

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT, PAT DERER

We were extremely fortunate to have David Douglas as our Honorary Chairman at this year's Walk for Awareness. He spoke eloquently of his loss & the terrible pain he felt as a survivor. Our walk this year was wonderful with sunny skies, great music and survivor fellowship.

This article is dedicated to all of you that show your support to our mission & continue to help us raise funds to accomplish our goals. We want to express our appreciation for your attendance at the walk. When we come together we help to remove the stigma around mental health issues, and influence people to get the help they need. Being with other survivors also reminds us that we are not alone in our loss and helps us to heal. This year's donations of \$17,844 were raised for our group to continue its work. Each year we educate people in life saving techniques.

We normally have a spaghetti dinner in the fall but we are delaying it until 2011, as we have another event to hold in its place. Please look for more information about the spaghetti dinner and silent auction in the future. We know from past comments how many of our supporters who have attended in the past enjoyed the great food and event festivities.

This fall, we will be hosting a QPR Training Event for people from the entire state of Wisconsin. There are many areas in the state where people are struggling, so providing trained QPR gatekeepers will help save lives. It will be an 8-hour training session teaching the Question/Persuade/Refer method of crisis intervention. There will be scholarships available based on need. If you're interested in this training please contact me at 608-274-9686 or our website address: www.hopes-wi.org

We know as survivors we would have done anything if we could have saved our loved ones. To date for 2010, we had 21 trainings touching 558. You may be thinking, "how we can be sure that QPR training is saving lives" ... I received this email after a training Sara Leikness and I did in Evansville. This is truly a dedication to all of you.

Hi Pat,

I wanted to let you know something significant that developed after your QPR training. Someone who participated in the training had a successful family intervention a few weeks after our gathering.

What joy it is to know that because we shared a few minutes learning how to help prevent suicide, someone's life was positively affected by our learning.

Rev. Wendee M Nitz

We are saving lives one at a time and will continue to do so in memory of our loved ones who we lost too soon. Once again, thank you for all your past support . . . Fondly, *Pat*

H.O.P.E.S. WALK FOR AWARENESS

Our mission in doing the walk is to provide a safe and comforting place for all survivors. We try to offer support and let new survivors know we will be there in their healing journey if they need us. Our lives will never be the same but we can all find meaning and find new life. This year we had people email us with what they thought and so I would like to share some of their comments with you.

I liked the walk better this year mostly because of the location. Wonderful view of the Capitol and watching the boats was very restful during the walk.

Don't change a thing, great venue for the gathering. As our numbers grow, I just hope the communication between our desperate loved ones and those who will help is growing too.

How nice to have a place where people can come together when you have lost someone this horrific and sad way. Everyone was nice, warm, and welcoming. The food was great. Good music and good people.

This is my second year attending the walk. I find this event so comforting to me. I have found the people who run this organization to be the most caring people I have come across in my life. I would do anything to help prevent the pain we all have endured.

I wouldn't change a thing. It was a beautiful walk put together by obviously wonderful people.

Thank you Hopes. See you next year.

When I got there everyone had a very happy smile and greetings. What really blew me away was when a lady came up to us and handed us 3 shirts for our children. That was within minutes from coming. That was great. It was like me and my family was taken care of. It gave us very warm feelings. Great job to all!

This was my first walk and I didn't know what to expect. It was a beautiful walk by the water. Everyone was so nice, and it was well organized. It was an emotional day but I got to talk with some really nice ladies. It's amazing how many people are touched by suicide, thankfully Hopes is there.

Every year when I attend the walk, I am struck by what wonderful hard working people you have on your board who work so well together! I can imagine that sometimes after the walk is over and you're finally able to relax, there's a very faint voice wondering if you should do it again. I realize it's a lot of work, but never doubt the healing value of the walk. I see it with the hugs and hear it with the conversations during the event. You are doing far more good than you'll ever know for so many people. Thank you and keep up the great work at HOPES.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!!!

