

BORDER

# ecoo



4 People who "echo" in the arts  
Elizabeth Weatherbie

CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA

## Teacher of the Year Awards

"Teachers Are Heroes"



6 Santa Cruz County 2021 Teacher of the Year

Sept. 10

## World Suicide Prevention Day



10 Santa Cruz County  
Teacher of the Year



12 Jump Back 2 School 2021



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Monthly Round-Up

**A Message from the  
Santa Cruz County School Superintendent**  
*We honor all essential workers*

**HAPPY  
LABOR DAY!**

**THANK YOU!**



**Alfredo I. Velásquez**  
**Santa Cruz County School Superintendent**  
**&**  
**Staff**

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**Nogales, AZ 85621**

**Phone: 520.375.7940**

# Border Eco Updates

We want to thank our readers and customers for their continued support. Your support helps us report on the great people, events, and organizations who make a difference in our community.

Our goal is to help connect Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County is a unique bordertown rich in culture, and traditions. We are here to support our community.

Please send us any information on any upcoming community events, meetings, or conferences.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram or Twitter for the latest events, people, and organizations who make a difference in Santa Cruz County.

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Please send us information on any upcoming events, meetings, or programs to share with our readers.

# People who "echo" Elizabeth Weatherbie

This month Border Eco is honored by featuring a woman in our community who echoes in the field of arts. Elizabeth Weatherbie is the Executive Vice President/Treasurer for Patrons of the Arts, Inc. also known as the Hilltop Gallery. She holds a very diverse role in the organization from accounting to coordinating events, and maintaining the organization's social media. "There is so much behind the scenes duties that get tackled on a daily basis, it's hard to really pinpoint a main role in the organization. Mostly my role is to ensure everything gets done and on time," said Weatherbie.

Elizabeth was born in Scottsdale, Arizona in 1968. At the age of 6 months, her family moved to Mexico where she spent the first three years of her life. Her family later moved to Nogales, Arizona in 1971 and maintained a residence in Nogales, Sonora, as well. Elizabeth was raised in Ambos Nogales and attended Sacred Heart School with her siblings. Her father was an architect who worked for the City of Nogales for many years in the Planning and Zoning Department. Her father was also a musician and artist. Her mother was a housewife/artist and also a substitute teacher. Her mother taught Catechism at Sacred Heart School in the 70s. Elizabeth attended Nogales High School, but decided to get her GED. She later moved to Silver City, New Mexico in 1997, with her two children, and earned a degree in business from Western New Mexico University in 2001. She began working for Patrons of the Arts, Inc. in 2011, then took a sabbatical for a few years until she was invited back as a board member in 2020.

"It's good to be back. My passion for the arts is helping the community come together in many ways whether it's through painting, music or just art appreciation. I would like to continue to help unite our community in these artistic endeavors. Hilltop Gallery is the only nonprofit art venue in our community. We encourage the arts on all levels and with all ages. We have branched out to not just be visual arts, but to include the performing arts, as well. We also offer art classes to all ages," said the Executive Vice President.

The Hilltop Gallery has revamped their approach to attract young people in Santa Cruz County. We have a variety of shows that have branched out to include children, youth, and adults. Our Women Breaking the Silence show features all female artists of all ages from 9 to 90. This art exhibit is from local women artists who use their talent and creativity to express their thoughts and feelings. The art exhibit was curated by Alma Rodriguez.

We have a variety of art programs at the Hilltop Gallery. Our "Open Talent Nite" brings community members to share their many hidden talents such as music, poetry, singing and other performing arts, as well as the visual arts. The Trip Around the World is where young artists use their imagination to visit every continent, while the staff works to emphasize creativity and encourages them to have fun. The Summer Art Program was in part thanks to the City of Nogales Parks & Rec Dept., the Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools Alfredo I. Velásquez and Pizza Hut for their continued support.

