Mother of teen suicide victim offers advice

In a newly published book, Kathleen Sandefer, a former teacher and the mother of a 14-year-old suicide victim, tells her heartrending story and offers advice and warnings not only to parents of teenagers but also to teachers, pastors, principals, counselors - anyone who works in any way with young people from elementary school through high school.

The book, Mom, I'm All Right, has been endorsed by the national Teen Suicide Prevention Task Force, as well as other agencies, such as the Southwest Education Referral Service of Louisiana.

Kathleen Sandefer's not only offers hope and healing to people who are going through the incredible tragedy of a teen suicide, but gives vital information about prescribed medications, such as her son, Wesley, was taking for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) prior to his death. ADD affects over 10 percent of school children. Doctors, school nurses, teachers, as well as parents, should be made aware of the dangers of a false sense of security when the following medications and others are prescribed: Imiperine, Ritalin, Tofranil, Endep, and Cylert.

"I had him on medication and he was doing well in school," Sandefer says about her son. Ritalin really helped her son when he began the medication at age 10, she said.

It was only after his death four years later that she learned the drug manufacturer warns that depression and suicide are possibilities from use of Ritalin, which allows hyperactive children to pay attention in class.

Sandefer doesn't blame the drug for causing the death of her son, but she blames her doctor for not telling her that suicide could be an outcome of its use.

When she questioned her doctor why she wasn't warned of this possible side effect, Sandefer said he told her that he didn't want her hovering over her child and preventing him from having a normal life.

The book is self-published, and now available locally at Don's on Tate Cove Road. It is also available through Spring Arbor Book Distributors, Baker and Taylor Books, or Quality Books, Inc. Author Kathleen Sandefer.