



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ACTIVE MINDS: COLLEGE STUDENTS GET INVOLVED IN SUICIDE PREVENTION

**DENVER, January 21, 2008**— “College leaders need to get involved with suicide prevention because it is something that is incredibly prevalent but unspoken about especially on college campuses,” mentions senior Molly Fortune, Co-President of the student mental health advocacy group Active Minds at Regis University. Many Active Minds members and student leaders will be in attendance at a unique mental health event called “Mirrors and Metaphors: Reflections on Suicide, Mental Health and Healing through the Arts” – an art exhibit hosted by Access Gallery (909 Santa Fe; Denver, CO) from February 8<sup>th</sup> – March 7<sup>th</sup>.

“Young adults are passionate about preventing suicide among their peers,” states Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, project director of the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant -- \$243,000 in federal funds designated to create a comprehensive suicide prevention program at Regis University.

Also on faculty at Regis University, Dr. Spencer-Thomas observed, “Since we started this work increasing numbers are getting involved in community walks, scholarly projects, and internships addressing suicide prevention. Students really get this issue because it impacts them now – many already know a family member or friend who has taken his or her life.”

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. Campuses have experienced an escalating mental health crisis for the past decade and now most have realized that this issue requires a full community response – not just the counseling work of intervention but the effort of students, faculty and administrators.

“The first step is to deconstruct the fear 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 is celebrating hope and recovery through the arts?”

Regis is a major sponsor of the opening night of “Mirrors and Metaphors: Suicide, Mental Health and Healing through the Arts” at 6:30PM on February 8, 2008 at the Access Gallery (909 Santa Fe, Denver; tickets are \$50).

At the event, Regis students will be joined by scores of mental health advocates, artists, business leaders and caring citizens for the opening night of the Mirrors and Metaphors professional art exhibit. Colorado’s beloved nature photographer, John Fielder (who lost his son to suicide almost two years ago) 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 [www.blacktie-colorado.com](http://www.blacktie-colorado.com).

**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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