SAVE THE DATE

HOPES 13TH WALK FOR AWARENESS

Saturday, May 7, 2011

National Survivors of Suicide Day

On November 20, 2010, the 12 Annual National Survivors of Suicide will be held. The local event held in Madison is hosted by The Mental Health Center of Dane County and H.O.P.E.S. of Wisconsin. It includes the presentation of the National Broadcast of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). This conference offers support and information about resources for healing after the loss of a loved one by suicide. Survivors of suicide and those who care are welcomed!

Date: Saturday, November 20, 2010

Time: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm.

Location: Promega Corporation / BTC - Biopharmaceutical Technology Center
5445 Cheryl Parkway, Madison, WI

Fee: \$20 per adult includes buffet lunch.
Onsite registration available/Free Parking.

For more information on National Survivor Day or AFSP Presentation visit <http://www.afsp.org>

For more information about the Madison Conference contact Vicki Westrich, Coordinator SOS Services at vicki.westrich@mhcdc.org or 608-280-2435.

Ask a Question, Save a Life

By Eric Garland

737 people died by suicide in Wisconsin in 2008. In comparison, there were 725 breast cancer deaths, 627 motor vehicle accident deaths and 149 homicides. In Wisconsin, suicide is the second leading cause of death for those 15-24 years of age; suicide is also the second leading cause of death for males between age 25 and 44. Suicide rates are also prevalent among our veterans and elderly populations. Suicide knows no boundaries; it affects all age groups and ethnic groups. Financial status or religious beliefs do not matter.

What can you do to make a difference? First, you can be vigilant. Read the following sections – “Warning Signs of Suicide” and “What to do.” Another positive step you can make is to attend a QPR gatekeeper training session.

What is QPR? QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer -- 3 simple steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Each year, thousands of people like you, are saying “yes” to saving the life of a friend, colleague, family member, or neighbor.

You can become a QPR Gatekeeper. A Gatekeeper is anyone trained to recognize a suicidal crisis and, because of their training, knows how and where to find help. Gatekeepers include family, friends, neighbors, teachers, ministers, doctors, nurses, coaches, coworkers, caseworkers and many others who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide. QPR Gatekeeper training can be learned in as little as an hour. It is taught in a format that is clear and concise. Gatekeepers are given information that is easy to understand and reinforced by a QPR booklet complete with warning signs, methods to encourage a person to get help and a list of resources available in your community. As a QPR trained Gatekeeper you will learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide, know how to offer hope and know how to get help and save a life.

QPR is not intended to be a form of counseling or treatment, but is intended to offer hope through positive action. QPR is intended to teach those who are in a position to recognize the warning signs, clues, and suicidal communication of people in trouble to act vigorously to prevent a possible tragedy.

QPR Gatekeeper training is provided by certified instructors who work with HOPES (Suicide Education and Prevention) of Wisconsin. If you are interested in scheduling a QPR training or if you have questions, please contact Eric Garland, erichopes@charter.net or (608)358-7413. You may also contact HOPES at info@hopes-wi.org or (608)274-9686.

Warning Signs of Suicide

Most people who are suicidal give warning signs that they are in crisis. Suicide can be preventable. Most people who are suicidal don't want to die, but they want the pain to end. Preventing suicide begins with education.

Warning Signs -- Any one of these symptoms does not necessarily mean the person is suicidal, but several may signal a need for help.

- A previous suicide attempt by yourself, a family member or friend.
- Talking about suicide and/or death; making suicide threats.
- A change in behavior such as increased alcohol or drug use, reckless or impulsive behavior or withdrawing from friends and family.
- Change in eating or sleeping habits.
- Loss of interest in school, work or hobbies.
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness, anxiety, agitation, anger, rage, a feeling of being trapped or quick mood changes including dramatic positive changes.
- Making final arrangements such as giving away special possessions or unusual contact with personally significant people.
- Making a plan. For example, acquiring a weapon or stockpiling drugs/medication

What To Do -- If a person is in immediate danger, Call 911.

