

2019 Linda Lee Martens

Community Health Hero Award

South Whidbey High School Forefront Peer to Peer Trainers

There are heroes among us in this community; people to whom we look to as models and inspiration. These 8 people: Clare Martin, Dexter Jokinen, Emma Hodson, Maliyah Hjelmstad, Rakeem Heino, Alexa Johnson, Ashley Lynch, and Chandra Wallace, exemplify what it is to be heroes through their service to their peers and our community. A University of Washington sponsored program called Forefront is working in Island County to raise awareness of, and prevent, youth suicide. According to the 2018 Healthy Youth Survey, between 22-26% of our Island County 8th, 10th and 12th graders had seriously considered suicide within the past year. Through Forefront, students at South Whidbey High School were asked to volunteer if they had a passion for helping others, a commitment to raising suicide awareness and prevention, and were open to speaking in front of their peers. After a rigorous application process, including a panel interview, these students were selected as peer to peer student trainers. After giving up their time to participate in several working lunch time meetings, these students in teams of 2, gave suicide prevention presentations to their peers, and continue to create other projects to help the school be a safe place for all students.

Beyond their peer to peer instruction and presentations, these students have committed to be advocates and supports within their student body, encouraging student use of available resources and alerting teachers and counselors to students with suicidal behaviors. With a student body of 500, these students are the heroes, being a stand that life is valuable, precious, and worth living. It takes courage, strength, and conviction to stand out among peers, especially in high school. For standing out and taking a stand to advocate for life, these 8 students, are challenging the status quo and stepping up to be heroes that save lives. The Island County Board of Health and Community Health Advisory Board are pleased to present the South Whidbey High School Forefront Peer to Peer Trainers with the 2019 Linda Lee Martens Community Health Hero Award.