

Dear Battle Ground Community Members,

Our youngest generations possess enormous power to create healthier communities - perhaps more than any generation alive. They are energetic purveyors of optimism and resilience. Our job is to unlock their power by helping them share their stories. The [Sources of Strength](#) program is an evidence based, peer led, youth suicide prevention program. It improves youth culture and population level norms through school wide positive messaging campaigns that promote engagement with Hope, Help and Strength. It has been successfully transforming lives, student social networks and communities in North America for over two decades.

The program begins by identifying caring, connected and positive volunteer adult advisors within the school and community. These volunteers partner with staff and teachers to identify a diverse group of influential students from the different social groups in the student body. The Adult Advisors receive 4-6 hours of training. They then join with a nationally certified trainer to spend a day training Peer Leaders. The Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders become a team that meets bi-weekly throughout the year to continue learning, sharing and carrying out positive messaging campaigns to spread hope, help and strength. This generates new norms and a positive culture shift. [Statistically, there is a 400% increase in help seeking behavior, increases in healthy coping attitudes and increases in connections to adults.](#)

Last school year, we reached a milestone. All seven traditional middle schools in the Battle Ground School District have participated in their first year of the three year [Sources of Strength](#) implementation process. Some schools have finished their second year and are starting year three this fall. This year, [Connect BG](#) hopes to partner with our high schools and alternative schools making a total of eleven student populations partnering together to generate positivity, awareness and engagement.

For the last few years, this program has been paid for by grant money from several sources. That money is no longer available. For most schools, the program cost is \$5000.00. That does not include supplies, substitute teacher costs, or food at trainings. Because we have a national trainer in our community, we can save on travel and administrative costs for the program. All told, the budget for eleven schools is \$32,850.00.

Connect BG is looking for financial supporters to cover this cost. We hope to identify five people or organizations who will contribute \$80.00 per month, fifteen who will contribute \$40.00 per month, forty who will contribute \$20.00 per month and ninety five who will contribute \$10.00 per month. These one hundred and fifty five people or organizations will cover the cost of the most studied and successful youth suicide prevention program currently operating.

Youth suicide and the depression, anxiety, substance abuse and loneliness associated with it can be significantly reduced. However, just like heart disease, we will not solve the problem through crisis response alone. We need an upstream prevention approach that creates new norms around healthy coping in response to stressors. We need to *promote* health, not just respond to illness. [Sources of Strength](#) does exactly that. By focusing on shared stories of eight strengths (family support, positive friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, spirituality, medical access and mental health), we create a proactive culture of strength. This is the culture in which we grow a hopeful, connected, and strong generation.

Will you be part of the upstream solution?

Thank You!

Curtis Miller - Director, Connect BG | National Trainer, Sources of Strength