

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dana Twidwell. My daughter was friends with Cady Housh. There was a point in time when she was at my home every day. We would go grocery shopping for her favorite foods and she would go straight to the refrigerator as soon as she walked into my house and lord could she eat!. She was a wonderful young lady. Her laugh was so contagious. She was welcomed at my home, even if we were not there. About a week ago, I was giving my daughter, Meena, a hard time about losing her house keys. She quietly told me she had given them to Cady. I loved that girl so much. I saw her almost every day. I, also, had many in depth conversations with her. I was worried she was making some bad decisions, but heaven help me, I didn't know they were signs.

Cady died November 9th, 2014. We attended a suicide awareness seminar in January of 2015. Meena and I both walked away wishing we had attended before November 9th, 2014. We would have had the guidance to know what to look for. I know teachers have a lot on their plates but most of the tenured ones could tell you stories about losing one of their pupils so young. Now imagine they could have prevented it? With just a little bit of training this could have been avoided. This will not cost anything but some of the teachers' time. Not every kid comes from a home where there is someone who is willing to talk about their mental health since it's not an easy subject to discuss (which, hopefully, will change one day).

You all have a chance today to help diminish the stat that says suicide is one of the leading killers of teenagers. It's 100% avoidable! Close your eyes, think about your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews. Do you think their teachers should be trained to know these signs? Yeah, your child might not be at risk but what about their best friend? Do you think your child should have to learn about losing a friend like this? Do you want them to blame themselves? Live with an undeserved guilt for the rest of their lives? I can tell you, you don't.

In closing, passing the Jason Flatt act won't bring Cady back but it will give other kids a fighting chance. Let's educate the people who come in contact with our kids ever day!

Thank You for your time,

Dana Twidwell  
Aka Meena's Mom