



THE LIGHTHOUSE REPORT

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

www.erikaslighthouse.org



A Letter From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am overjoyed to announce that in roughly two months I am going to become a mother for the first time. The process of bringing a child into the world has been exhilarating, and if I am being totally honest, quite terrifying, too! Very soon I am going to be responsible for another human life, and with that, I have felt a burning desire in my belly (literally!) for reevaluation. I have found myself asking big, important questions like, "What do I want for my life and what must I do, change or release to get there?"

It's funny because in the last year, I have been able to draw some striking parallels with my pregnancy journey and the path Erika's Lighthouse has taken. For Erika's Lighthouse, the last eighteen months have been all about reevaluation, change and making room for the new. Just as I have been asking big, important questions, so has Erika's Lighthouse, and our future has never looked so bright.

Last summer, with the help of my staff and board, we set a vision to become a leading provider of teen depression awareness programs and resources in middle school and high school communities. This new and far reaching vision has taken our work into a

beautifully inclusive and expansive direction. As we begin to think about being a leading provider, we are now challenging ourselves to ask the kinds of questions that will truly enable us to trailblaze our field. Questions like, "How can we create programs that are engaging, impactful and relevant to students from diverse communities? How can we continue to bring the most cutting edge ideas about depression awareness and mental health into schools while respecting their system, needs and standards? And, how can we continue to provide materials in the most accessible format as possible?"

One of our most promising initiatives of the year has been birthing *The Lighthouse Curriculum: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students*, which will be launching this fall. This video-based high school classroom curriculum shares a new story of mental health, one that's inclusive, accessible and empowering. *The Lighthouse Curriculum* seeks to open up conversations about mental health, provides students with opportunities to better understand what it's like to have depression, and informs students of where they can get help if worried about themselves or a friend. The program will also teach students research-based methods for reducing stress and practical ideas for supporting well-being. Please take a moment to watch our 90-second trailer and find out more about *The Lighthouse Curriculum* by visiting: www.erikaslighthouse.org/teen-depression-training.

They say, "It takes a village to raise a child." I guess I will find out very soon whether or not that is true! What I do know is that it takes a village to actualize our shared mission to Get Depression Out of the Dark. You are the reason we can trailblaze, lead and make a difference in our small sector of society - improving the mental health of our teens.

As you flip through the rest of this report, I hope you are proud and inspired. I know I am. We can't thank you enough for your unwavering love and support. If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved or make a donation, please visit our website at www.erikaslighthouse.org.

With deep gratitude,

Heather Freed, LCSW
Executive Director

Our Mission

Erika's Lighthouse is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating and raising awareness about depression, encouraging good mental health, and breaking down the stigma that surrounds mental health issues.

OUR TEAM

Board of Directors

Beth Brady
Deedee Brannigan
Craig Colmar
Eileen Sheehan Hovey
Linda Monico
Virginia Neuckranz, Co-Founder
Thomas H. Neuckranz, Co-Founder
Kathleen Kelly Spear
Elaine Tinberg
Barbara Bruck Williams

Executive Council

Jill Axline
Dianna Devine
Katie Gierke
Kathleen Hooper
Avril Klaff
Ghita Lapidus
Lauren Laughlin
Shira Lichtenstein
Scott Lieberman
Fleury Linn
Sally Lou Loveman
Heather McPhilliamy
Martina Mead
Gayl Monto
Kari Osier
Jeni Spinney

At Large

Cate Barron
Jan Bawden
Sally McQuillen
Eve Perri
Karen Peters
Maggie Stewart
Robin Lehrfeld Subar

Professional Advisory Board

Penny Powers Beitler, M.S., L.M.F.T.
David C. Clark, Ph.D.
Dan C. Daly, M.S.
Tom Golebiewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Lauren Gumbiner
Jason LaHood, Psy.D.

Deborah Lazar, M.L.S.
Melissa Perrin, Psy.D.
Alec Ross, L.C.S.W.
Father Charles Rubey, L.C.S.W.
David Schreiber, M.D.
Daniel Schwartz, Ed.D.
Sharon Weingarten, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.

Young Adult Board

Meara Fallon
Jessica Jones
Andrew Komnick
James Litzow
Andrew McCarthy
Clare Monhart
Rolando Montoya-Rodriguez

Daniel Passerella
Alexandra Perraud
Danielle Spiekhoort

Staff

Heather Freed, LCSW, Executive Director
Sarah Griebler, Director of Program Development
Peggy Kubert, MA, LCSW, Director of Education
Jennifer Lande, Office Administrator
Emily McGlawn, MBA, Digital Marketing Manager
Kristina Kins, Intern

2016 IN NUMBERS

76,976

Total teens
educated

1,335

Total adults
educated

3,681

Total general
education

TOTAL IMPACT:
81,992

OUR COMMUNITIES



24 STATES

Teaching Erika's Lighthouse curricula:
California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

