

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NEW YORK JETS DEFENSIVE END SOLOMON THOMAS AND DALLAS COWBOYS QUARTERBACK DAK PRESCOTT ALONG WITH THEIR FOUNDATIONS JOIN FORCES WITH LEADING MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS TO EXPAND CRISIS SUPPORT DURING SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH**

**NEW YORK--(September 5, 2023)-** The Defensive Line, in collaboration with The Faith, Fight, Finish Foundation, is proud to announce a month-long initiative with the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\)](#), [Crisis Text Line](#), provider of the 741741 text-based mental health support service and [Vibrant Emotional Health](#), the administrator of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This groundbreaking alliance aims to amplify access to free, around-the-clock mental health and crisis support for individuals in need, coinciding with National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Through a series of collaborative initiatives and outreach efforts, The Defensive Line, The Faith, Fight, Finish Foundation, ASFP, Crisis Text Line, and Vibrant Emotional Health will work together to expand mental health resources, reduce stigma, and increase awareness about the importance of seeking help during times of crisis. The collaboration represents an unwavering commitment to making crucial support services more accessible and widespread.

“In 2018, I lost my big sister Ella to suicide. The pain of losing a loved one, especially a family member, to suicide was extremely overwhelming and filled me with a very painful journey of grief and sadness. It’s hard to know where to go for help and to learn how to continue to live this new life,” said Solomon Thomas, an American football defensive tackle for the New York Jets. “In honor of my sister, my family and I started “The Defensive Line,” where our mission is to end the epidemic of youth suicide, especially for young people of color, by transforming how we connect and communicate through mental health. I couldn’t have survived this journey without the love and strength of my family and mental health resources like Crisis Text Line and 988. You aren’t alone; there is help to guide you through this hard journey. If you ever need support, please reach out by texting 988 or HUDDLE to 741741.”

Suicide is a public health crisis, particularly among our youth. In 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 40 percent of high school students felt sad or hopeless every day for two or more weeks in a row. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among adolescents after unintentional injury and accounted for approximately one-fifth of all deaths among high school students.

“No matter what you’re going through, being able to share your thoughts and feelings is critical to your mental well-being,” said Dak Prescott, an American football quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys. “After my brother Jace passed away due to suicide, I had to deal with many emotions, but I learned how to cope through the amazing mental health support I received. This is why the nonprofit organization I founded, Faith Fight Finish, focuses on mental illness by helping people always know that they are not alone, that there is help out there to help you get through the darkest moments in your life.”

Join us as we stand together to ensure no one faces mental health challenges alone. Together, we can make a difference and provide the support and compassion that every individual deserves.

Lifesaving resources exist to help young people struggling with mental health challenges and everyday stress. For support in English, call, text 988 or [chat online](#) or to reach a live Crisis Text Line volunteer Crisis Counselor, text HUDDLE to 741741 or via [webchat](#). For support in Spanish, text or [chat online](#) to 988 or text AYUDA to 741741 or via [webchat](#).

#### **About The Defensive Line**

*The mission of The Defensive Line is to end the epidemic of youth suicide, especially for young people of color, by transforming the way we communicate and connect about mental health. Our non-profit organization provides Suicide Prevention Workshops, keynotes, and related programming to reduce the stigma associated with suicide and mental health. We train teachers, coaches, leaders, and executives to proactively recognize a mental health crisis, to create a safe environment for all, how to have difficult conversations, and then help them create a plan of action. Leaders of young people are prepared to more appropriately refer students and young people to existing and lifesaving mental health resources. Learn more about The Defensive Line at [www.thedefensiveline.org](http://www.thedefensiveline.org) and follow us [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).*

#### **About The Faith, Fight, Finish Foundation**

*The Faith Fight Finish Foundation by Dak Prescott invests in a better future by empowering individuals, families and communities to find strength through adversity. The foundation focuses on 4 main initiatives: colon cancer research, mental health & suicide*

prevention, bridging the gap between law enforcement, youth and the communities they serve, and offering assistance to those facing life-challenging hardships. Faith Fight Finish was established as a tribute to Dak's Mom, Peggy, who lost her battle with colon cancer in 2013; and its work honors Dak's brother, Jace, who was lost to suicide in 2020. Visit [www.faithfightfinish.org](http://www.faithfightfinish.org) and follow the Faith Fight Finish Foundation on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

#### **About The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide, including those who have experienced a loss. AFSP creates a culture that's smart about mental health through public education and community programs, develops suicide prevention through research and advocacy, and provides support for those affected by suicide. Led by CEO Robert Gebbia and headquartered in New York, with a public policy office in Washington, DC, AFSP has local chapters in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, with programs and events nationwide. Learn more about AFSP in its latest [Annual Report](#), and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following AFSP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

#### **About Crisis Text Line**

Crisis Text Line is a nonprofit organization that provides free, confidential, 24/7, high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention in English and Spanish. Since its launch in 2013, Crisis Text Line has engaged in more than 8 million crisis conversations and trained over 65,000 volunteers to support people in their moments of need. Crisis Text Line is committed to creating an empathetic world where nobody feels alone. Anyone in the US including Puerto Rico can text HUDDLE to 741741 to reach a live, volunteer Crisis Counselor. Visit Crisis Text Line on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Additional information is available at [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org).

#### **About Vibrant Emotional Health**

Vibrant Emotional Health is a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families achieve emotional wellbeing. For over 50 years, our groundbreaking solutions have delivered high-quality services and support when, where and how people need it. We offer confidential emotional support through our state-of-the-art contact center and crisis hotline services that use leading-edge telephone, text and web-based technologies, including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Disaster Distress Helpline, NFL Life Line and NYC Well. Through our community wellness programs, individuals and families obtain the support and skills they need to thrive. Our advocacy and education initiatives promote mental wellbeing as a social responsibility. Each year we help nearly 5 million people live healthier and more vibrant lives. We're advancing access, dignity and respect for all and revolutionizing the system for good. Visit [www.vibrant.org](http://www.vibrant.org). And follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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