Natural Helpers (NH) is a secondary level peer-helping program which began in 1979 in Seattle, Washington and has spread nationally to provide thousands of middle and high school students the resources to become more effective helping resources to their peers. NH is based on a simple premise, that when a friend is hurting, another trusted friend is usually the first to find out. At times, NH's act as empathic and nonjudgmental listeners who pride themselves on hearing a friend's plight and NOT offering specific advice or specific solutions. Advice is cheap as they say, but a good listener is hard to find...unless that listener just happens to be a Natural Helper. At other times, NH's intercept problems of a much more serious nature like self-injurious behavior ("cutting"), depression, eating disorders, physical or sexual abuse, pregnancy and STD's, and escalating drug and alcohol problems to name a few. In these situations, NH's are trained to keep no confidences but to get help for that friend by referring to school mental health and support professionals immediately while continuing to stand side by side with their friend.

Natural Helpers is currently a key part of many Long Island school districts' prevention effort. Six of these Long Island schools jointly developed and funded the nhli.info web page in an effort to help other schools begin NH programs of their own.

If you would like to hear more about the workings of the Natural Helpers program, including a step-by-step overview of funding, staffing, and startup procedures, please visit our website at www.nhli.info. A team of four to six individuals should include a building administrator, pupil personnel staff who could be potential program advisors, student activities director, student council member, and a PTA representative.

YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL !!!