

Teen Talk

(360) 397-CHAT

Hello Readers,

Welcome back! Today we're introducing a new segment called *Community Spotlight*. In these posts I'll feature organizations and resources within the community that the SCTF partners with. On our Home page you'll find a list of many of our partners but I feel it's important to give a little more detail.

Recently, I spoke with Clark County Teen Talk coordinator Kris Henriksen. Teen Talk is a warm-line offering non-judgemental peer support. Trained volunteers assist young people through various issues they are facing. Volunteers represent a diverse array of backgrounds, personalities, and outlooks on the world. In this blog post I will outline my conversation with Kris. Thanks in advance for reading, and I'll see you next time!

If there were only three things you could tell someone about Teen Talk, what would they be?

- 1) TeenTalk is not a crisis line—it is a source of empathy and resource information for young people.
- 2) Our teen volunteers do an incredible job of listening and they take it seriously.
- 3) TeenTalk is almost always anonymous and confidential, but if a young person is at risk of harm to themselves or others we are mandatory reporters and we will make every effort to get that young person the help and support they need.

What is the impact you see Teen Talk having on youth or young adults?

“There are fundamentally two major impacts. One is the impact on youth in our community who reach out to us. For those youth, the impact is the huge benefit of being truly listened to, to be able to speak your truth and get both empathy and resource information from our volunteers. While we often can't fix the situation there is huge benefit in feeling safe, valued and supported. The second impact is what happens in the lives of our volunteers. For those current and past volunteers the impacts are around skills building—communication, listening, problem solving, empathy, etc. They also are impacted by becoming more aware of the struggles of others, which helps them become more compassionate and insightful people on the planet.”

Is there anything I didn't cover that you'd like to have featured in this blog post?

Our pen became our mascot recently. Peppy is incredibly photogenic, kind and brave- check out Peppy Penerson on Facebook! If you work with teens, I invite you to come to a monthly I Work With Teens meeting I organize— it's a great way to get better connected!

Contact Kris.Henriksen@clark.wa.gov

Is there a lesson(s) you've learned while working with Teen Talk that the community would benefit from hearing?

“I think a big lesson I am continually learning is how important it is to not make assumptions about young people. I have learned that just because a young person is smiling and cheery and helpful that does not mean they might need support for so many reasons. I try to not assume who does or does not need support. I am also learning that young people are phenomenal humans, not people in the process of growing up to become phenomenal humans. They share immense kindness, they have amazing opinions and they are capable of incredible things. As a group, they get labeled in ways that are unfortunate and inaccurate. They are some of the best people I know.”

Are there ways the community can get involved in Teen Talk?

Young people can join us as a volunteer. If they are 15 to 19 years old, they complete pre-service training and then volunteer for one 3 hour shift each week. For those in the community who are not teens—they can help us with distributing our brochures and business cards, they can send support or rice krispy treats to our volunteers. I am always happy to meet with people to talk about creative ways to be involved.



@TeenTalkTalk



@PeppyPenerson



@PeppyPenerson