

Operation Round Up Helps SAFE:TEEN Save Lives

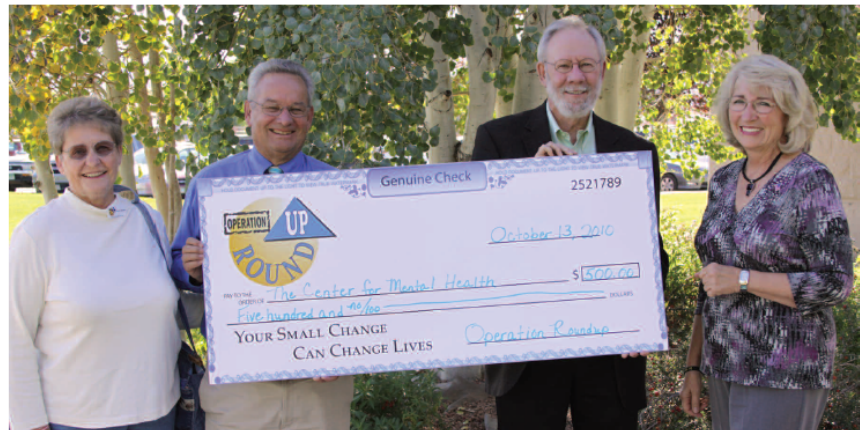
"Thank you....this class gave me hope."

"I learned a lot in this class and it helped open my eyes to how suicidal people feel."

Comments like these, from students who have completed **SAFE:TEEN Suicide Prevention** training provided through The Center for Mental Health, help keep the focus laser-sharp for program coordinator Judy Schmalz and the team of volunteer trainers who provide information and training to middle and high school students in Delta and Montrose counties. The message is that, by learning how to recognize the warning signs of suicidal depression, and knowing what to say and do, you can save the life of someone you care about.

The Center for Mental Health, a non-profit organization, has provided wellness treatment for people with mental health and substance abuse issues in Western Colorado since 1964. SAFE:TEEN is part of the Center's Suicide Prevention Program, serving schools in counties which have some of the highest suicide rates in a state that has the 6th highest rate in the nation.

In 2009 the suicide rate in Colorado increased by 18 percent, making it



From left to right: Operation Round Up board members Jeannie Jardine and Carl Clay present a check to The Center For Mental Health's Executive Director Jon Gordon and SAFE:TEEN Program Coordinator Judy Schmalz.

more critical than ever to increase awareness through training. According to statistics released in September by the University of Colorado Depression Center, last year 940 residents of Colorado died by suicide – more than in motor vehicle accidents and homicides combined. Moreover, suicide is the third leading cause of death for Colorado youth between the ages of 10 and 24.

The SAFE:TEEN program is funded primarily by grants. When funding fell short this summer, The Center turned to DMEA's Operation Round Up program for help. The \$500 donation from Round Up makes it possible for the team of Center and volunteer trainers to take SAFE:TEEN on the

road to schools across Delta and Montrose counties throughout the 2010/2011 school year and beyond.

Once again the "small change" donated through the generosity of DMEA's member-owners, who round up their bills each month to the nearest dollar, is making a huge difference in the lives of teens across DMEA's service area - you are, quite literally, saving lives.

For more information about SAFE:TEEN, call 252-3228, or to donate directly to the SAFE:TEEN Program, log onto www.center-mh.org. For more information or to sign up for Operation Round Up, visit www.dmea.com.