- Always take thoughts of suicide seriously.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- Ask the person if they have a plan or weapon.
- Listen and talk openly.
- Allow the person to express their feelings.
- Don't act shocked—this can create distance.
- Don't ask “why”—this may encourage defensiveness.
- Be non-judgmental and don't debate if suicide is right or wrong.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. An angry friend is better than a dead friend.
- Seek support. Ask for help from a teacher, counselor, parent or other trusted adult. Don't try to handle it alone.

QPR Train The Trainer Session

HOPES has been inundated with requests for QPR trainings and we are looking for more trainers. We are planning to hold a QPR train the trainer session in early October. The training is 8 hours and will be held in the Madison area. If you are interested or would like more information please contact HOPES at 608 274-9686 or our website: www.hopes-wi.org.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

OVERNIGHT WALK - Boston

By Dawn Leikness

My sister and I recently had the opportunity to participate in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP) annual Out of Darkness Overnight Walk this year for the first ever, in beautiful Boston, MA, and it was an event I'll never forget. We arrived at City Hall Plaza around 4:00pm on Saturday the 26th for check-in. The AFSP staff was incredible from start to finish. I was congratulated on the amount of my fundraising no less than three times just during the check-in process. It made me feel like the \$3,100 I raised was truly appreciated and recognized. I felt a great sense of pride.

As I sat there waiting for the opening ceremony to begin I reflected on the journey to this point. I thought about how exciting it was to be doing something like this for my cause. Of course I thought about my brother, Dan and couldn't help but feel like he was right there with us. As I watched the crowd I thought about how cool it was to see so many survivors of suicide in one place, and how sad it was at the same time. Across the very front of the stage there were 8 luminary bags, each representing someone lost to suicide. During the opening ceremony one of the speakers introduced the survivors that made each of the 8 bags representing who they lost to suicide. First a woman came out to represent the loss of her loved one. Then a young boy came forward, he was the youngest registered walker out of nearly 2,000 people. He was there to represent the loss of a parent. He had lost his father to suicide. That's when I was hit with a wave of emotion. To think this little boy didn't have his father anymore and that he was not only aware of why but supported the cause and was able to represent his family on stage in front of so many people. I was deeply sad for his loss and amazed by his strength at the same time. Last but not least they introduced a man in his mid-30's and he was there to represent himself, and his struggles with

mental illness. The speaker told of his prior attempt years ago and his ongoing treatment and passion for the cause. Again I was hit with emotion as the entire crowd stood up to give him a standing ovation. I thought to myself, THIS is why I'm here! This one man represented what all of us were working so hard for... awareness that mental illness is treatable and that suicide is not the way to escape your pain and suffering.

The walk started around 7:30pm and little did we know we wouldn't make it back to City Hall Plaza until 8.5 hours later. The weather was comfortable in the mid 60's and we didn't stop until the 2nd rest stop 6 or 7 miles in. Between mile 7 and 11 things all kind of blur together. My sister started having major feet issues with all her blisters. We slowed down considerably and our attention shifted to focusing on when the dinner break was because we both wanted to sit down. It was already 2am by the time we hit the 12 mile mark and finally got dinner. I knew we had to pick it up and finish strong with only 6 miles to go.

It was a relief to see the 17 mile marker because we knew that we only had one left. Our spirits rose again and then just around a few corners, no more than a half mile from the last marker, was the 18 mile marker! 4:00 am and we had done it! All 18 miles on our own two feet! We were welcomed by a beautiful sight, nearly 2,000 luminaries lined the steps of City Hall Plaza. Each of the luminaries represented each of the walkers and their loss or support for the cause. It was truly a sight to see. Again I considered all those that had been lost. Each bag represented someone's family member or friend lost to their battle with mental illness. It was unreal to think that those 2,000 luminaries represented only 6% of the 33,000 people that we lose to suicide in this country every single year.

