



## Bridge Rail Foundation Newsletter

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#### A Special Note from Kevin Hines 2010—A Critical Year and an Action Plan One More Thought

December 2009  
Vol 3 #6

Stop the Suicides at the Golden Gate Bridge

Spread the word—send this on to a friend.

Dear Friends,

As you know, a public agency in our community has allowed unsafe and deadly conditions to exist now for more than 72 years.



In spite of recent studies, plans and promises, the deaths continue—about 30 per year now. These tragedies—two or three every month—are preventable. All that's needed is a taller safety railing or proper safety net.

I am speaking, of course, of suicide from the Golden Gate Bridge—a topic I know well as one of the very few individuals to jump from the bridge and survive. We cannot allow a public facility to continue as death's launching pad.

A public campaign to stop this needless death is underway and that's why I am writing. We need your support.

#### Studies are not solutions

I am sure you have read of the recent studies—wind tunnel testing, engineering and environmental studies are all complete or soon will be. For all the good news these studies bring us, they simply establish that improved safety netting *can be built—not that it will be built.*

And we have seen studies before. Every ten years or so, the bridge district studies the issue. Then, public interest fades and the district returns to its "do nothing" state. But not this time—not if we keep the issue in front of the public and push for construction funds. With your help, we can ensure this problem is finally resolved.

Quite simply, there will be no action to stop the suicides on the Golden Gate Bridge unless we campaign for it. The Bridge Rail Foundation is doing just that—and we need your help.

Please donate what you can to the Bridge Rail Foundation—on line at [www.bridgerail.org](http://www.bridgerail.org). or simply, [Click Here](#)

Thank You

Kevin Hines

P.S. Please take a moment to donate now—then forward this note to others you think may be able to help as well— Thank You.

#### 2010-- a Critical Year and an Action Plan

Next year is a most critical decision making period in the effort to end suicides at the Golden Gate Bridge.

Over these 12 months we must campaign for development of a federal system to fund suicide prevention structures on bridges throughout the US. In addition, the bridge district should apply for and MTC should fund the design phase of the GGB suicide safety net. Falling behind in either of these two efforts will seriously erode the opportunity to end suicides at the Gate in the near future.



In the last edition of this newsletter, we asked for your ideas and input for our work next year. Following that response, and other input from our volunteers, the Bridge Rail Foundation board met and approved an **Action Plan for 2010**. Here is what we plan to do:

**1-- Keep the issue before the public.** BRF will continue to develop and release new data and information on the GG bridge suicide problem. We will also seek at least three additional venues for the "Whose Shoes?" exhibit. Finally BRF will initiate an art or multi media project to capture the tragedy of bridge suicides in a visual media.

**2--Outreach to other communities with problem bridges.** In addition to national organizations, our efforts will be strengthened with coordinated, active support from other communities with bridge suicide problems. We have identified problems in Washington, Florida, Ohio, New York and Minnesota where local organizations have begun efforts to resolve their bridge suicide problem. And we have already seen great benefit in working with our Santa Barbara friends seeking to end suicides at the Cold Spring Canyon Bridge. 2010 is the year to focus this support and deliver on the policy changes all these communities need.

**3--Organize & energize national support.** Our goal is to get active, engaged support for our efforts from the high visibility national organizations concerned with suicide prevention and mental health. Most of these organizations have endorsed efforts to resolve the Golden Gate bridge problem, but 2010 will require their active support—and we will bring them more fully into the fight.

**4--Decision maker contact.** Next year will see several layers of decision making addressing the suicide problem at the Gate. BRF board members will specifically track and maintain contact with--the Golden Gate Bridge District, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, CalTrans, and federal authorities. In addition we will organize testimony at public hearings and other presentations as needed.

**5--Communications.** BRF will continue this newsletter and publish monthly with revised and reenergized reporting. We will also revise and expand our web site.

All of these efforts depend on our volunteers--suicide survivors, survivor families, suicide prevention activists and mental health advocates have been our base of support. That support has seen us move the bridge district well forward--but our goal of installing a physical barrier to suicide on the bridge is still to be reached.

#### Please help in any way you can:

If you can volunteer or would like more information on any of the activities described above, please send us a note and tell us of your interest--[Click Here](#).

As Kevin noted above--contributions are needed and greatly appreciated. If you can donate, please do so now. Go to [www.bridgerail.org](http://www.bridgerail.org) and click on the "Donate Now" button or simply [Click Here](#)

#### One More Thought

Lisa Firestone--an internationally recognized suicide researcher and therapist recently published an interesting and informative article in the Huffington Post.

There is lots of good information here and an important perspective-- the article is well worth the read. [Click Here](#) for the link.

One point she makes is the critical importance of personal connections in suicide prevention. Retelling an important part of Kevin Hines story, she reminds us of his bus riding to the bridge. Kevin recalls thinking he would not jump, if just one person offered a kind word or expressed genuine concern.

Often as not, that one person is just a phone call away--a caring, sympathetic voice is ready to talk and trained to listen. They are the volunteers at suicide prevention hotlines--working in local agencies throughout most Bay Area counties. Their quiet dedication has saved countless lives, yet their story lacks the drama to attract much attention.

If you get a chance this season, take a moment to show your appreciation. Click on a link below for contact information:

[Click Here for Alameda County](#)  
[Click Here for Contra Costa County](#)  
[Click Here for Marin](#)  
[Click Here for San Francisco](#)

#### Help Us Fight to Install the Net

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Volunteer—Click [here](#) to send us a note.

Request a Speaker—Click [here](#) to tell us of a venue for a speaker.

Forward a copy of this newsletter to a friend— [Click here to forward](#)

Contribute—Click below to donate online (deductible for federal and California tax purposes)

[Click here to donate on line](#)