Art is therapeutic. It is an outlet for emotions. It quiets the mind. It helps with anxieties. I especially enjoy sharing my work with others who enjoy art. I have dabbled in the arts most of my life, but it hasn't really been until the past few years that I realized my true passion for the arts. I used to work mostly with acrylics, but for the past year I have found oils more appealing. I work with a variety of arts media from textiles to paints. I am a painter, seamstress and musician. Lately, I find myself working mostly with oil paints. I've grown more patient with my art, and it's very relaxing "waiting for the paint to dry."

My artwork helps me express myself in many ways that I can't verbally do. It is a language of its own. The more I paint; the better I feel. It made me realize my true passion and love is art. My future plans are to be a full-time artist. I want to be able to make a living creating art. I want to continue to be a part of the artistic community and help others learn the value of being an artist, as well.

"I enjoy being able to encourage the arts on every level. I love being able to share art with the community. I thrive on seeing people's faces light up when they see a work of art they love. I mostly love seeing children excited about and doing art. To me, children's art is the best art. It is pure and beautiful with so much meaning," said Weatherbie.



# Hilltop Gallery-Breaking New Ground

Patrons of the Arts, Inc./Hilltop Gallery has been servicing the community for nearly 50 years in promoting local art, helping people get job training, and completing community service hours. These are just a few ways the organization has helped to improve the community. The Hilltop Gallery will be celebrating 50 years of art exhibits in September of 2022. They are the only leading edge place that offers a wide variety of the arts and art education. The Hilltop Gallery (DBA: Patrons of the Arts, Inc.) in Nogales, AZ was founded in 1968. In 1968, a group of Nogalians with a passion for the arts under the leadership of Jean Wisdom formed the Patrons of the Arts with the purpose of building a public gallery. A non-profit organization bringing arts and culture to an underserved community. They have successfully exhibited several shows per year since the building was completed in the early 1970's.

"The Hilltop Gallery has brought art to the community for nearly 50 years showcasing art from local artists of all ages. And, for over 30 years, the gallery has housed children's art classes both sponsored by the gallery and the City of Nogales. Recently, we have incorporated more of "the arts" into our venue.

We are breaking new ground by incorporating performing arts. We hope that future generations will continue to be encouraged to create the arts on every level, and help them bring their dreams to life!

What makes us special is our continuing effort to promote the arts to enrich the lives of everyone in the community," said the Executive/Vice President Elizabeth Weatherbie.

The Hilltop Gallery is the only permanent art collection in the region that has an exhibit and education activities representing two cultures: U.S. and Mexico. "We offer art classes for adults and children at little or no cost to them. The goal is to promote the arts in our community. The dedicated staff and volunteer board of Patrons of the Arts, Inc., work with local artists and businesses in the community to bring the best art pieces to Santa Cruz County. We strive to serve anyone interested in the arts. Our gallery serves as a venue for a number of aspiring artists to have their very first solo showing. Our legacy will be good memories of good experiences with art for all of our students, and art supporters who attend our exhibits," said Elizabeth.

Our organization supports the community in many ways. We encourage and teach art to the community, which is very beneficial in helping with stressors and education. We are also a place for job training. We are working with two separate programs for job placement. We have one employee through the Ayuda Program, and another employee from the Arizona Works Program. We help at-risk youths with completing community service hours, and encourage them with positive outlets.

The gallery has two employees, only volunteers from the Board of Directors and occasionally volunteers from the public.

Hilltop Gallery Board Officers are:

Ricardo Santos Hernandez, President since fall of 2020

Elizabeth Weatherbie, Executive Vice President/  
Treasurer since 2020

Carmelita Levin, Secretary since spring of 2021

Janice Johnson, Historian/Exhibit Chairperson since 1972

Alex, Jones, Board Member since 2015

Esteban Michel Larios, Board Member since 2011

Isabel Galindo, Board Member since spring of 2021

Alma Rodriguez, Board Member since 2019

Alma Pina, Board Member since spring of 2021

Jenny Hill, Board Member since spring of 2021

**For information on how to donate or volunteer, please contact us at: (520)287-5515 or visit the location at: 730 N Hilltop Dr, Nogales, AZ 85621**



## CONGRATULATIONS



### Teacher Nominees

**SUZANNE "Suzie" SAINZ**  
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Phone: (520) 375-7990

Intelligence plus character — that is the true goal of education.-Martin Luther King Jr.