We ate breakfast as the sun started peaking up over the horizon of the harbor. I truly feel like Dan was watching over me. I escaped the 18 mile walk without a single blister or sore. I'd like to say that I remember what was said in the closing ceremony at 5:00 am but at that point my brain had checked out for the most part. The crowd stood to cheer for ourselves and our accomplishment! I've had lots of time to reflect on the journey since the walk ended. It was truly a life changing experience and next time I plan to take more people along for the ride! I cannot explain how it made me feel, besides, incredible. We met some amazing people. We saw some amazing sights in the middle of the night. Most importantly though we shared an experience with 2,000 people that could never be replicated in exactly the same way ever again. We came together as a community of

supporters and raised a total of 2.2 million dollars for suicide prevention! We raised not only funds but also awareness. Not a single person that saw us in Boston that night didn't wonder what we were walking for. They asked us as they passed on foot, on bikes, cars rolled down their windows to ask at stoplights. They asked and we told them and I loved the reactions every single time... because "suicide prevention" isn't something that's yelled out that often. People don't think about it that often.

Mental illness is kept hush and in the dark. People are ashamed and made to feel guilty about their illness. But there we were, telling everyone about suicide prevention and the reactions were priceless!

So many faces filled with shock. Like they'd never considered the cause, but at that exact moment, they were. So many people said thank you... And I could only imagine that those were the people who had been affected, as we had, some way or another... and I hope it humbled them to know, they are not alone in their journey. None of us are alone.

**This was a condensed version. For the full story go to:

www.bostonbound.weekly.com/my-blog.html



Loving Memories

Your gentle face and patient smile
With sadness we recall
You had a kindly word for each
And died loved by all.

The voice is mute and still the heart
That loved us well and true
Ah bitter was the trail to part
From one so good as you.

You are not forgotten loved one,
Nor will you ever be,
As long as life and memory last
We will remember thee.

We miss you now our hearts are sore,
As times go by we miss you more,
Your loving smile, your gentle face,
No one can fill your vacant place.

Calendar of Events...

- National Suicide Prevention Week – Week of September 5th-11th, 2010
- Many Faces of Suicide Quilt Display, Madison Capitol Rotunda, Week of September 12th-18th, 2010
- Program Announcement for the New Suicide Prevention Wisconsin State Logo, Madison Capitol, September 13th, 2010, 12-1:00 pm
- LaCrosse Area Suicide Awareness Event, Riverside Park, September 14, 2010 @ 6:00 pm
- LaCrosse Area Suicide Prevention Summit, Radisson Hotel, September 15, 2010, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Beyond the Blues, Event sponsored by Charles E. Kubly Foundation, Discovery World Terrace at Pier Wisconsin, September 18, 2010 @ 6:00 pm
- Out of the Darkness Community Walk, Olin Park-Madison, September 19th, 2010, Registration @ 8:30 am
- National Survivors Day, Promega Corporation, Madison, Saturday, November 20th, 2010, 8:30 am – 2:30 pm



Special thanks to HOPES supporters Lindsay Holzwarth & Nick Diny who were married in the Florida Keys on January 29, 2010. The couple graciously donated \$100 from the dollar dance at their reception. Thank you and congratulations! Wishing you all the best!

News Flash --

Suicide Prevention Goes State Wide

By Sue Howell

The State of Wisconsin will roll out its new Prevent Suicide Wisconsin program September 13th 2010, from noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Madison State Capitol. Please join us for the roll out and news conference. Suzy Favor Hamilton will be the keynote speaker. HOPES will have a speaker and the *Many Faces of Suicide* quilts will be on display. Both public and private sectors in the State have been working on this program to make it a reality. As with all suicide prevention efforts, survivors were included in the process. There will be a statewide website, new logo, wallet cards and lethal means brochure. Public Service Announcements are in the works. People working on suicide prevention throughout the State will be able to use these tools. The HOPES organization is proud to support this effort and we will continue our mission of suicide prevention here in southern Wisconsin.

**HOPES of Wisconsin
1902 Tarragon Drive
Madison, WI 53716
www.HOPES-wi.org**

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." --Margaret Meade**