



Randy spoke two weeks for camp staff training, three youth camps and one family camp this summer

straight talk ministries newsletter



HEART CHANGE  
LIFE CHANGE

Volume 9, Issue 3, October 2012

## Dispensing Hope

I recently sat through a training sessions titled "A Harsh Reality". The statistics for suicide are staggering.

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth age 12-18 behind car accidents
- Attempted and completed suicides have increased 300% in the last 30 years
- Canada's youth suicide rate is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the industrialized world
- Females account for 75% of suicide attempts
- Males complete suicide 4 times more often than females

An estimated 80% of youth who complete suicide give some warning of their intentions or mention their feelings to someone they trust.

For some time I have been feeling like there is a growing sense of hopelessness and despair

Hopelessness = a : having no expectation of good or success : **despairing** b : not susceptible to remedy or cure c : incapable of redemption or improvement

among students. From the numbers that were presented, clearly this not just my own perception. I have a

pretty high profile at camps where I speak. Be-

cause I don't really know them, I feel like a "safe" person to the campers. In one of my sessions I touched on this issue in passing. I received this Facebook message shortly after I got home.

*"We met at Teen camp .... I just wanted to say that when you talked about the girl who killed herself, it hit me hard. I've been battling depression for a couple years now and I'm to scared to tell any one about it, even my family. I feel like she did, I feel worthless most of the time, I feel like there is no good reason for me to stay on that boat. I'm not really sure why all of a sudden I'm talking about this"*



More than ever I believe students need to hear and experience the life giving truth about Jesus

We have been messaging back and forth. She is terrified to tell her parents, doesn't trust her teachers or guidance counsellors and doesn't have a youth group or youth leader. I have notified the camp leaders and we are working to set up a face to face meeting with some of the staff she knows from the camp.

Jesus said that Satan comes to rob, steal, and destroy but that He came to give us life to the max. With suicide- Satan wins. If the person is not a believer he has won the ultimate victory

*(Continued on page 4)*



***"This summer we are aware of 58 who made first time decisions to follow Jesus!"***

## He said

### Running From Pain

I started the conversation with "Hey I remember you from last year. You were the guy with the Northstar runners from the '70's." I was not prepared for the response. "I have known you longer than that. When I was 13 you were my camp speaker—that's the summer I accepted Jesus." I was speaking with a staff member at Camp Qwanoes whom I had seen the year before when he was a cabin leader. We didn't exchange more than passing hellos and some comments on his runners—which were a total throw-back to my Jr. High days.

This summer he was in a program directing role and had few moments of down time. As we talked he told me that home had never been a particularly nurturing place but things got much worse the fall after he accepted Jesus. Following a terrible argument with his dad, he was kicked out of his home. That year was one of the roughest years he had experienced. He said something that stuck with me.

**"I understand why people choose to commit suicide. The only thing that kept me going that year was my relationship with Jesus."**

Every summer I get to speak to a sea of students. Usually I have no idea what their lives are like. I get to offer them the hope that Jesus offers for this life and the life to come. Some grab onto that hope and have the trajectory of their lives changed forever. This summer we are aware of 58 who made first time decisions to follow Jesus! Thank you for the part you play in extending the life changing hope of Jesus to students who desperately need it.



70's NORTHSTARS!

# She said



## God Uses Broken Hearts

Speaking authentically is costly. Especially when life gets messy, exhausting, and painful. Thursday before I left for my retreat near Saskatoon my friend said to me. “You know God is going to really show up this weekend, don’t you? He always does that when we are at our weakest.” And I was weak. I can’t remember a time when I left home to speak feeling so emotionally vulnerable and unprepared.

The retreat was in a beautiful spot near Saskatoon with 50 warm and wonderful women from Martensville Baptist Church. It was a fun group and we shared great food, fellowship and full-body-contact Dutch Blitz. We also shared our lives. I spoke on five separate occasions over the course of the weekend. I couldn’t help but weave my present experiences and what God is teaching me through them into my talks. Many tears were shed on both sides of the podium. And once again, God proved that His strength is completed in our weakness.

I shared how my sister Debbie’s terminal illness has taught her to live more intentionally. At the end of the retreat, several women shared how deeply that had touched them and how it had caused them to look at their priorities differently. Many commented on how they were-



The hands that holds our broken hearts are God’s.

moved that I came offering only my raw vulnerability instead of my strength. It seemed to make them more tender to the Holy Spirit somehow. Thank God that he doesn’t need our lives to be tidy and untangled to serve him.

These are difficult days for my family and me. We learned on Tuesday that on top of my sister’s illness and the pain of strained relationships resulting from upheaval in our home church, my dad’s cancer has now become very aggressive. Please pray for us. We are hurting deeply. Yet we know that God is in control. If there is anything my dad has taught me in my life, it is that God is good and He is sovereign. I will trust Him to hold my broken heart and use it to reach out to others.

***“I couldn’t help but weave my present experiences and what God is teaching me through them into my talks.”***



## Your gifts make ministry possible

**CanadaHelps.org:** Visit [straighttalkministries.com](http://straighttalkministries.com) and follow the links to give online. It's safe and secure.

