

Taking Our Mission to Boise

ADVOCACY ACTION DAY 2026



Every year, AFSP chapters across the country come together for Advocacy Action Days—an opportunity for volunteers to visit their state capitols, meet with legislators, and share the importance of AFSP's mission. These conversations highlight the power of personal stories, the value of human connection, and the critical need for the policies we support each spring. During this year's Advocacy Day, all lawmakers were invited to join us, and we were grateful to host a wonderful catered lunch that created space for meaningful dialogue and connection.

Following this impactful day, House Bill 860 was officially signed into law on April 1, 2026—restoring full access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for Idaho youth. This marks a significant victory for our advocacy efforts and, more importantly, for the communities we serve.

Light the Night for Hope



What an incredible evening of connection, compassion, and community.
On April 29, we partnered with the Organization of Student Social Workers at Boise State University to host Light the Night for Hope—bringing together over 200 attendees to raise awareness for suicide prevention and mental health.

Because of this amazing community, we raised $6,000 to support the AFSP Idaho Chapter and our lifesaving work across the state.

To everyone who attended, donated, volunteered, and helped make this night possible—thank you. You are helping us build a future where no one has to face their darkest moments alone.



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

A time to come together, raise awareness, and take action to support mental health and prevent suicide in our communities. Through education, connection, and conversation, we can all play a role in saving lives.

This month, the Idaho Chapter is offering several opportunities to get involved, learn, and make an impact:



PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Thursday, May 14
Idaho Virtual Talk Saves Lives
6:00–7:00 PM MST
This signature AFSP program provides an introduction to suicide prevention, including risk factors, warning signs, and practical steps you can take to help someone in need.

Register Here for Talk Saves Lives

Tuesday, May 19
Talk Saves Lives – Construction
4:00–5:00 PM MST
This specialized version focuses on the construction industry, a field with one of the highest suicide rates. Learn how to recognize warning signs and bring life-saving conversations to job sites and workplaces.

Register for Construction Training

AFSP 101 — VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

AFSP 101 Volunteer Orientation brings our community together to learn about AFSP's work, our local chapter, and the many ways to get involved in suicide prevention.

Monday, May 18
AFSP 101 Volunteer Orientation
5:00–6:00 PM MST
Register for Volunteer 101

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Looking to get more involved locally?

Apply to Volunteer

We encourage you to attend a program, invite a friend or colleague, and help expand the reach of these important conversations. Together, we can create a culture that's smart about mental health.



Construction Safety Week (May 4-8, 2026)

Construction Safety Week is an ideal time for companies across Idaho to take action.



Hard Hat Courage brings suicide prevention and mental health awareness directly to construction workers—one of the highest-risk industries. By starting conversations on job sites, we can help break stigma and connect workers to support.

Contact Emma Laney at elaney@afsp.org or 475-208-8973 to invite a Hard Hat Courage training to your job site and be part of this important effort.

Board Spotlight

RYAN EDEN - IDAHO CHAPTER BOARD TREASURE



Ryan brings more than 27 years of leadership experience in construction development and management to his role as Vice President at Betacom, where he focuses on strategic planning, performance optimization, and delivering data-driven results. Alongside his professional accomplishments, Ryan is deeply committed to advancing the mission of AFSP.

Ryan's connection to AFSP is rooted in personal loss. He lost his mother to suicide. She was a loving parent, devoted grandmother, and an elementary school secretary who spent her career advocating for children. Her passing left a lasting impact and a search for understanding.

Years later, Ryan faced another heartbreaking moment when a close friend's teenage son died by suicide. As one of the first people their family reached out to, Ryan was reminded how often people struggle silently and how easily signs of distress can be missed.

These experiences transformed his perspective and inspired him to take action.

Today, Ryan is dedicated to turning his pain into purpose—advocating for greater awareness, supporting individuals and families affected by suicide, and helping to ensure no one feels alone in their darkest moments. Through his work with AFSP, he is committed to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention | JED The Jed Foundation

AFSP and JED Merge

TO BOOST SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and The Jed Foundation (JED) are taking a major step forward in suicide prevention efforts nationwide. Both organizations are excited to announce the intent to merge as equals to form AFSP/JED, the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to preventing suicide across the lifespan and bringing hope to those affected by suicide loss or risk.

