

charitable passions

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Special thanks to the **Kallen family**
for the provided photos.

It's A Brighter Day Thanks To Elliot Kallen



Elliot with his three children, Cody, Jake and Alexa (2013)

A Brighter Day, based in Lafayette, helps tweens, teens, and parents connect the dots around youth stress, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

According to the Center for Disease Control, more teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined. Now, COVID-related isolation, remote schooling, and the economic downturn are increasing stress and risk factors even more.

A Brighter Day founder Elliot Kallen says that “parents are the last to know” that there is a problem and are shocked to learn their child is depressed enough to consider suicide or that they’ve actually died by suicide.

“That’s what happened to us. Around four years ago, our 19-year-old son Jake died in this way while he was attending the University of Montana,” explains Elliot. “We had no idea Jake was suffer-

ing. My wife and I received the note from Jake after it was too late, and we were so devastated. In the note, he wrote: ‘Mom and Dad, I’ve been feeling this way for a long time. I never would have told you, I never would have asked for your help, and I never would have taken your help.’”

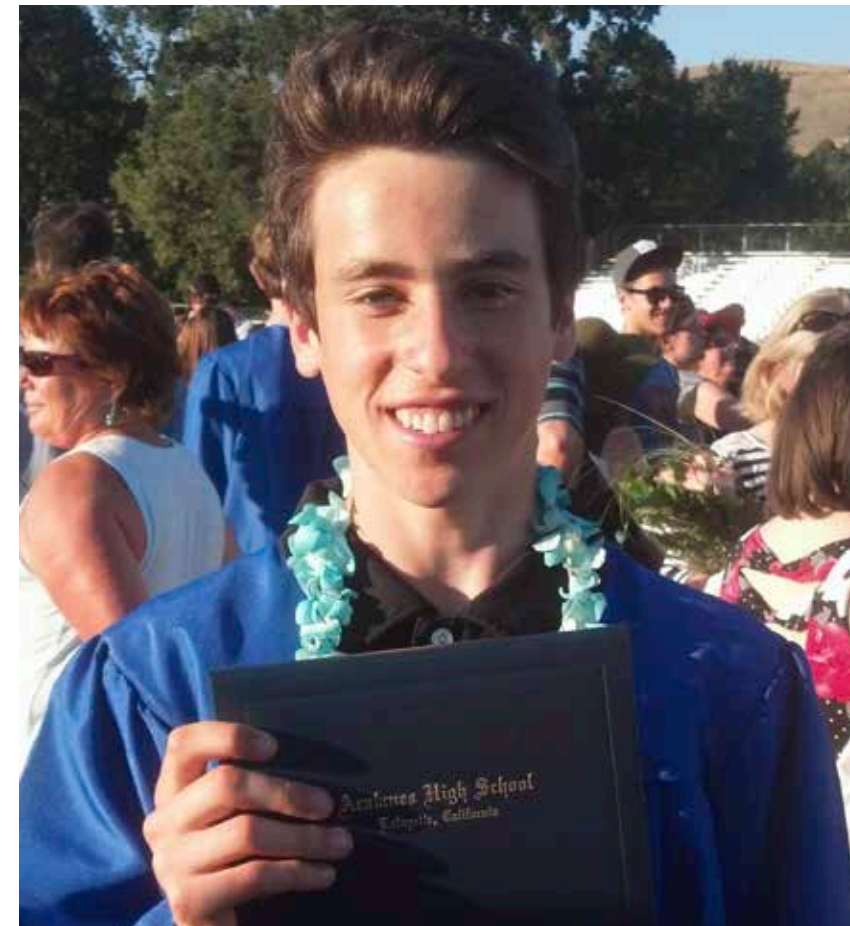
In his grief, Elliot began thinking of what he could do to protect other teens and parents from suffering the same fate – that’s when the idea for A Brighter Day was born.

“Elliot and A Brighter Day have exactly the right idea when it comes to suicide prevention and youth,” says Karen Oberdorfer, LMFT, a youth suicide prevention text-line expert based in Oakland. “Isolation is a big component of depression and suicide, so giving youth a way to connect with each other is great. Adolescents and young adults often confide in each other first, and giving them the tools and resources to help if they hear their friend is depressed or considering suicide is a huge gift.”

This month, A Brighter Day is launching the all-new Teen Talent Showcase, where teens can perform their talents on a Zoom Online Video with judges who are all professional musicians and artists. In late November, a Zoom Online Video run-off will announce the winners from each community. The overall winner will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship. Each participant (and parent) will receive a free backpack from A Brighter Day, filled with resources on how to deal with stress and depression.

“Band competitions and talent shows form the basis of what we do because they’re a wonderful way to reach teens. Most young people share a love of music,” says Elliot. “This fall, we’re hosting a new Teen Talent Showcase that will be so much fun for young people and will provide a way to educate teens and parents on how to deal with stress and depression.”

For more information, visit ABrighterDay.info.



Acalanes Graduation

If you or someone you know is experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide, call 211 to quickly connect with a kind and supportive person or Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741). All services are free and available 24 hours a day. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential.

Suicide is complicated and tragic, but it is often preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.

The behaviors listed below may be signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching for lethal methods online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about great guilt or shame
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often

- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, making a will

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.



If you have a charity or cause you'd like to spotlight, please contact me at jamie.cronk@n2pub.com.

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