**Contact us:**

38 River Rock Crescent SE  
Calgary, Alberta T2C 4J4  
Phone/Fax: 403.720.3832  
Toll Free 1.866.835.5827

[www.straighttalkministries.com](http://www.straighttalkministries.com)

Editor: Heather Traub  
Parkvista Projects Inc.  
403-225-6590

[parkvistaprojects@shaw.ca](mailto:parkvistaprojects@shaw.ca)

Spending of funds is confined to board approved programs and projects. Each restricted contribution towards such a program or project will be used as designated, with the understanding **the fine print** that when the need for such a program has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the board, the remaining restricted contributions designated for such programs or projects will be used where needed most.

[www.straighttalkministries.com](http://www.straighttalkministries.com)

*(Continued from page 1)*

and that person will pass into a Christ-less eternity. If they are believers in Jesus he removes them and any redemptive influence they may have for God's Kingdom from this world. I am convinced that there is a spiritual element with every suicide.

More than ever I believe students need to hear and experience the life giving truth about Jesus. That is why Straight Talk exists.

Straight Talk is not just Randy and Donna running around where ever groups are willing to have them. **Straight Talk is a great team of board members, prayer partners, and financial partners who have teamed up to bring the truth of Jesus to people who don't know- or have forgotten the abundant life Jesus promised us.**

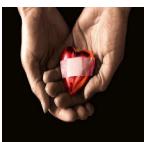
### Four ways *you* can make a difference by investing in Straight Talk



**Pray** for us. Straight Talk is empowered by consistent, informed prayer. To receive weekly prayer requests in your inbox, send your email address to [admin@straighttalkministries.com](mailto:admin@straighttalkministries.com).



**Sponsor** Randy to dispel despair in youth at weekend retreats through the winter months.



**Enable** Randy and Donna to challenge youth, men and women with Biblical truth.



**Launch** Friend Me\*\* —get the news of this new outreach tool out to ministry influencers. \*\*Donna's new official book title\*\*

**heart change** straight talk ministries

**life change**



- I want to make a difference by investing in Straight Talk:**
  - Sponsor** Randy to dispel despair in youth \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Enable** Randy & Donna to challenge people with Biblical Truth \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Launch** *Friend Me*, Donna's new book \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Please use my gift where most needed \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Pray** for us. Join our weekly prayer team. Email: [admin@straighttalkministries.com](mailto:admin@straighttalkministries.com)

- I want to support Straight Talk monthly:**
  - \$250     \$100    \$75
  - \$50     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Monthly Giving Options**

- I have included post-dated cheques to Straight Talk Ministries
- I prefer the convenience of automatic debit and hereby authorize Straight Talk Ministries to withdraw \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my bank account on the  3rd or  17th of each month (choose one).

**Note:** Please include a cheque marked Void and provide signature below.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Giving on line.**

You can give on line with Visa or Mastercard through Canada helps.

Go to Canada Helps at <https://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=d74727> and you can make your donation there today.

If your contact information has changed please let us know:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Donations can be mailed to:

Straight Talk Ministries  
38 River Rock Crescent SE  
Calgary, Alberta T2C 4J4

**heart change**

**life change**



# Parent's Page

## Detecting Depression

Recently I have been

messaging with a young lady whom I met at a camp this past summer. She shared with me that she is struggling with some very deep, sad feelings. She never told anyone before she told me. I am very concerned for her and have been working to get her to talk to someone where she lives. Here is an excerpt from our running conversation.

*My parents think I'm always happy and if they found out that I'm not they would treat me like I need to be babied and always watched. There isn't really anyone in (location withheld) I trust, the one person I trusted lied to me a lot. I know a couple of people who kind of go through the same thing as me it's just I'm not very good at talking about myself.*

I am running into an alarming number of students who are struggling with depression and don't know where to turn. These students are terrified to speak about depression and suicidal thoughts with their parents for a number of reasons. Sometimes it is fear of disappointing them, fear of being labelled, fear of rejection or simply the fear of not being able to articulate how they are feeling. You might be asking "How could a parent not know their child was struggling that deeply?" During adolescence it is not unusual for students to begin to change. That sweet, positive, highly communicative child can become surly, withdrawn, and moody. Sometimes it is hard to know the difference between normal teenage angst and depression.

It is not unusual for there to be a number of issues that can act together to drive students to depression and even resort to self harm or suicide. It can happen in the most caring, loving, and supportive families. We know a mom and dad who knew their daughter was not as happy and positive as she once had been but they didn't realize the depth of her despair. That is until one morning she confessed that she had tried to kill herself the night before. These were engaged parents! As they walked through the aftermath they learned that their daughter's struggles had been the result of a number of issues.

There were some chemical, relational, physical, and emotional elements that had all come together to create a toxic soup that could have been deadly. Thankfully, this young lady was not successful and now, after appropriate medical and psychological intervention, is living life in a much better place.

There are some great resources out there to help us help our kids. This link <http://www.about-teen-depression.com/depression-statistics.html> has a great article on teen depression stats and how to spot the symptoms. A book we personally found helpful in understanding some of the emotional challenges parents and teens can face was a book titled [Blue Genes](#) Breaking free from the chemical imbalances that affect your moods, your mind, your life, and your loved ones. By Paul Meier, M.D.

You may need to help your student get medical treatment. Depression can be caused by Anaemia and other chemical imbalances. A therapist may also be helpful. I am aware of a couple of good counsellors who know how to connect with students. If you think your child needs that kind of assistance I would be happy to provide contact info. We can't afford to take risks with our kid's lives.

If you have feedback, or have questions you would like to see addressed, please forward them to [feedback@straighttalkministries.com](mailto:feedback@straighttalkministries.com).

