

Stop Netflix Premiere of '13 Reasons Why' on May 18

The premiere date of the second season of the controversial teen series *13 Reasons Why* has been set for May 18, but the American Family Association (AFA,) says there is still time to stop the show from airing.

AFA has been encouraging families to sign a petition urging Netflix to pull the second season of the series that experts say glorifies teen suicide. Nearly 59,000 have signed the petition.

AFA is also telling the tragic story of the Bright family, whose 14-year-old daughter, Anna, committed suicide just two weeks after binge-watching all 13 episodes of the program.

Several months ago, the Bright family asked AFA to help tell Anna's story. After hearing the Brights' plea, AFA President Tim Wildmon had sent a private letter to Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, respectfully asking for a short meeting to discuss AFA's concerns, but the request was ignored.

Now, AFA continues to work to stop Season Two of *13 Reasons Why*, advocating on behalf of the Bright family and many other families of American teenagers.

"Anna Bright was a self-taught artist, musician, writer, photographer, vocalist, beauty queen, cheerleader, scholar and friend," according to AFA writer Rebecca Davis for AFA Journal. "But on the inside, she was fighting a deep, dark battle of which her parents had no idea and to which her peers paid little attention. She hid it behind her smile and quirky personality. Young people become desensitized to the content in *13 Reasons Why*, especially when they binge-watch it, like Anna did. When they immerse themselves in it for 13 hours straight, it becomes their everyday reality, the norm. The

influence of media is powerful, especially when it feeds the innate sin in one's heart."

Davis further reported that the show's creative team, among them Pulitzer Prize winner Brian Yorkey and superstar Selena Gomez, claims that *13 Reasons Why* is positive in purpose, bringing an anti-bullying message and an awareness of mental illness and teen suicide. However, statistics suggest otherwise.

Citing a study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, *The Washington Post* reported that "internet searches about suicide were significantly higher than expected" within the three weeks after the release of *13 Reasons Why*, according to Davis' story in AFA Journal. Overall, online suicide queries increased by 19 percent during the first 19 days after season one of the show premiered.

Anna's father, Joseph, knows now that cultural forces deeply affected his daughter. "What you watch, what you take in, what you listen to is so important, and you need to guard your heart," he said.

Anna's mother, Patrice, added, "We know for a fact that our home was invaded by darkness. However anybody wants to look at it, it was a spiritual battle that was lost, but it wasn't the eternal battle that was lost."

AFA is sharing the resources below with parents, young people and others:

- "13 Reasons Why, and Its Unintended Consequences"—a blog by licensed clinical social worker Brooke Fox
- "13 Reasons Why"—a blog by Julie Lowe that gives 13 reasons life is worth living
- Grieving a Suicide: Help for the Aftershock—a minibook by David Powlison
- I Just Want to Die: Replacing Suicidal Thoughts with Hope—a minibook by David Powlison

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline—1-800-273-8255
- —AFA's '13 Reasons Why' Action Alert and petition