# *Congratulations!*

## 2021 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Awards



On Friday July 30, 2021, the 14th Annual Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Awards Dinner Ceremony took place at the Tubac Golf Resort and Spa Geronimo Ballroom. The splendid event was co-sponsored by the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez, the Nogales Rotary Club and coordinated by the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Accounting Specialist/Special Events Coordinator Patricia Barraza-Preciado.

The night started with the acting 2020 Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Michelle Sebert of Elgin School District leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez welcomed all guests and thanked all nominees and every teacher in our county, for their extraordinary dedication and commitment to the students of Santa Cruz County. While the guests enjoyed an exquisite dinner, over 30 door prizes donated by local businesses were raffled to those in attendance. All proceeds from the ticket sales for the raffles are to be designated to the William I. Rothstein Memorial Scholarship for graduating students in our county.

Mrs. Patricia Barraza-Preciado introduced each of the 20 Teacher of the Year Nominees with a short video on their philosophy on teaching, as they took center stage they were presented a trophy by Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez. They also received a Teacher of the Year Appreciation Platter consisting of a cash reward and assorted gift cards.

Given the difficult task of selecting the 2021 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year, were five incredible judges chosen from across the county. We are proud to announce and congratulate Mr. Mark Dittmar from Mountain View Elementary, for being the recipient of the 2021 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Award. Mr. Dittmar will now represent Santa Cruz County at the state competition in Phoenix, this fall.

Mr. Dittmar was awarded the Teacher of the Year Trophy, \$2,000.00 check, BBQ Smoker Grill, Samsung Galaxy Tablet, a one-night stay and two rounds of golf for two from Tubac Golf Resort and Spa, \$500.00 for Professional Development and prizes and gift cards from local community members, valued close to \$4,000.00.

We also want to congratulate the 2021 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Runner-up from Patagonia Union High School, Mrs. Ann Gortarez. Mrs. Gortarez received the Runner-up trophy along with a \$1000.00 check, a fire pit donated from Home Depot, Samsung Galaxy Tablet, a one-night stay at Tubac Resort, \$250.00 for Professional Development along with prizes and gift cards from local community members, valued close to \$2,300.00.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Sponsors and Donors that made this event possible and a great success. We appreciate your support.

On behalf of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez and the Nogales Rotary Club President Ms. Alba Quijano, we would like to thank all the community organizations and businesses for all their support in making the 2021 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Awards Dinner Ceremony the most celebrated event in Santa Cruz County.

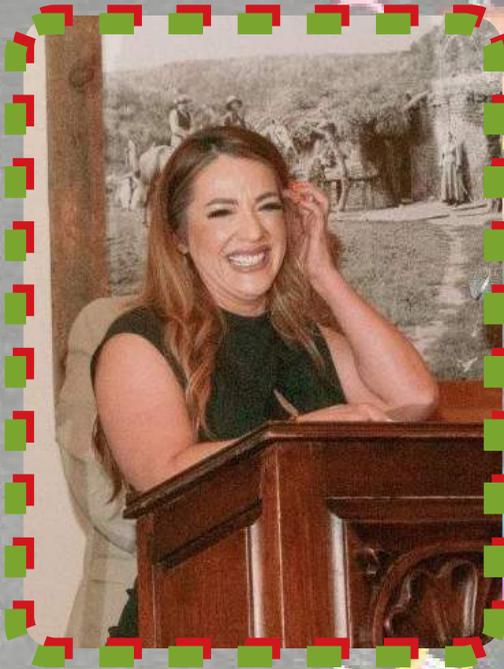


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Making Connections 4 U

**Free Community  
Resource Guide at:**

[www.makingconnections4u.org](http://www.makingconnections4u.org)



Follow us on Facebook @  
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# SCV35 teacher Mark Dittmar named Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year

Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District No.35 is proud to announce Mr. Mark Dittmar was named Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year, at the County's annual ceremony held Friday, July 30, 2021.

