



**THE Carson J Spencer**  
**FOUNDATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WORKING MINDS: NEW FOUNDATION PROMOTES MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

**DENVER, January 21, 2008** – The mind skills of innovation, analysis, resiliency, and communication are essential in today’s knowledge-based economy, yet one in five American workers will experience a mental disability in any year (Surgeon General). Workplaces where management provides mental-wellness support systems enjoy a competitive advantage:

- After spending funds to improve employee mental health **McDonnell Douglas** experienced a four-fold return on investment through improved absenteeism rates, fewer medical claims and sharply reduced turnover
- **The First National Bank of Chicago** reported a 32% drop in insurance claims after implementing a comprehensive early detection mental health program.

“We can no longer tip-toe around the issue of mental health in the workplace,” states Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, Executive Director for the Carson J Spencer Foundation, the only suicide prevention organization that exclusively targets the working aged population. “Suicide and mental illness clearly impact the morale and bottom line of a workplace, and we need to tackle these issues directly.”

Those who die by suicide are often younger people in the prime of their earning, spending and productivity. Often, prior to their death, they exhibited clear signs of distress and noticeable declines in their productivity and, or, creativity. These people are otherwise valuable parents, employees, consumers, and citizens – lost forever. Workplaces are an essential partner in shifting the tide of this major public health issue.

“The first step is to deconstruct the stigma associated with suicide and mental illness,” says Spencer-Thomas. “In order for that to occur, we must become more comfortable talking about these issues. What better way to start than at a community event that celebrates hope and recovery through the arts?”

On February 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM, business leaders will be joined by scores of mental health advocates, artists, students and caring citizens for the opening night of the Mirrors and Metaphors professional art exhibit. Colorado’s beloved nature photographer, John Fielder will make brief remarks and dinner will be provided by LifeStyles Catering. West Pines Lutheran Medical Center and Regis University are sponsoring this event. Proceeds will benefit the Carson J Spencer Foundation, the Second Wind Fund, and Access Gallery. Tickets may be purchased through <http://www.blacktie-colorado.com/rsvp>. Enter the Event Code: CJSart08.

### **About the Carson J Spencer Foundation**

The Carson J Spencer Foundation, a non-profit organization, was founded in April 2005 following the suicide of its namesake. The Carson J Spencer Foundation envisions a world where leaders and communities are committed to sustaining a passion for life. We sustain a passion for life through:

- funding social enterprise for sustainable mental health initiatives
- delivering innovative suicide prevention programs targeting the working age population
- supporting the education of emerging entrepreneurs and leaders

For more information, please call Sally Spencer-Thomas 303-458-4323 or visit [www.CarsonJSpencer.org](http://www.CarsonJSpencer.org).

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