

BLAKE WORKS

NEWS ADVISORY FOR JANUARY 16

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STATE LAWMAKERS HOST FORUM ON DEPRESSION AND YOUTH

“I felt like I was just sinking in the ocean with like a weight strapped to my feet ... I couldn’t breathe. I was just panicky and I would lay in my bed in the fetal position for days.”

- Mike Haas, 18 Needham, Massachusetts

Mike Haas describes a crippling depression that led to suicidal thoughts. He tells his story in the new DVD *Depression: True Stories* produced by Blake Works, to be premiered at a State House Forum January 16. As part of the forum, Haas, his parents and sister will speak about how he and his family coped with his depression. The forum is co-hosted by **Representative Ruth Balsler and Senator Gale Candaras**, co-chairs of the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse; and co-sponsored by the Mass. Department of Mental Health and Partners HealthCare.

According to a 2005 MA Department of Public Health Survey, 27 percent of teens surveyed reported feeling sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in the prior 12 months; 13 percent had seriously considered suicide; and six percent had attempted suicide.

More than two million American teens experienced major depression last year, and less than half received treatment. (SAMHSA) Most suicides are the result of untreated depression.

Forum attendees including policy makers, advocates, educators, public health officials, and employee assistance professionals will receive copies of the DVD and the booklet *Words Can Work: When Talking About Depression*, written by Jeanne Blake, to use in their community outreach to educate about depression; reduce the stigma associated with mental illness; and to encourage those suffering with depression to seek potentially lifesaving treatment. The forum will also include a panel discussion of experts including: **Commissioner Barbara A. Leadholm, MS, MBA, MA** Dept. of Mental Health; **Nancy Norman, MD, MPH** Medical Director, Boston Public Health Commission **Paula K. Rauch, MD**, Director, Child Psychiatry Consultation Service to Pediatrics, Massachusetts General Hospital for Children; and **Jefferson Prince, MD**, Child Psychiatry, North Shore Medical Center.

LOCATION: MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE GREAT HALL
TIME: 9:30AM UNTIL NOON (interviews available at 9:30AM; speaking program begins promptly at 10AM)

The DVD *Depression: True Stories* and the *Words Can Work* booklet are available at www.wordscanwork.com

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