Dittmar, an art teacher at Mountain View Elementary, has been a teacher for SCV35 for more than 22 years. He was also recently announced as the 2020-2021 SCV35 District Teacher of the Year at the District's annual Welcome Back Celebration.

Every year, the District sends nomination forms to families and staff. In March, the District received close to 200 nominations for staff, administrators and teachers, several of which were for Mr. Dittmar. One nomination, submitted by fellow teacher, Josie Tanori, read "Mark is someone who everyone can learn from, his dedication and ability to create fun and interesting teaching methods for students during distance learning."

When schools quickly transitioned to virtual learning last year due to COVID-19, Dittmar sought out an assistant art teacher to help capture students' attention during online lessons. Secondary the Monkey, a talking hand puppet, filled the position.

"I began using the monkey as an occasional teaching aide years ago, but it wasn't until the pandemic and remote learning that the need to keep students engaged became vital. That's when Secondary's comic voice and personality developed. He is a combination of people from my old neighborhood (and a bit of me)," said Dittmar. Even parents were captivated by Secondary's personality and charm. "He incorporated humor and interest into his lessons by using his puppet Secondary as a VERY effective teaching tool. Mr. Dittmar does not only know(s) how to teach art, but he knows how to teach art to KIDS. And knowing how to encourage creativity, wonder and talent in kids through art is not as easy as one might think," wrote Mountain View parent Haydee Montemayor who submitted a nomination.

Not only did Montemayor nominate him, but also submitted a nomination on behalf of her son Angelo. "I chose Mr. D to be Teacher of The Year because he is creative. He taught me how to draw, showed me how to do "what its", taught me about artistic people, and showed me how to shade and shadow. The best thing he taught me is how to shade and shadow because that's how I learned how to make pictures come to life. I also chose him because I miss him. I hope he's my art teacher again."

Mr. Dittmar was one of twenty teachers from across Santa Cruz County who were honored at the annual ceremony by Superintendent of Schools Alfredo Velasquez's office, and ultimately, he and Secondary took home first place.

Mr. Dittmar will represent Santa Cruz County in competition for the Arizona Rural School Teacher of the Year via zoom on Friday, August 13, 2021. -Shannon Enciso, Communication Specialist



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# Jump Back 2 School

Local organizations along with NUSD have been hosting the Jump Back 2 School event for several years now. This was their 9th Annual Jump Back 2 School event. "This year we decided to do the same thing we did last year because of COVID. We decided not to host the event but ask our community partners for financial support to help purchase school supplies, backpacks, and uniforms. We sent out over 800 tickets and as of today, only 365 backpacks have been issued. Parents continue to come by everyday, and we will continue to hand them out throughout the year." said Judith Mendoza, Student Services Director.

This event was originally spearheaded by Safeway along with other local non-profit organizations. The ultimate goal of this event has been to help prepare NUSD students for a successful school year. Local organizations know it is an opportunity for them and community leaders to work together to help motivate students towards a successful school year regardless of the circumstances. "We distributed backpacks filled with school supplies and uniforms. They were delivered to each school site where they were hand-delivered to the students," said Judith.

The Jump Back 2 School Planning Committee would like to thank the following local organizations for their continued support:

Santa Cruz Superintendent Office Alfredo Velásquez

South 32

Santa Cruz County Manager Jennifer St. John

Croppers Nogales Auto Center

Unisource

The City of Nogales

Arizona@Work

Mariposa Community Health Center

United Way

Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital

Making Connections 4U/Santa Cruz Community Action Coalition



# Let's Talk Health

## What is cholesterol?

*Your body needs cholesterol to build cells, make vitamins and hormones, however, too much cholesterol can be a problem.*