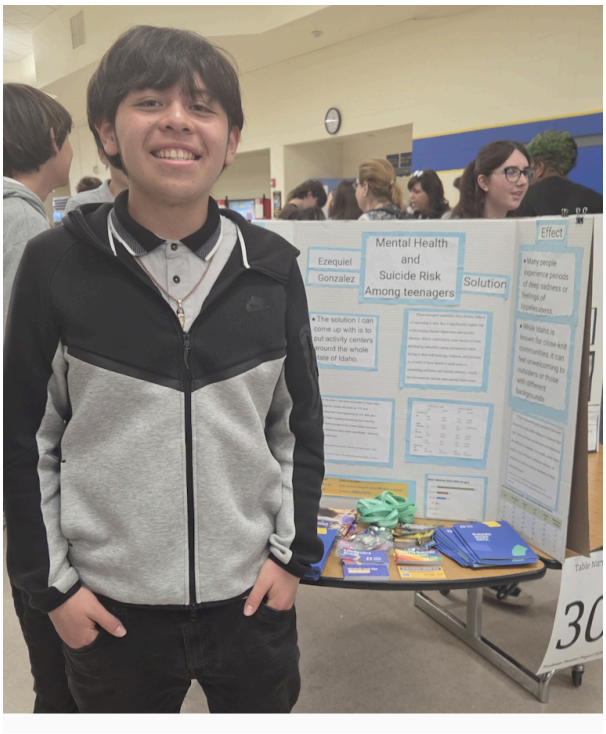
AFSP/JED will unite unique resources, approaches, and expertise to drive measurable impact. With a $75M operating budget, the organization aims to strengthen mental health systems, support those affected by suicide, and advance evidence-based solutions across the country.

Together, we can create a future where everyone has the support they need to thrive.

Learn more about this exciting new chapter here: Read more



You can request and bring programs to your community spaces — from schools to workplaces, community gatherings, Rotary clubs and more. The Idaho Chapter is here for you. To learn more visit afsp.org/idaho.



Ryan and Shelly recently visited Caldwell High School after receiving an invitation from a 9th-grade student, Ezequiel Gonzalez. As part of their Passion Project—a problem-solution research project completed by all ninth graders—Ezequiel chose to focus on teen mental health and suicide risk. He reached out to the AFSP Idaho Chapter on his own and invited us to attend his presentation. It was inspiring to see a young student take initiative on such an important topic, and it reflects the kind of community engagement we love to highlight.



Event Information

The Treasure Valley Out of the Darkness Walk will take place on October 3, 2026 at Kleiner Park in Meridian, ID. Check-in begins at 9:00 AM, with the walk starting at 10:15 AM. This free, non-competitive 1–3 mile event brings the community together

