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For Immediate release

Anti-Violence Candlelight Vigil to Mark World Suicide Prevention Day

New York City, USA, August 24, 2019: 'Working Together to Prevent Suicide' is the theme for the World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) 2019. Under this theme, The Caribbean Voice (TCV) is urging communities everywhere to organize candlelight vigils on September 10 to mark WSPD this year.

TCV, an NGO focusing on suicide and abuse prevention, launched the Annual National Anti-Violence Candlelight Vigil, to mark World Suicide Prevention Day in Guyana, in 2016. The vigil was quickly extended to focus on violence in general, of which suicide and abuse are manifestations. This year, vigils are expected to be held in Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Vincent, the US and Canada. At the same time TCV is urging NGOs and activists in other nations to also launch similar initiatives in their countries.

Each year over one million persons die of suicide, which has become a public health crisis in many nations including Guyana. This represents a global mortality rate of 16 people per 100,000 or one death every 40 seconds. It is predicted that by 2020 the rate of death will increase to one every 20 seconds. Males are four times more likely to die from suicide than are females. However, females are more likely to attempt suicide than are males. Globally youth suicide is increasing at the greatest rate and is the third

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leading cause of death for young people 15-24 years in the US.

While a vigil, in itself, is not sufficient to tackle suicide and other forms of violence it can be one in a basket of measures. Non-political in nature, the vigil serves to bridge all sorts of divides on the social landscape by bringing communities together to be involved in anti-violence activism, while fostering the concept of communal action for community well being. When communities come together they can begin to become more caring and build more togetherness

Vigils are inexpensive to organize with participants needing only candles or they can even use the light from their cell phones. Organizers can choose to march around their communities, engage in chanting slogans, assembly at a preselected point and have a keynote speaker address the gathering. As has been done in the past by some entities, organizers can also include cultural performances in their vigils.

Please note that other activities to mark WSPD include having community residents each light a candle or diya near a window of their homes. Thus even those not joining in vigils can still be involved in the observance. As well those with cycles can ride around the communities with placards hanging around their necks. Artists can draw their representations of suicide and abuse prevention and these can be displayed at a prominent place in the community. Singers can write and perform suicide and abuse prevention songs. Poets can write appropriate poetry, which can be recited. Families can also organize memorials for suicide victims. And community leaders and activists can write letters to the media and/or to their politicians calling for measures to help prevent suicide and abuse and to help victims.

For further info and support in organizing vigils please call 502-3419 or 621-6111 (Guyana), 646-461-0574 (US & Canada) or send email to caribvoice@aol.com or thecaribbeanvoiceinc@gmail.com. Also check out TCV's website at www.caribvoice.org/voices-against-violence.html. If possible do contact TCV so we can map vigils, and provide pre-vigil promotion and post vigil reporting. As well please send us vigil videos and photos so we can create collages online.

END

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