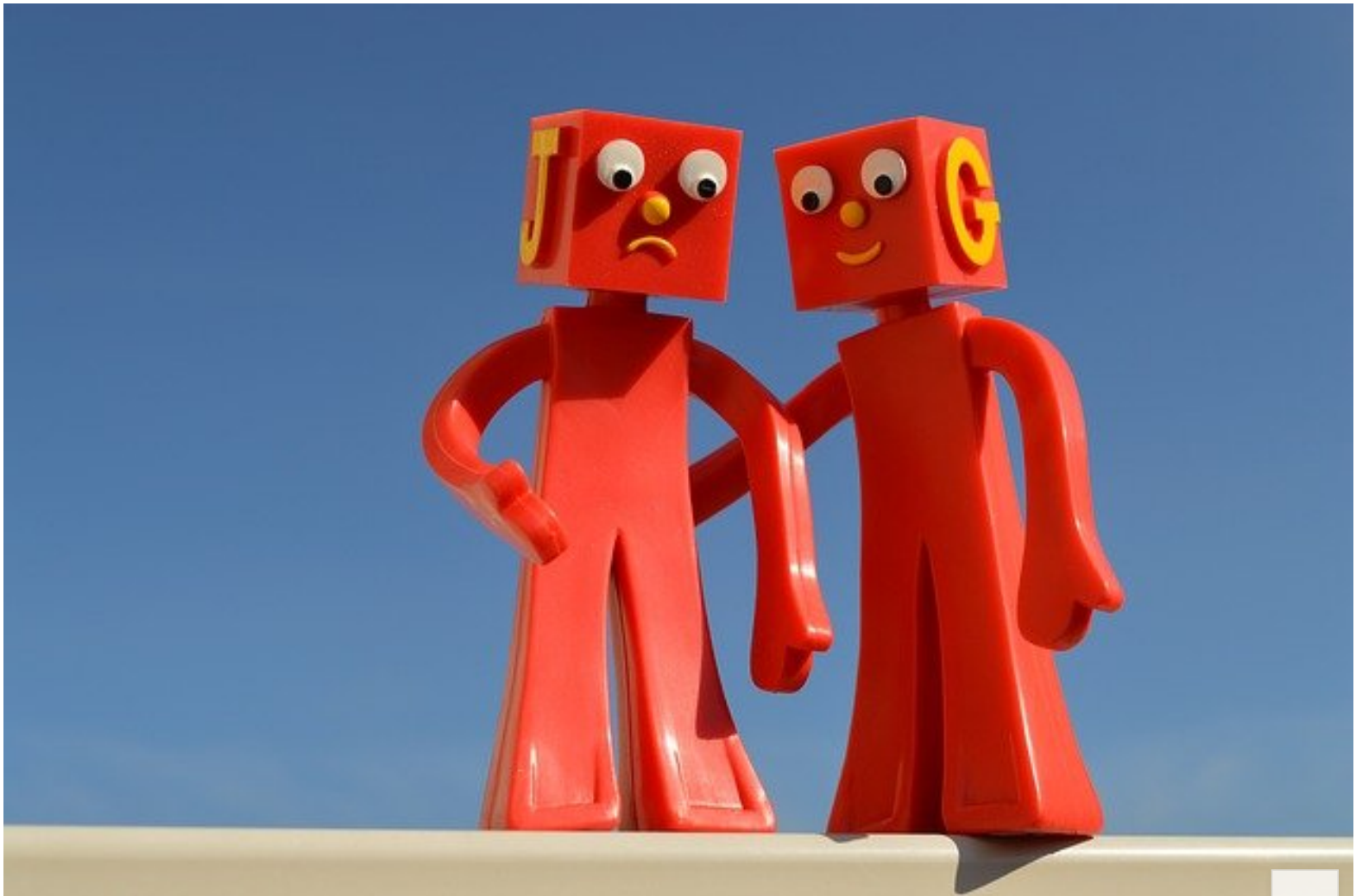


## Guest Editorial: East County suicides down, but goal should be zero

October 23, 2020 in Editorials, Featured, Guest Editorial, Opinion [0](#)



Every day, 134 Americans die from suicide. Now, here in California, the annual suicide rate is an estimated 10.81%. California has one of the lowest rates in the U.S. However, should we be proud of that number?

There were 11.3 suicides per 100,000 people in the East County last year. That's the lowest it has been in many years and down significantly from 2018, when there were 18.5 suicides per 100,000 people. The data is from the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office.

We can do more to prevent suicide. The goal should be zero.

Suicides can surge from any small change in context. Time, environment and specific situations can influence suicidal thoughts. If someone is having these thoughts, a good friend or other person may notice subtle changes in behavior and help that person seek resources for mental wellness.

If the person with suicidal thoughts is accompanied by a good friend, they will notice the signs and ask what's wrong, they will form a supportive and nonbiased environment in which they will comfort them. We can all keep the suicide crisis help line information available in our purse or wallet, to have it ready when we need to support a friend, or even ourselves.

The San Diego Access and Crisis Line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 888-724-7240. The service is free and available in multiple languages.

Thanks to organizations like East County Youth Coalition, I feel educated on mental health. I feel that I have some important knowledge on how to approach such a delicate topic like suicide. I know that I have the power to halt suicide, and I know that everyone else does as well. It's just a matter of taking threats seriously, and helping our loved ones connect with the help they need.

Suicidal people, about 81% of the time, tell someone what they are going to do and when. Through this fact we can conclude that avoiding suicides is just a matter of taking threats seriously. The reason why these warnings go unnoticed is because they are either underestimated, less valued than a relationship, or they are avoided out of fear of not knowing what to say.

People may not see the gravity of things. They think certain suicidal phrases are normal. Suicide notes and messages can be found anywhere nowadays. They are found written in a public restroom. They are sung in popular songs and are in the most popular slogans. After seeing these threats so often, people begin to think nothing about them. This contributes to not being able to detect warning signs when they are actually real.

Another reason why people don't speak up is out of loyalty to the victim. They don't want to rat them out and have them be angry with them. But what should we prefer: Having a friend who hates us for ratting them out or not having that friend at all?

Sometimes people notice the gravity of situations through warning signs but they don't speak up out of fear they might say the wrong thing and make it worse. This fear is something understandable, especially when the victim is a loved one. For these reasons we must educate ourselves on how to read warning signs and how to act on them. We can all learn the best ways to support someone who is sharing thoughts of suicide.



724-7240. Trained and experienced counselors are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day to provide support, referrals, and crisis intervention.

You can also call the Access and Crisis Line if you are concerned about someone, just need to talk, have questions about how to offer support, or if you are looking for information about community resources, mental health referrals, and alcohol and drug support services. If emergency medical care is needed, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital.

— *Jasmine Jauregui is a junior at Monte Vista High School in Spring Valley and a member of the East County Youth Coalition.*

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