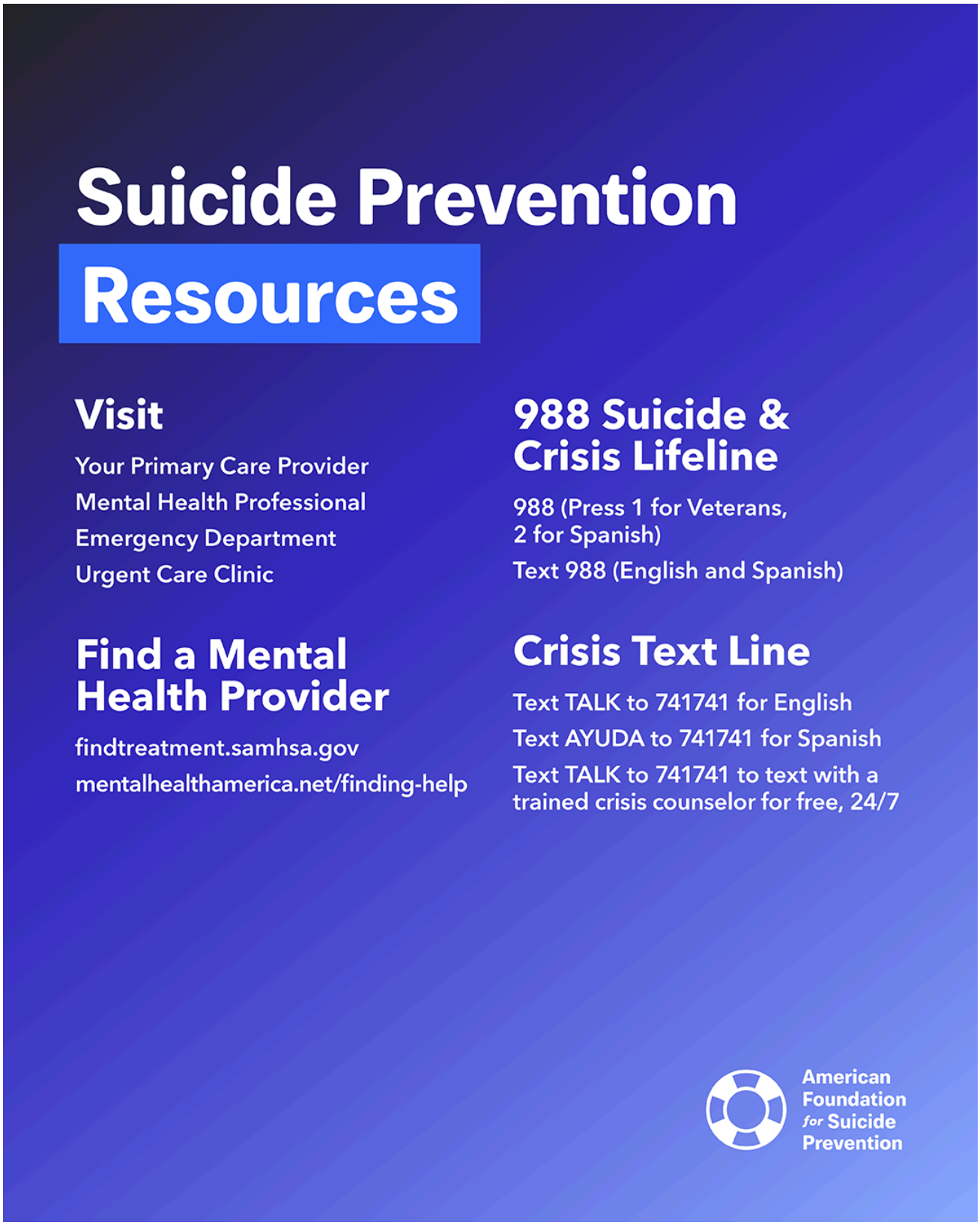
for a morning of hope, healing, and suicide prevention, featuring a short program, activities, and resources.

Learn more and register now here:

Read more

Get Involved

We welcome individuals and groups to support the Walk by volunteering on event day or joining a planning committee—an impactful way to give back and connect with the community. You can also bring people together by forming a team, helping to build connections, raise awareness, and increase your fundraising impact. Local businesses and organizations are invited to partner with us as sponsors and play a vital role in advancing mental health initiatives.



Why Our Work Matters in Idaho

Suicide remains a critical public health issue in Idaho, ranking as the 7th leading cause of death statewide. For younger Idahoans, the impact is even more severe—suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 15–44. In 2023 alone, 460 Idahoans

died by suicide, with a rate of 23.34 per 100,000 people, significantly higher than the national average.

Access to care continues to be a major challenge. 74% of communities in Idaho lack enough mental health providers, leaving many individuals without the support they need during difficult times. The consequences are profound—not only in lives lost, but in the ripple effects felt by families, friends, and entire communities.

The Idaho Chapter is working to change this. Through community education, advocacy, and outreach programs, we're expanding awareness, promoting early intervention, and supporting those affected by suicide. Every training delivered, every conversation started, and every life reached brings us closer to a future where fewer Idahoans struggle alone.

A Closing Note from our Board:

Through our work with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, I believe we can bring hope and save lives. When we share our stories, create space for open conversations, and lead with compassion, we make it easier for others to reach out and find support.

Thank you for being part of this effort. Together, we are making a meaningful difference.

— Ryan Eden, Idaho Chapter Board Treasure