*Cholesterol comes from two sources. The main source is your liver which makes the cholesterol we need. The rest of it comes from animal products such as eggs, meat, dairy, poultry. These foods are high in saturated fats and trans fat which cause our liver to make more cholesterol than it would normally make. This raises our cholesterol to an unhealthy level. Oils such as palm oil and coconut oil also contain saturated fats and can increase our bad cholesterol.*

*High cholesterol can contribute to heart disease and stroke which is why it is important to get checked so that we know what our cholesterol levels are.*

*There are two types of cholesterol: LDL cholesterol which is bad and HDL cholesterol which is good. We can't have too much of the bad kind or too little of the good kind because this could increase the risk of cholesterol building up in the arteries. This narrows the arteries and makes them less flexible. If a blood clot forms on one of these arteries a heart attack or a stroke may happen.*

*It is important to:*

- Check your cholesterol levels and assess your risk.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet to help improve your levels.
- Talk to your doctor
- Stop smoking



# Let's Talk Health

Did you know that in Santa Cruz County, there are approximately 2,700 people struggling with a substance use disorder or addiction? Or that an estimated 80% of those with a substance use disorder do not receive a diagnosis or treatment?

The Santa Cruz County Overcoming Substance Addiction (SOSA) Consortium is working to address this need for substance use disorder prevention, treatment, recovery, and workforce development. The S.O.S.A. Consortium began in 2019 with the support of a Health Resources Services Administration Rural Communities Opioid Response Planning Grant. Our goal is to collaborate across sectors to increase the availability of and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services to help people prevent, treat, and recover from substance use disorder, specifically opioid use disorder.

Mariposa Community Health Center leads the S.O.S.A. Consortium efforts along with project leads in each of the four target areas: Circles of Peace for prevention, Community Health Associates for treatment, Pinal Hispanic Council and Helping Ourselves Pursue Enrichment, (HOPE) Inc for recovery, and Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center (SEAHEC) for workforce development. The consortium also includes participation from Nogales, Rio Rico, and Tubac Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, Nogales Police Department, Holy Cross Hospital, Santa Cruz County Attorney's Office, Mariposa's clinical pharmacist team, Community Medical Services (CMS), Sonora Prevention Works, Arizona Complete Health, Arizona Department of Health Services, PEPP, Inc/Amado Youth Coalition, along with primary care providers, other nonprofit organizations, behavioral health providers, local court system, school partners, and partners from the University of Arizona.

In the two years since the S.O.S.A. Consortium has formed, we have made important strides towards our goal. Collectively, the S.O.S.A. Consortium partners have trained more than 500 community members, which include youth, faith-based community, and health professionals in stigma reduction, substance/opioid misuse, and Naloxone overdose reversal treatment. Collectively we have increased the availability, access, and distribution of Naloxone, the life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. We have also implemented an innovative collaboration between EMS, peer support specialists, and medication assisted treatment providers to connect people to treatment services. We have strengthened our collaboration with the criminal justice system, and distributed over 500 bags filled with SUD information, Detera kits to safely dispose of prescription medicines, and Naloxone overdose reversal treatments. We have improved the coordination of care between primary care and behavioral health providers, with an emphasis that patients with infectious drug-use diagnoses are referred to appropriate treatment.

The SOSA Consortium meets monthly and has continued to work for our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the stress and isolation of the pandemic has increased the need for substance use disorder services, and sometimes has prevented people from seeking services. Our work is more important than ever.

There is a lot of work to be done surrounding the issues of substance use disorder/opioid use disorder and behavioral health. We are looking forward to continuing to implement system changes in the areas of prevention, treatment, and recovery with all our partners.

August 31 was International Overdose Awareness Day. We remembered those that have been affected by addiction, particularly those who have suffered an overdose on August 31st at a community and resource fair at Pierson field.

September is National Recovery Month which is a national observance to educate our communities that substance use treatment and mental health services allows those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Let's take this time to celebrate the success made by those in recovery.

If you or someone you know is suffering from addiction, help is available!

