

making a difference

# Teens Helping Teens

By Kim Tarnopolski

The lives of teenagers are as complex as ever. Growing up is complicated and at times, difficult and confusing. Homework, sports, extra-curricular activities, and relationships have always been a mainstay of middle and high school students. Yet, today's world seems to up the ante with rigorous demands coupled with technology.

As parents, we don't always know how to stay in tune with the world our kids are navigating. We can also find it difficult to recognize the difference between typical growing up problems and those that are more serious. Often times growing kids find it hard to communicate their needs.

Knowing this, our job as parents is helping our kids identify people they can turn to for support when they might not turn to us. Without setting up these connections for our teen, they may turn to someone or something that is destructive. Research shows that most teens will turn to their peers before turning to an adult. This is where Teen Lifeline comes in.

Teen Lifeline is a nonprofit that provides a safe, confidential and crucial service where teens help teens make healthy decisions together. They offer a peer-to-peer hotline for teens struggling with bullying, dating and family relationships, sexuality and pregnancy, life skills, depression, self-injury, and suicide. Teens may call or text 602-248-TEEN for help.

The peer counselors are not there to judge or to laugh, criticize or punish. They are available to listen and to help find solutions to whatever is happening in the teen's life. Teens can talk to someone their own age who understands what they are going through because they have gone through it too. This is not an advice hotline; it is a place where teens help empower other teens to help themselves.

The cost to provide help and hope to one teen caller who is considering suicide is \$250. Julie Krause, a member of 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun, secured a \$8,800 donation that will be used to train more teens on the hotline. Krause's passion for the charity runs deep. "I nominated Teen Lifeline because teens need to know they are not alone and someone is there to listen. Teen Lifeline provides a teen perspective; where teens help other teens make healthy choices when they need it most. They learn that hope is just one phone call away."

Visit [www.TeenLifeline.org](http://www.TeenLifeline.org) and [www.100wvcvalleyofthesun.org](http://www.100wvcvalleyofthesun.org) to learn more about these organizations.

## ADDISON TAYLOR

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Scott@at-fj.com • Marla@at-fj.com \* 480-344-9318  
6900 E. Camelback Rd., Suite 604 Scottsdale, Arizona 85251