Total foreign countries teaching ELH programs:
2 - Denmark and Mongolia

127

Total communities
served

184

Total schools &
organizations served

OUR WEBSITE



288

Total Parent Handbook
website downloads



131,600

Total website
visitors

OUR PROGRAMS

16

Total teen clubs

184

Total curricula
programs

51

Total Teen Panel
programs & Training

21

Total adult
programs

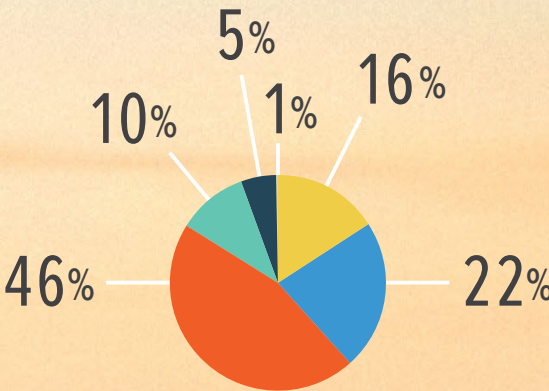
7

Total general
awareness programs

279

Total programs

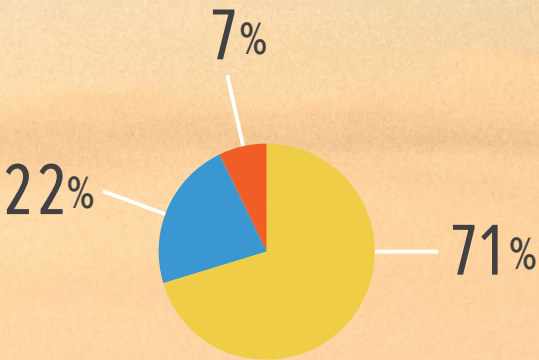
OUR FINANCIALS



\$415,760

INCOME

- Donations \$66,732
- Chicago Marathon \$93,522
- Fall Appeal \$189,299
- Grants \$43,199
- Outside Fundraisers \$22,527
- Other \$481



\$402,394

EXPENSES

- Programming \$283,891
- General and Administrative \$90,100
- Fundraising \$28,403



MAC'S STORY

Mac is a former recipient of Erika's Lighthouse programming and a mental health advocate.

I grew up queer, just as I grew up with depression.

Neither are separable from any aspect of my life and as such both experiences can be viewed through linked lenses. This is important to point out mainly because I think that people sometimes don't quite understand how profoundly mental health and LGBT identities impact the course of, and how one views, their lives in their entirety—and not just the parts most closely affected. I think about it like a nuclear blast, in a sense. There's the ground zero, and the most affected zones, and then less affected zones, but the radiation still spreads over the entire world.

Knowledge is power. Time stops for no one. These are pretty descriptive of what's helped me move forward. **The first - knowledge is power.** It's a common phrase for a reason. Before I got involved with Erika's Lighthouse, I didn't have the understanding to be able to change my situation. I remember alternately praying that I would wake up and I had the right body and praying that I wouldn't wake up at all. It depended on whether the days felt heavy due to having untreated depression—or if the days were ones pulled down by the intensity of my gender dysphoria; people not seeming to get that I wasn't a girl. I just didn't know. And so I spent most of my life just waiting for time to keep pushing forward, as it always does.

What Erika's Lighthouse gave me was a voice. It gave me a way to fight back against the frustratingly intangible issue that mental health is. It gave me a small sense of community with a peer group during a time that I didn't have a safe space to retreat to, with school and home and sports all being so deeply entangled with my struggle with my gender or depression. It gave me a positive relationship with multiple fantastic adults in my life, as well as with people who worked in the mental health field.

It also gave me a better lens with which to look at time. **Time stops for no one**, and just as I had gotten through all the days before, my ability to see the days ahead became better and better until I stopped feeling like I had a cap on my vision. I am not the person that I was when this journey started, but I was given the keys to the ways to keep going. Knowledge is power. Time stops for no one. And life does indeed get better.



Getting involved with ELH was an amazing way for me and other teenagers to understand that depression was not something to be ashamed of, but rather a topic we must further discuss. Everyone deserves good mental health, and organizations like this one are giving hope to those who need it. I will always be grateful for being apart of this project that continues to impact many teenagers.

Edgar Avalos, Teen Panel Participant from Rolling Meadows High School



Students throughout Los Angeles Unified School District have received Erika's Lighthouse curriculum and have engaged in learning about teen depression, stigma associated to mental health, and coping skills. The program is easily accessible and provides all the materials needed for implementation. The students, school staff and parents that have been provided with the lessons have expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the program.

Ely Mena, Los Angeles Unified School District, Licensed Social Worker



It has been an honor to be involved with Erika's Lighthouse for the past 4 years, in assisting them with program evaluations of their RTAAD and TDSHH programs. The initial outcomes for both programs are promising, and reflect the ground-up, evidence-informed approach of the EL team. I love working with practitioners and program designers who are heavily invested in making their work relevant and evidence-informed, and the EL team is simply one of the best groups I've ever worked with. I look forward to seeing their work continue to help families, students, and schools understand how to handle the complex issues related to depression and youth suicide.

