

Didi Hirsch Takes Stage with Logic at MTV VMAs



Fifty Didi Hirsch staffers, clients and volunteers joined rapper **Logic** onstage for a powerful performance of his suicide prevention song, “1-800-273-8255,” at the MTV Video Music Awards on August 27.

In a partnership with the National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline, of which **Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention Center** is a lead member, Logic invited Didi Hirsch survivors of suicide loss and attempts to participate in the performance to show that suicide affects people of all backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.

Named after the Lifeline phone number, the hit song has been among the top 50 songs globally since it was released in April and has raised awareness about the availability of support services for people who are thinking about suicide or worried about someone else.

Didi Hirsch’s call volume hit a record high of 470 calls on the day of the Video Music Awards, over 100 more calls than we received at our previous peak following the suicide of **Robin Williams**. Among the nation’s busiest, our counselors answer nearly half of the Lifeline calls for all of California and our Center is one of two in the nation with English- and Spanish-speaking crisis counselors available 24/7.

REAL TALK Promotes Real Change for Teens

Teenagers today have access to so much information but are alarmingly uninformed about their own safety and wellbeing. That’s why **Heather Sardella**, lead clinical supervisor at Didi Hirsch Glendale, spearheaded REAL TALK, a program that helps teenage girls develop into mental health ambassadors for their peers.

Funded by a generous grant from Soroptimist International’s Glendale Chapter, Heather and co-facilitator, **Christine Brinn**, created the summer workshops on the premise that teens are more receptive to what other teens have to say and can help each other make good choices and avoid tragic outcomes.

The first session covered suicide prevention, the second-leading cause of death among teenagers. The second workshop discussed sexual exploitation and how to recognize the danger signs. The third one explored the con-



Leadership team for REAL TALK Workshops and Teen Summit (L-R) Christine Brinn, Karine Iskandzhanyan, Heather Sardella, Jonathan Picos

nection between mental and physical health.

In treatment for issues ranging from depression and anxiety to childhood trauma, the teens are self-aware and insightful. “If you’re told over and over that you’re worthless and nobody loves you, you are more susceptible to being a victim,” Clarissa, 17, said about sexual exploitation.

Lulu, 17, who once felt inept when a friend was suicidal, said the workshop on suicide was especially helpful and that she is eager to share what she learned with her peers.

“They listen more if it’s a teen helping a teen,” she said. “It’s really cool to be someone who’s got the information.”

East West Bank Champions Efforts to Erase Stigma



"We have to let people know that most of us, no matter our age, race or gender, will have a mental health disorder and that with treatment, people get better," says Didi Hirsch's President/CEO Dr. Kita S. Curry.



With the support of **East West Bank Foundation**, Didi Hirsch created "**Stigma**," a nationwide online video campaign aimed at erasing the stigma of mental illness. Running during May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month, the campaign included 11 short videos featuring a diverse cross-section of Didi Hirsch clients, staffers, board members, advocates and celebrities who survived and thrived through a mental health crisis.

Among the subjects were TV personality **Melissa Rivers**, writer-director **Maya Forbes**, lawyer/professor **Elyn R. Saks**, actress **Eva LaRue** and Didi Hirsch Medical Director **Dr. Curley Bonds**. "Someone with depression or schizophrenia, that is simply a part of them. It's not the whole person," says Board member

Lisa Petrazzolo, who talks about her brother's experience with bipolar disorder in one of the videos.

The campaign expanded Didi Hirsch's social media presence, garnering more than 322,000 impressions and nearly 8,000 engagements across our social media channels.

Our Facebook fan base grew by 15%, while our Instagram following grew by 45%. Our Facebook account received the most impressions during the campaign, but our Twitter account had the most engagements.

Special thanks to **Rudolph I. Estrada**, former Executive Vice Chair of Didi Hirsch's Board of Directors, who championed the video campaign, and to **Shawn Amos**, a former Didi Hirsch Board member, who produced and directed the videos. To view, visit www.erasingthestigma.org/video.

Healing Through Surfing with Ocean Therapy

Juan, 9, a client of Didi Hirsch's **S. Mark Taper Foundation Center**, entered the ocean for the first time during an ocean therapy surfing lesson this summer. When a powerful wave knocked him off his surfboard, Juan got out of the water and told his instructor he was done. But eventually he mustered enough courage to give it another try. "It felt kind of scary," he said. "I expected it to be way more slower, but it was just so fun."

