



Saving Young Lives One Yellow Ribbon At A Time

(NAPS)—Many families may find a ray of hope because of the tragedy of one family and the foundation it created.

The Light for Life Foundation International began in September of 1994 after the suicide of 17-year-old Mike Emme.

In the days following Mike's death, dozens of teenagers approached Mike's family asking what they could do.

Mike's parents responded by saying, "Don't ever do this. Don't commit suicide. Reach out to someone and ask for help."

The teens took notes. "It's okay to ask for help," they wrote. As the teens shared their grief and their stories of friendship with Mike, they also discussed the tragedy of teen suicide and ways in which it might be prevented.

"It's okay to ask for help" became the common theme and the yellow ribbon card was born.

The cards feature a yellow ribbon and carry the message that there are people who care and who will listen to you when you need help. The other side of the card states that presenting the card is a cry for help. It features a suicide hotline and instructions on what to do to help in case a person gives you the card.

The Yellow Ribbon Program is more than a card. The multifaceted program is affiliated with respected mental health and suicide prevention experts. It offers youth and adult seminars, workshops and presenta-



THIS RIBBON IS A LIFELINE!

It carries the message that there are those who care and will help! If you are in need and don't know how to ask for help, take this card to a counselor, teacher, clergy, parent or friend and say:

"I NEED TO USE MY YELLOW RIBBON"

The Yellow Ribbon Program is in loving memory of Michael Emme



This yellow ribbon has been adopted as the symbol of suicide prevention efforts among teens.

tions that teach awareness and strategies to empower youth and adults.

Having been featured in *A Third Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, on the *Oprah* show and in *People* magazine, the Yellow Ribbon Program reaches out to an international audience and that audience has responded.

So far, the program has received more than 30,000 letters from youth that have considered or attempted suicide. The letters contain similar messages, such as "I'm glad to know that you're there and help is available," and "Just having the card makes me feel safer."

To date the program has been implemented by more than 2,000 schools, reaching over 150,000 youths.

For more information on the Yellow Ribbon Program, visit www.yellowribbon.org. This information is sponsored by the Auxiliary to the American Osteopathic Association, www.aux-aoa.org.