Michael S. Kelly PhD, LCSW, Associate Professor, Family and School Partnership Program Director, Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work



When you lose a loved one to suicide, it can feel different from other types of loss, making the bereavement and healing process a bit more complex and challenging. There really is no easy way to describe it. For me, being a part of Erika's Lighthouse has served as an outlet for grief after my father's suicide - it's educated me about depression, enabled me to speak my truth and encouraged me to stand up against stigma and bring light to mental illness. As a survivor of suicide loss and now an advocate for mental health, I will forever be grateful for Erika's Lighthouse and the positive impact it has had on my life.

Danielle Spiekhout, Erika's Lighthouse Young Adult Board Membership Coordinator

OUR HIGHLIGHTS



39 Team Erika's Lighthouse runners raised a total of \$93,522 (with 1,176 donors) in the Bank of America Chicago Marathon.



This winter marked the launch of a brand new educational video that will accompany *The Lighthouse Curriculum: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students*. We will also begin training educators on this new program in late August, both in person and via webinar.



In 2016 we released the second edition of the *Parent Handbook on Childhood and Teen Depression*, a parent-to-parent guide about teen depression offering basic information about depression and practical advice to help families navigate treatment, school support, medication and much more. We continue to offer the free download on our site, and now offer an e-book and this summer will have an audiobook version available.



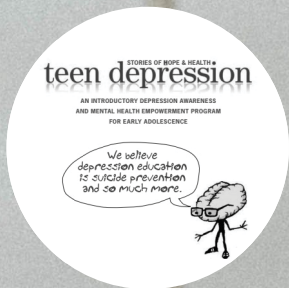
The Erika's Lighthouse Young Adult Board held a Spring Fling Brunch to help Get Depression Out of the Dark and engaged 30 young adults in the Erika's Lighthouse mission.



The Teen Club at Regina Dominican High School e-mailed motivational passages to the entire staff for Motivation Mondays, as well as sponsored Wellness Days throughout the year.



The Erika's Lighthouse Teen Club at New Trier Northfield Campus did several activities this year to Get Depression Out of the Dark, including constructing gratitude journals, creating "soothing" stones, and distributed stress reduction tips for finals including posting the ever popular Compliment Board!



An independent evaluation conducted by Dr. Michael S. Kelly Ph.D., LCSW, of Loyola University School of Social Work determined that our *Teen Depression: Stories of Hope & Health* middle school curriculum has a statistically significant impact on students' knowledge of depression, as well as significantly increased the likelihood that students would seek out a trusted adult in times of need.

OUR UPCOMING EVENTS



5th Annual Bump Out Depression Beach Volleyball Tournament

"Bump Out Depression!" is our Young Adult Board's annual beach volleyball tournament. Teams of eight to ten play in a double elimination beach volleyball tournament with fun prizes awarded to the first and second place teams. During the tournament, participants receive t-shirts and enjoy complementary refreshments, sun and fun. **Join the Young Adult Board on August 12th from 10AM to 1PM at North Avenue Beach. To register, go to www.erikaslighthouse.org by August 1st!**



The Lighthouse Curriculum - Training for High Schools

The conversation we often hear about young people and mental health is one of brokenness and powerlessness. It's time for a new story around mental health, one that's empowering, transformative, and healing. Erika's Lighthouse is thrilled to announce *The Lighthouse Curriculum: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students* coming soon this August! Join us for a free training and learn how to implement this program in your school. **To register, go to: www.erikaslighthouse.org/teen-depression-program.**

Training Dates:

Friday, August 25th, Virtual Webinar

Thursday, September 7th, Virtual Webinar

Friday, September 15th at New Trier High School Northfield Campus

Hosted by: New Trier High School Kinetic Wellness Department and Erika's Lighthouse

Tuesday, September 26th at Warren Township Library

Hosted by: Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth Warren-Gurnee Community and Erika's Lighthouse



2017 Bank of America Chicago Marathon

For the fourth year in a row, Erika's Lighthouse is an official charity of the 2017 Bank of America Chicago Marathon. In addition to running 26.2 miles, our marathoners have a goal to raise \$63,000 by race day. Consider making a contribution at: www.erikaslighthouse.org/events-chicago-marathon or join us on October 8th to support our 44 marathoners making strides against stigma at Chicago's most coveted race.



P.O. Box 616
Winnetka, IL 60093



Why We Ask for Your E-mail

We get it. Everyone gets inundated with e-mails. However, here at Erika's Lighthouse, we do not send more than one or two emails per month, and the information you'll receive is similar to the annual report you are reading now. Our goal is to share with you how we're spending your donations, alert you to events that we're hosting, and update you on major changes and new initiatives that happen here at Erika's Lighthouse. We promise we won't spam your inbox, and everything we send will be quality, relevant and infrequent. Thank you for understanding and adding your e-mail to our list! Please include your email the next time you make a donation, or go to www.erikaslighthouse.org and click "sign up" at the bottom of the page!

Get Depression Out of the Dark!™
