will aid in further development of our program and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program by comparing pre and post tests results to measure statistical significance
- **Explore Opportunities for a Multi-Year Grant:** Evidence-based research is the crux of what will help to break down barriers to implementing education in schools.
- **Follow Up with Interested Locations for Education:** Currently include Southern Ohio, Bakersfield/Kern River area and several counties in Utah, as well as a possible opportunity to provide training in Ventura County, CA. Data collection from these areas will be important to demonstrate widespread need for education.
- **Risk Assessment Surveys:** Team members are helping develop question(s) for potential integration into state risk assessment survey in Utah. If successful, will follow-up with other states.
- **LACOE and San Bernadino County Professionals:** Continue to provide trainings, and hopefully expand to Ventura County.
- **Attend Conferences:** To be determined and as funding permits.
- **UC Davis Medical Center Study:** Expected publication in 2015. Excited to see the results and where we can go from here!!

As the 5-year anniversary of Erik's death approaches (April 2015), I am humbled by all of the incredible and talented people who have joined this journey and their amazing contributions to move our education forward ... each in his or her own way. This has been, and continues to be, a collaborative evolution. I am truly indebted for everything each of you has contributed. I remain grateful for your continued support and welcome both your financial donations and ideas for future growth.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful and safe 2015. Happy Holidays! ❤️ Judy