



## **Speak Up, Stand Up, Save a Life Conference Committed to Saving Lives of Youth Through Inaugural Virtual Conference**

*Annual conference addresses prevention with dynamic speakers, programs, and resources*

**Phoenix, AZ (November 5, 2020)** – Students throughout Arizona will join together in the first virtual conference to Speak Up, Stand Up and Save Lives. Now in its fifth year, the event will run from **9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.** on January 19, 2021 and will inspire attendees to create lasting ways to combat bullying, depression and suicide at their schools. The conference is free of charge thanks to partnerships and donations and is open to all schools in Arizona.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide is a serious public health problem among all age groups. Among youth it exacts an enormous toll due to the significant years of potential life lost. In 2017, there were more than 6,200 suicide deaths among adolescents and young adults ages 15-24, making it the second-leading cause of death for that age group. Youth suicidal ideation, attempt and completion are on the rise. Far more adolescents have suicidal thoughts or attempt suicide and survive than those who die by suicide. Results from the 2019 Youth Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System show that in the past year 19% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide and 9% attempted suicide.

The conference offers students a chance to hear from local and national speakers who will address hope, resilience, self-compassion, empathy and the power within us all to care enough to speak up, stand up and save a life. Another highlight of the conference will be the presentations of the Difference Maker Awards to a student, law enforcement official, and teacher.

According to Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux, Pendergast District Superintendent and Gina Godbehere, Maricopa County Attorney's Office Bureau Chief, "Teen suicide is preventable according to the CDC. Prevention efforts should be aimed at all levels of influence: Individual, relationship, community and societal. Suicide rates for at-risk youth can be substantially reduced by knowing the signs, intervening and improving access to resources. All of these will be addressed at the conference."

The conference is for students in grades K-12, adults and volunteers. There will be individualized breakout sessions for each age group along with sessions available for teachers, staff and parents alongside law enforcement members and government leaders to learn how to become trusted adults ready to respond to students in crisis. For additional information or to register, visit the website at [www.speakstandsave.com](http://www.speakstandsave.com).

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### About the Conference Founders:



Gina Godbehere is the Bureau Chief in 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, 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. Gina is active in many community organizations.



Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux was born in New York, N.Y., where she attended elementary school and two years of high school. 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: The Hispanic Leadership Institute, Leadership West Class XXII, Glendale Chamber of Commerce, and others. Lily is sought after as a motivational speaker, and in 2015 she founded the organization Si No Yo, Quien? LLC, to provide training to empower women to reach new heights in their personal and professional lives.