

**From:** House Communications Office  
**To:** House Communications Office  
**Sent:** Tue Mar 01 20:20:40 2011  
**Subject:** PRESS RELEASE: House Recognizes Will to Live Foundation



*Georgia*  
House of Representatives

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Tuesday, March 1, 2011

Contact: J.D. Easley  
(404) 656-0311

[john.easley@house.ga.gov](mailto:john.easley@house.ga.gov)

### **House Recognizes Will to Live Foundation**

ATLANTA –House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge) today led the Georgia House of Representatives in passing House Resolution 389, recognizing the Will to Live Foundation for its dedication to preventing teen suicide. The foundation was created by John and Susie Trautwein after the couple lost their 15-year-old son, Will Trautwein, to teen suicide in October 2010. The House fell silent as Speaker Ralston introduced the Trautwein family.

“We get caught up in this world here at the Capitol and think we deal with some big issues,” said Speaker Ralston. “I want to introduce you to a couple who is dealing with some big issues and dealing with them in a big way. Last October 15, John and Susie Trautwein lost their 15- year-old son, Will, who took his own life. Out of that tragedy that is unthinkable to me, they have dedicated themselves to fighting a problem and a tragedy that is becoming all too frequent - teenage suicide. They have established an organization known as Will to Live.”

Speaker Ralston then asked members to join him in watching a video produced by a local television station which told the Trautwein’s story. Speaker Ralston, members of the House and visitors in the gallery then rose to their feet and applauded to honor the strength and courage of this great Georgia family.

“It is truly an honor to be here. Thank you for the kindness you have shown to our family,” said John Trautwein. “This foundation was started the day that Will died. The Foundation has brought us such hope because its motto of ‘for the kids, through the kids and by the kids’ is a good one, and we truly believe in it. We know that our son, Will, would truly believe in it. He would be up here leading this foundation had circumstances been different, but

they are not. So we are here and we are encouraged because we know this would make Will proud.”

The Will to Live Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit foundation dedicated to improving the lives and “Will to Live” of teenagers everywhere. The foundation works to achieve its mission by empowering teens to help each other.

Specifically, Will to Live teaches young people how to share their own personal experiences in a way that can help other teens find the “good” in life and a “Will to Live” through all of life’s trials. To do this, the foundation provides education, motivation, consultation, charity, support and most importantly, love and fellowship.

“My wife and I feel a hand on our back every day. Maybe there are two hands. One is the hand of God and the other is the hand of Will. He’s saying do this mom; do this dad. This is a good thing. And to live in state where the government of that state is now adding their hand to our backs, this is a good thing. This is truly encouraging to us and motivating to us and gives us the strength to keep doing it,” added John Trautwein.

Will to Live works with suicide prevention experts, and has succeeded in becoming a trusted resource for both youth and their families. The foundation works to inform young people of counseling organizations that are available in times of need. Additionally, they teach families how to support struggling youth and suicide warning signs.

“As a parent who has seen the toll that social and academic pressures can have on teens, I am comforted to know that an organization like Will to Live exists to help young people realize that they are loved and that suicide is never the answer,” said Rep. Lynne Riley (R-Johns Creek). “I can’t even begin to imagine the difficulty of losing a child, but seeing how the Trautwein family turned their loss into a lifesaving foundation is truly an inspiring lesson for us all.”

The foundation held its first event in December of 2010. Working with the girl’s lacrosse team from Northview High School in Sandy Springs, Georgia, the foundation showed the classic movie “It’s a Wonderful Life” to a group of more than 150 students. Just before beginning the movie, Susie Trautwein explained to the students that even after more than 50 years, “It’s A Wonderful Life” continues to remind us that we all need a “Clarence” in our lives and that we all need to be a “Clarence” for our friends and loved ones from time to time. A “Clarence” is a friend who helps you find the good in life, even at the worst of times. By accepting “The Clarence Effect Challenge,” young people agree to love each other, be there for each other, and most importantly, talk to each other.

In addition to “The Clarence Effect,” Will to Live also encourages young people to find “Life Teammates,” those people that you want to help and that you would turn to for help. By

recognizing those individuals and telling them that they are life teammates, young people can build life-saving support networks.

The Will to Live message was powerfully shown this year at the foundation's first ever "Where There's A Will, There's A Way 5K" race. Over 1,500 people were in attendance to show their respect to friends and family who have fallen victim to suicide. Sarah Biondich and Michael Trainer, event organizers who attend Northview High School and were guests of the Trautweins at the Capitol today, announced that the event raised \$25,000.

Will to Live donates all funds raised during events like the "It's a Wonderful Life" movie showing and "Where There's A Will, There's A Way 5K" race to teen suicide prevention, education, and counseling centers.

"The Trautwein story is one of tragedy, but one of hope springing from unthinkable adversity," said Speaker Ralston.

For more information on HR 389, please click [here](#).

For more information on the Will to Live Foundation, please visit [www.will-to-live.org](http://www.will-to-live.org).

*\*Editor's Note: a picture of House Speaker David Ralston with members of the Trautwein family and others is attached to this email for your convenience.*



***Featured in photograph:***

**From left to right: friend Doug Chalmers (with glasses); students Michael Trainer and Sarah Biondich of Northview High School; Rep. Chuck Martin (back - red tie); Rep. Lynne Riley (blond hair, blue jacket); Tommy Trautwein (purple tie); Michael Trautwein (green tie); Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones; Susie Trautwein (graphic print dress); Holyn Trautwein; John Trautwein; House Speaker David Ralston.**

**###**

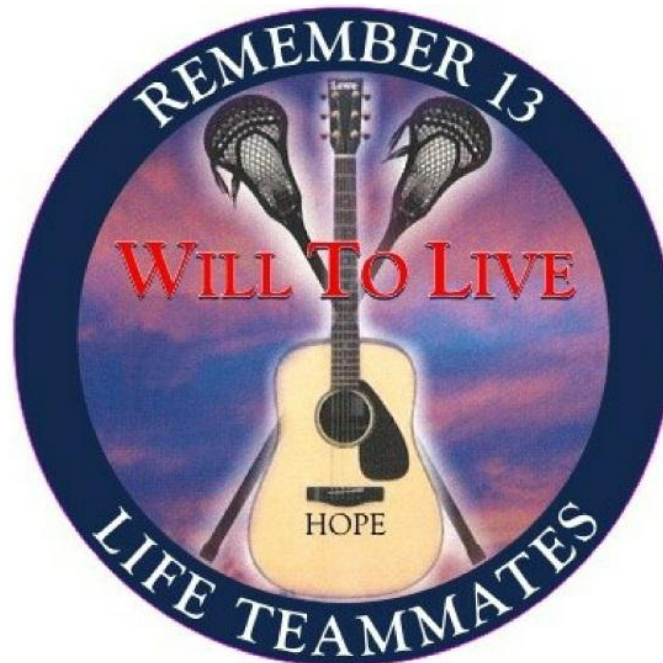


***The Will To Live Foundation, Inc.***

*For The Kids, Through The Kids, By The Kids*



# **THE WILL TO LIVE FOUNDATION**



***FOR THE KIDS,  
THROUGH THE KIDS,  
BY THE KIDS***

[www.Will-To-Live.org](http://www.Will-To-Live.org)

***The Will To Live Foundation, Inc.***

300 Brogdon Rd. Suite 140, Suwanee GA, 30024; 678-835-6108

[www.will-to-live.org](http://www.will-to-live.org)