For more help or more information contact:

Mariposa Community Health Center (520) 281-1550

Circles of Peace (520) 281-0579

Community Health Associates (520) 394-7400

Pinal Hispanic Council (520) 287-0015

HOPE, Inc. (520) 287-9612 if you are interested in joining or learning more about S.O.S.A.

Consortium, please contact Yara Castro at [ycaastro@mariposachc.net](mailto:ycaastro@mariposachc.net), or 520-375-6050.



# Mayor's Corner



Hello my friends,

September will be a very busy and exciting month for the City of Nogales and its residents. We have been hard at work planning many fun and free events and activities for everybody.

We start the fun on Thursday, September 9th with an evening of crime prevention awareness, an outdoor movie, free hot dogs, free giveaways, and more at the Nogales Night Out. Many different local law enforcement agencies gather that night to provide information and fun activities for people of all ages.

On Saturday, September 11th we will be holding a remembrance ceremony in honor of the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001. We will have guest speakers, a multi-agency honor guard, and a moment of silence.

We honor our Mexican heritage on Saturday, September 18th with the Fiestas Patrias Celebration that will take place in downtown Morley Avenue. There will be live music, dancing, food vendors, and the traditional Grito de Independencia.

We will end the month with the State of the City Address on Tuesday, September 28th at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). I will be presenting information on all the work completed and pending completion for the City of Nogales. This will include all departments from Police and Fire, to Public Works.

All these events are completely free and for people of all ages. Please go to the City of Nogales website, [www.nogalesaz.gov](http://www.nogalesaz.gov) or contact my office at 285.5602 for additional information. We look forward to seeing you there.

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**Admission is free; donations welcome**

**Mask is required for entry**

**Built in 1914 Nogales City Hall now is home to the museum.**

**Exhibits include Meeting of the Rails,**

**Able & Willing fire hand pumper, fire signal room, printing press from Tombstone**

**Epitaph, original city jail, remodeled bike cart used by El Maestro of El Charrito store on**

**Elm Street, bullfighter Salvador Corona's paintings, historical photos & postcards, and**

**more.**

**Research Library collection online:**

**[Pimeriaaltamuseum.pastperfectonline.com](http://Pimeriaaltamuseum.pastperfectonline.com)**

**We offer tours, guest speakers, & special events. Upcoming in October is El Día de Los**

**Muertos honoring those lost to Covid. **Membership begins at \$35****



# Sheriff's Round-Up



*As the Sheriff's Office ramps up it's hiring of Detention Officers, we are glad to see the progress of various officers currently undergoing training at the Correctional Officer's Training Academy in Tucson. Members of the Command Staff attended the graduation ceremony for new officer Fernando Valencia and are proudly encouraging other new officers who are undergoing both detention training and deputy sheriff training at various academies.*

*Our volunteer program has expanded greatly and we are about to kick off an in-house training class for our many new volunteers. An expanded volunteer program to help our small agency cover the county has always been part of the vision of Sheriff Hathaway and it is coming to fruition with the large number of volunteers that have come forward to be a part of the Sheriff's Office. Both our volunteer deputies ("Law Enforcement Assist Officers") and our volunteer Search and Rescue members play a vital and rewarding role. Our Search and Rescue volunteers selflessly give up personal time to come to the rescue of lost persons who are often lost in rough remote terrain during hours of darkness and in inclement weather. We cannot thank these volunteers enough.*

*The Sheriff's Office was pleased to participate this month in an impromptu parade and celebration for the 95th birthday of WWII veteran Sergeant Conrado Humberto Villegas at the Bowman Senior Center in Nogales. The Sheriff's Office was also happy to participate in the Teacher of the Year Ceremony at the Tubac Resort which honored the many fine teachers in the county and the winner, Mark Dittmar.*



# **A Message from the Santa Cruz County Attorney**

**Knowledge is Power & You Have the POWER!**  
**We Can All Take Action**

STOP

Suicide

**By starting the conversation, providing support, and directing help to  
those who need it,  
we can prevent suicides and save lives.**



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