



## Third Annual Speak Up, Stand Up, Save A Life Conference Tackles Barriers to Empower Students

**November 13, 2018 - Phoenix, AZ** – Students are sometimes the only ones who know when another classmate is in crisis and it could be their courage to act or speak out that saves a friend’s life. On **Tuesday, January 22nd** more than 4,500 students will fill the arena at **Grand Canyon University** to learn how to Speak Up, Stand Up, Save A Life. The free, daylong event running from **9:15am– 2:15pm** will inspire attendees to connect and create lasting solutions they can implement back at their schools.

The conference offers students a chance to hear from local and national speakers on the difficult issues they face on a daily basis both inside and outside of school. Breakout sessions will also allow them to discuss and brainstorm ideas on how to help their schools increase each student’s ability to speak out when they see behavior that could be harmful to another student from bullying, to substance abuse and even suicide.

The idea for the conference was created through Leadership West Class XXII, where Gina Godbehere of the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office connected with [Pendergast Elementary School District](#) Superintendent Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux and another colleague, all sharing the same vision. The women saw a need and believed that real change for these issues could be achieved for students locally through a solution-oriented youth conference.

“I would like nothing more than to change the tattle-tale mentality and start a movement of speaking up,” said Conference Co-Founder Gina Godbehere. “Valley schools have suffered too many tragedies involving our kids. Many times there were warning signs other kids saw, but no one was either willing or knew how to take action.” DeBlieux shared, “Tragically, suicide is now the second leading cause of death in youth 10-34 years of age in Arizona. We are proud to share that last year 108 schools participated in the event and in the last two years we have impacted 380,000 students across the state to reduce this number. We urge everyone to [register](#) on the website and be part of this amazing movement that is saving lives.”

What makes this youth conference unique is the outreach offered to the adults through their own breakout sessions. These sessions will bring together school instructors alongside law enforcement members and government leadership to talk about how they can communicate better with students. Additionally, for adults not able to attend the conference, there will be resource nights offered across the Valley. These smaller events will offer more information on helping students facing difficult issues and provide information on the programs and resources available in the area.

**Additional information can be found on the website at [speakstandsave.com](http://speakstandsave.com)**  
**The media is invited to attend the conference, with a recommended arrival time of 10:30am. For pre-conference interviews, please contact Amanda Steele at [steelea@mcao.maricopa.gov](mailto:steelea@mcao.maricopa.gov).**

**About the Conference Founders:**



Gina Godbehere is the Bureau Chief of the Northwest Valley Bureau in the Community Based Prosecution Division of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office. She has more than two decades of experience as a trial attorney and in assignments with a wide variety of bureaus, including Pretrial, Juvenile, Gang, and the Repeat Offender Unit, during which she has tried every type of felony case, including first degree premeditated murder. Throughout her twenty years of service with MCAO, Gina has played an integral role in developing the first Juvenile Drug Court, in implementing the Juvenile Transfer Offender Program, and is the Co-Author and Creator of the Ultimate Trial Research Notebook used by prosecution agencies throughout Arizona. Gina is Maricopa County's designated Bias Crimes Prosecutor, and she actively trains prosecutors and law enforcement officers throughout the state. Gina was born, raised, and currently resides in the west valley. She graduated from Cactus High School, before receiving a Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies and a Juris Doctorate degree from Arizona State University's College of Law in 1995.



Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux was born in New York, N.Y. where she attended elementary school and two years of high school. Her family then moved to Isabela, Puerto Rico where she completed high school and college. Lily's educational preparation includes degrees in Elementary Education (BA), Educational Leadership and Supervision (MA and Ph.D), all from the University of Southern Mississippi and a BA in Business Administration from the University of Puerto Rico. Her experiences are varied and include serving as a teacher, elementary principal, middle school dean of students, assistant superintendent, adjunct university professor, English as a Second Language Instructor, director of religious education at a military base, business owner, and community volunteer. Dr. DeBlieux was appointed as the first bilingual, Latina Superintendent of the Pendergast Elementary School District in May 2014. Dr. DeBlieux is involved in community organizations including: Leadership West Class XXII, City of Phoenix Youth and Education Commission, Glendale Chamber of Commerce, and others.