



4010 Executive Park Drive
Suite 320
Cincinnati, OH 45241
grantushope.org

Ohio, Southeast Indiana and
Northern Kentucky Provider of:

Grant Us Hope Organization – HOPE SQUAD Mission, Vision and List of Signature Program

The mission of Grant Us Hope is to transform the conversation around youth mental health and suicide prevention and bridge local service gaps through collaborative, evidence-based research, education and programs. Our work centers on EDUCATING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING young people to build capacity around mental health issues and change the culture within their schools.

Grant Us Hope was founded by Diane Egbers after the loss of her son, Grant, to suicide at age 15. Grant was a sophomore at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. He struggled with migraine headaches, the result of multiple concussions as a young athlete, and depression. From Grant's perspective, the only way he could escape the physical and emotional pain was to take his own life. Since that time, Diane has made it her mission to do everything possible to make sure other families do not struggle with what her family experienced losing Grant.

*Grant Us Hope's signature program **Hope Squad** is one of the only peer-to-peer evidenced-based programs in the country.* It has been effectively saving young lives in Ohio schools since 2018. Hope Squad members are selected by their peers then trained to identify the signs of mental crisis and how to intervene to get help from an adult. These members become the eyes and ears of the school, looking for and assisting students who are struggling emotionally, need a friend or just need someone to listen. Hope Squad also promotes conversations and awareness around mental health and suicide prevention reducing stigma and opening the door for the entire school community to have conversations about both of these serious topics.

Schools have tremendous needs around supports for youth with mental health and suicide prevention. According to Ohio's Department of Health, suicide has become the leading cause of death for kids ages 10-14 and the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24. Grant Us Hope believes that focusing on the education of young people will help address the mental health issues that this generation of students face. As a result, Grant Us Hope has experienced significant growth in bringing Hope Squad programs to Ohio's schools, expanding from just three pilot schools in March of 2018 to over 125 schools today. The geographic make-up of Hope Squad schools range from urban to rural (12% urban, 66% suburban, 22% rural), big to small and poor to wealthy (24% high poverty; 76% average to low poverty). In addition, the age groups of students involved in the program is 78% High School (ages 14-18), 33% Middle School (ages 11-13) and 5% Elementary School (ages 8-10). Overall, we presently have trained 6,500 Hope Squad members and supported over 250,000 students by having a Hope Squad in each of their schools.

To track the effectiveness of its Hope Squad Program, Grant Us Hope annually collects data from its schools regarding suicide referrals and suicide ideation. Over the past two years, the organization has shown that Hope Squad schools show a 65% increase in referrals made by students; 22% of those



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student referrals were made by Hope Squad members and 25% were made by other students who were not Hope Squad members. When students begin referring themselves or each other for help with mental health issues, it is a strong indication that there is a positive shift in the school's culture regarding mental health issues and its stigma.

Overall, the Hope Squad program provides tools for students to address not only mental wellness and suicide prevention but also social/emotional wellness. Arming our youth with the skills necessary to open doors for understanding and coping with mental health issues not only saves lives but enables students to live life to its fullest potential.