Overcoming obstacles and developing confidence and resilience are what Ocean Therapy sessions offered by **The Jimmy Miller Foundation** are all about. The Manhattan Beach foundation offers free surf lessons to child clients of Didi Hirsch and other at-risk children throughout the year. Most of the kids live in poverty with limited access to joyful experiences; many have mental health challenges or have suffered physical,

sexual or emotional abuse.

With the slogan "Healing Others As We Heal Ourselves," **Nancy and Jim Miller** formed the foundation in memory of their eldest son, Jimmy, a surfer and lifeguard who suffered from mental illness and took his own life in 2004. Watching Juan wade back into the water after his wipe out, Nancy smiled: "You fall down, you get back up. That's surfing and that's life."



Catching a wave with Ocean Therapy



Instructors and students discuss how they have overcome challenges in their lives

Erasing the Stigma Leadership Awards breaks records for Didi Hirsch's 75th Anniversary

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services celebrated 75 years of service and raised a record \$700,000 at its annual Erasing the Stigma Leadership Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on April 27, 2017.

After a moving performance that included her iconic version of "Both Sides Now," singer/songwriter **Judy Collins**, who has written extensively about mental health issues, received the **Beatrice Stern Media Award** from Didi Hirsch's daughter **Nancy Rubin**.

Filmmaker **Paul Dalio**, who wrote and directed the film *Touched With Fire*, received a Leadership Award. Actor **George Segal** presented the Mental Health Ambassador Award to writer/actress **Anna Akana**, who has nearly 2 million subscribers on Youtube, where she posts personal videos that often address mental health issues and suicide.

TV personality **Melissa Rivers**, a 2016 honoree and suicide prevention advocate, emceed the star-studded event, while comedian **Wendy Liebman** helped lead a floor appeal using text-to-donate technology—an agency first. The event was chaired by Didi Hirsch Board member **Laura Ornest**, who is also leading next year's Awards on Thursday, April 26, 2018. We hope you can join us!



Judy Collins performs



(L-R): Honorees Anna Akana and Paul Dalio with Kita S. Curry, PhD and emcee Melissa Rivers



George Segal and event chair Laura Ornest



Three generations of the Rubin/Hirsch family

A New Home for Suicide Prevention Center

10277 W. Olympic Blvd.



Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services has purchased a new building to serve as the standalone home of its **Suicide Prevention Center**—the first and only one of its kind in the nation.

Having the words "Suicide Prevention Center" on the building at **10277 W. Olympic Boulevard** on the southwest end of Century City will

also be a first, bringing the once-taboo topic out of the shadows.

The 14,000-square foot building will allow the Center to meet increasing demand for its life-saving services. It will expand support for people who have survived a suicide attempt or loss, and establish a training academy that instructs health professionals how to recognize and respond to warning signs. The new center also will allow us to offer specialized therapy and support, including private pay opportunities for people who have attempted or lost someone to suicide. It will also have a research and innovation hub.

Last year, the Didi Hirsch Suicide

Prevention Center helped more than 100,000 children and adults. Counselors at our 24/7 English/Spanish Crisis Line answered nearly 87,000 calls, chats and texts from around the United States—a number that is expected to double by 2025. We train thousands of people in suicide prevention, including emergency responders such as the **FBI** and **LAPD SWAT**. We have also trained mental health systems around the nation in our treatment model for people who have attempted suicide.

The purchase was made possible with lead gifts from the **Nickoll, Fletcher** and **Lichstein** families. Staffers will move in once renovations are completed in **Spring 2018**.



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**There is still time to
register or donate!**
aliveandrunning.org

**Sunday, September 24th
8:00 am**

**West 88th St & La Tijera Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(north of LAX)**



ALIVE&RUNNING
5K Walk/Run for Suicide Prevention

Mission Statement

Didi Hirsch transforms lives by providing quality mental health and substance use services in communities where stigma or poverty limits access.

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**SUICIDE
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www.didihirsch.org

**For information about how you can support Didi Hirsch, call
Joel Wyatt, Vice President of Development, at 310-751-5425.**

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