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Brother creates suicide prevention program in sister's honor

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By Ugochi Iloka, Reporter [CONNECT](#)

TUSCALOOSA, AL (WBRC) - The brother of an 11-year-old girl who took her own life is sharing his efforts to prevent suicide in our schools.

JacQuan Winters started The Kristen Amerson Youth Foundation to cope with the loss of his sister and to make sure people know who Kristen was to touch lives through her story.

"In Alabama 2014 74 youth passed from suicide and I always tell people of those 74 Kristen was one of them," said Winters.

It's been exactly 4 years since JacQuan Winters's sister Kristen passed away but the painful memory of how she died is still vividly remembered today.

"Her being 11 years old that was very unexpected, and I was very more shocked that she had the capability to take her own life and that she knew what suicide was," said Winters.

That loss cut deep but Winters was fueled by that hurt and inspired to found a suicide prevention program.

"I have some sadness problems that I must deal with," said 7th grader Brooke Sherrod.

"It's allowed me to loosen up a little bit," said 7th grader Kalia Mabien.

Through the foundation, students learn social and emotional skills to help deal with emotional, social, and academic stress.

"When you think of suicide you think of someone taking their own life but we're making sure children never have to get to that point," Winters.

Currently, the foundation is running the program at Eastwood Middle school, where Winters sister once attended before she was gone too soon.

"One thing I would like people to remember about her is beautiful spirit and the life she brought in the room," said Winters.

Winters wants to expand the program to other schools starting earlier in Elementary.

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