

## Community Services

**Y**oung voices do not fall on deaf ears. Kids in Crisis impacts the lives of many Fairfield County families and children through far-reaching community outreach services. This extensive menu of prevention programs, offered in grades K-12 throughout the area, reinforce the Agency's goal of addressing problems before they become overwhelming.

This year, more than 8,000 elementary school students participated in the Kids in Crisis SafeTalk program, provided free of charge to schools, youth groups, camps, and other organizations. Using an age-appropriate approach, SafeTalk teaches children ways to recognize dangerous behaviors, including physical, verbal and sexual abuse, bullying, and "stranger danger." A collaboration among Kids in Crisis professionals, educators, parents, and trained volunteers, SafeTalk helps children acknowledge the voice inside that tells them something is just not "right." Since its creation in 1999, SafeTalk has been presented to more than 37,600 students in grades K-5.

For adolescents, Kids in Crisis offers its unique TeenTalk program, placing an in-school Counselor at area middle schools and high schools. This experienced Counselor provides a confidential support system for teens dealing with the issues and stresses of adolescence. The TeenTalk Counselor serves as an important advocate for teenagers and a critical adjunct to school staff. In addition to being there for teens, TeenTalk Counselors provide group sessions for parents and students on topics ranging from internet safety to peer relationships. This year, TeenTalk Counselors provided ongoing, individualized support to 304 students struggling with school pressures, family conflict, depression, and more. ■

*"As a TeenTalk Counselor, you're kind of like a cast.  
The cast doesn't fix the problem,  
but it provides what you need to heal."*

—TEEN TALK CLIENT



*A student came to see the TeenTalk Counselor because of mounting anxiety; the senior was concerned about her future and getting into college. At the same time, she was cutting classes regularly. The TeenTalk Counselor recognized that the student needed a great deal of structure and positive reinforcement and helped her strategize before potentially stressful situations to alleviate anxiety. For a time, the student visited the TeenTalk Counselor's office every morning before attending class. With the support and encouragement of the Counselor, the student was able to get in touch with her emotions, face her fears, and set more realistic goals for herself. She began attending classes regularly and preparing herself for college. The TeenTalk Counselor suggested she get a part-time job while finishing high school and encouraged her to consider college sports. Her once daily visits to the Counselor's office gradually diminished. As graduation approached, she was successfully balancing school and work and looking forward to her freshman year, when she will participate on the college swim team.*