



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Attitudes in Reverse®  
PO Box 3127  
Princeton, NJ 08543  
www.attitudesinreverse.org

Co-Founders Tricia and Kurt Baker  
609-945-3200  
tricia@attitudesinreverse.org  
kurt@attitudesinreverse.org

**AttitudesIn Reverse® Launches Fourth Chapter in Minnesota,  
Will Save More Lives through Mental-Health Education Program**

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY (July 18, 2016) – On August 13, 2016, Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™), a New Jersey-based, 100-percent volunteer, nonprofit organization with the mission of saving young people’s lives through mental-health and suicide-prevention education, will launch its fourth chapter in Minneapolis, MN. The second chapter was established in Pasadena, CA in November 2015 and the third was launched in Phoenix, AZ in June 2016.

“We are so grateful to Melissa Knight, who is doing a phenomenal job planning and promoting the chapter launch event in Minneapolis, and we have every confidence that she will be equally successful operating the Minnesota chapter of AIR,” said Tricia Baker, Co-Founder of AIR. “Our message of hope and healing needs to get to youth throughout the nation. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10- to 24-year-olds and mental-health education is critical for preventing suicide. We teach students how to recognize the signs of mental health disorders and encourage them to seek help if symptoms persist for any length of time. We reinforce the fact that these are real, biologically based illnesses; that they are nothing to be embarrassed about and they are highly treatable.”

All her life, Melissa has lived in Minnesota, which has the same problems of limited access to mental health services as New Jersey. “There has to be a way to fix it. If I can’t do it myself, I’ll tell enough people – lawmakers and other important people – to get things rolling and make a difference,” she said. “I haven’t found anyone to bond with and I was thinking of starting my own group. But, I ran into a lot of red tape trying to get 501(c)(3) status. Then, I met Tricia and now, I’m excited to bring AIR to Minnesota.”

The event will feature Scarlett Taylor, who sings about mental health issues and how to break through depression. She is sponsored by Borderline Musick, which is named after bipolar disorder and focuses on good mental health.

**Eclectic Shoe Exhibit Demonstrates that Mental Illness Can Affect Anyone and No One Is Alone**

A standard highlight of the chapter launch events is AIR’s IN THEIR SHOES™ exhibit. In this powerful display, the shoes have tags featuring statements representing thoughts youth may have when they have emotional or mental difficulties: for example, “*Why can’t I be happy?*”; “*I don’t belong anywhere*”; “*I can’t get out of bed most days.*” The goal is to build empathy and understanding among those who are not experiencing such struggles, and to show those who are struggling that they are not alone.

**More**

## **AIR™ Launches Fourth Chapter in Minnesota/Page 2 of 3**

For Minnesota's IN THEIR SHOES™ exhibit, Melissa is striving to represent the diverse cultures in her home state. Since the population includes a large Native American population and a number of reservations, she has collected moccasins that will have quotes translated into some Native languages, such as Navajo and Obigwe, as well as printed in English. Melissa is also trying to represent the Somalian population, as Minnesota is one of a few states that accepts immigrants from Somalia, and Minnesota's large Hispanic community. The exhibit will also represent popular sports and recreation with hockey skates, hiking boots, baseball shoes and flip flops. "We get all seasons here and we have received eclectic donations," Melissa said.

"Many have come with stories – some 10 pages long – about why those particular pairs of shoes were selected. It's very heartfelt and touching. I appreciate the fact that they trust me with their stories and sent these shoes to AIR because this is a permanent collection. It's a real honor for them to do that for us," Melissa added.

The exhibit needs to consist of 478 pairs of shoes to match this tragic number of individuals aged 10 to 24 years old in Minnesota who die by suicide each year. To date, Melissa has collected 456 pairs and at the time of the interview, she has not yet gone through her closet. She expects to have extra shoes, which she will send to Houston, Texas for the chapter launch that will take place in January 2017.

### **Origami Cranes Symbolize Happiness, AIR Volunteer's Hope to Lift Away Burdens**

The chapter launch event will also feature a hanging wall display of 1,000 origami cranes created by AIR's newest volunteer, Karen from North Carolina. "I met Tricia and others from AIR in DC while I was in a pretty bad place emotionally. Around the same time, I started making origami cranes as a form of kinesthetic meditation to center me. I liked AIR's message and I knew I wanted my cranes to have a life somewhere," Karen said. "Tricia told me of their Minnesota chapter launch and thought it would be a good place to showcase them. I was thrilled, especially after talking to Tricia and asking for more details about AIR. Now, I can't wait for AIR to launch in its fourth state!"

Karen will share her experiences, describe the significance of the cranes and demonstrate how to make the cranes during the event. "In Japanese folklore and mythology, cranes symbolize happiness and longevity. Folklore says that if someone folds a thousand paper cranes, their wish will come true. There are grey areas as to why there needs to be a thousand, but it's generally accepted that it is due to the myth that cranes are one of the legendary animals that can live for a thousand years; thus, you fold one crane for every year," Karen said. "My wish is that every crane should be able to carry at least one person's burden. When I finished the last crane, I wished for the flock to take those emotional and mental burdens and lift them away. I wish for anyone and everyone who struggles or has ever struggled with mental illness, who have loved ones they are supporting or whom they've lost, to be graced with some reprieve. Even if my cranes can grant only a few precious moments, then I know my wish is working."

The Minnesota chapter launch is a free event that will take place on August 13, 2016 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Millennium Hotel, Grand Ballroom, 1313 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis.

"I see AIR'S initial impact as informational and at conferences, out in the public making people aware of our presence in Minneapolis. Then, we will go into schools and give presentations," Melissa said. "The potential for Attitudes In Reverse in Minnesota is limitless. I just need to get the movement started."

**More**

### **AIR™ Launches Fourth Chapter in Minnesota/Page 3 of 3**

“AIR's potential is nearly boundless. AIR can teach our future generations not to fear, but to help; not to shun, but to accept. My personal hope and what I can see as the greatest potential for AIR is to one day spread and impact so many people that the program becomes part of our nation's school curricula, and that classes for Mental Health First Aid, which I know AIR chapter volunteers need to participate in schools, become as common to take as regular First Aid and CPR training,” Karen said.

To learn more about the launch of AIR's Minnesota Chapter, search for AIR Minnesota Attitudes In Reverse on Facebook. To learn more about AIR, visit [www.attitudesinreverse.org](http://www.attitudesinreverse.org).

# # #

Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™) was established by Tricia, Kurt and Katelyn Baker of Plainsboro, NJ, in 2010, soon after their son/brother Kenny died by suicide following a long battle against severe depression and anxiety. Their mission is to save lives by educating students about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention. Since January 2011, they have presented to more than 30,000 students in middle and high schools and colleges in New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Missouri. AIR recently began offering Youth Mental Health First Aid instruction. AIR includes the AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™ program, bringing dogs into schools to help students de-stress and engage in the conversation about mental health. In addition, displaced dogs with the ability to serve as Emotional Support Dogs, are matched with individuals who have mental health disorders or developmental disabilities, thereby saving two lives with each match. For more information about AIR™, please visit [www.attitudesinreverse.org](http://www.attitudesinreverse.org) or call 609-945-3200.