

HOPES Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

Your support and enthusiasm in our Annual Walk for Awareness is awesome. We appreciate your support the day of the walk and year round. We want to thank you for participating, raising money, donating food and prizes. It really wouldn't be an event if everyone didn't participate. It is exciting to see families and friends come together to walk in memory of their loved ones. We had all ages participate in the walk and luncheon afterwards. We are truly building a community of survivors that want to make a difference.

It's important to know that you are building awareness in the community as you contact your family and friends for donations and tell them about your participation in our walk. It is said that we can remove some of the stigma by letting people know that we have been touched by suicide. We put a face to the tragedy. We give people an opportunity to talk about it when we talk about it. We are approaching suicide knowing that what we are doing is going to make a difference. It is an empowering experience for me.

I hope it is for you also.

Pictures from the Walk

Check our website www.hopes-wi.org for pictures of the walk provided by Mike and Kathy Dayberry who come from St. Kansas City, Missouri to walk in memory of Kathy's brother Damon Degenhardt. They join Damon's mother, Carol Devoe, from Monroe Dawn Degenhardt and Richard Krank from Rockford, Illinois and Dolan Degenhardt from Stoughton.

This picture (unavailable in the .pdf format) of Erika and Makenzie Ney was submitted by Betty Ney whose family walks in memory of her son Todd Ney. It was taken shortly after one of the walks. The girls had just bathed and put the "HOPES" shirts on as nightshirts. Betty said this picture, "just touched my heart." It did mine too. Betty embroiders dishtowels for the raffle each year. Rhonda Olson from Las Vegas, Todd's sister, was one of the first people to contact us about a square. The Ney family has been involved with HOPES quilt and Walk from the beginning.

QPR in Florence County

Mary Doemel arranged for me to introduce QPR to Florence County. She works closely with the Agency Director of the Florence County Human Services Department, Bob Macaux. Together they arranged 7 QPR presentations in 2 days. She also collects letters to take to Washington and sets up displays at local health fairs.

SPAN'S NATIONAL AWARENESS EVENT WASHINGTON, D.C.

Every year someone from HOPES takes our Quilts to Washington for this National Awareness Event. SPAN provides training from professionals in the field of suicide prevention. We also hear from people that are doing exactly what HOPES is doing. We share ideas about fundraising, awareness activities and legislative ideas. We then take the quilts from WI and place them with all the quilts from the other states in front of the Lincoln Memorial. We had speakers, a professional singer and we read the names of our loved ones from all the quilts. We finished off the evening with a Candlelight Walk in front of the reflecting pond at the Lincoln Memorial.

This year there was the first Award Reception. It is a year of celebration as SPAN takes their organization to the next level. SPAN has hired an Executive Director, Jerry Reed. He worked in Senator Harry Reid's office when Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch came to Washington for the first NAE event. He has been supportive of our mission of suicide prevention for the last 9 years. He is well respected in Washington and knows his way around. We are lucky to have him. So there were a fair amount of tears as the Weyrauch's moved to positions of Honorary Board Members. It was a night to honor them and all the work that they have done in honor of their daughter Terri. Before we returned home we visited all the WI Senators and Representatives. We deliver the SPAN/HOPES letters and talk to them about the importance of Suicide Prevention in our communities. We usually see their Health Aids but this year we were able to see Senator Kohl at a breakfast reception and we met with Representative Mark Green in his office.

Susan Conlin Opheim

Mary Doemel goes to D.C.

I went to Washington, D.C. in July of 2003 for the SPAN conference representing HOPES. The trip was bittersweet, as it is a painful reminder that my son Tim took his own life in Nov. 1994 and how much I miss him. It is part of the healing process. While I was there I felt very warm and safe, like someone had wrapped me in a warm blanket. There was such an outpouring of love from Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch and their staff. The camaraderie of everyone who attended the conference was enormous. It felt so safe to be able to talk about my son because everyone there had experienced the same hell that I had been through. It was liberating to be able to talk about suicide without someone quickly changing the subject. It really opened my eyes to the magnitude of this ever-growing problem in our country. So much work still needs to be done. Every time I attend a conference I learn more about preventing suicide. It motivates me to work harder—to do more.

Since I have been back from the conference I have been working diligently to get the word out. I set up a booth at the Florence Co. Senior Health Fair. At the fair I spread the word about the warning signs of depression and suicide. I hand out flyers of upcoming events. I will be holding a QPR training for the clergymen's association. When I took the QPR training I learned the warning signs and I felt like I had been hit in the face with a ton of bricks. I realized my son had

given me many clues that I had missed. I felt a tremendous amount of guilt. How could I have missed all those clues?? I was his mother; I'm supposed to know-supposed to protect him. As I was beating myself up someone told me, "You can't do what you don't know!" Now when I feel a wave of guilt coming on I repeat that saying, "You can't do what you don't know." It really helps. I don't want to waste energy on guilt. It makes me more determined to spread the word that suicide can be prevented. There is a movement in this country toward suicide prevention and I'm hopping on the bandwagon. I don't want another mother to feel the lose of a child to suicide, nor do I want another father to loose his son, nor another young lady to loose her brother. Hop on board! You won't be sorry you did.

Mary Doemel

Ann Abel Goes to D.C.

It was my first time in Washington, D.C. I am from Ladysmith, WI and in our town we do not even have a stop and go light. So going to Washington, D.C. was very scary for me. I am very glad that I went. There were lots of meetings and classes about depression and suicide prevention. My head was spinning trying to understand what was being said.

Saturday we went to the Lincoln Memorial. All the quilts were laid out for the reading of the names. Sue and Mary did the reading of the names from WI. It was too emotional for me. (Maybe next year) A lovely ceremony with a candlelight walk. We were also to take a pair of shoes or a package of socks in memory of the loved ones that we lost to suicide. I took a package of socks for my son Brian. They were donated to the homeless shelter.

Sunday was the Congressional Celebration and Awards Reception. Sue was the MC. She was great. Celestial Children's Choir sang. They were just great. Elsie and Jerry Weyrauch gave out the first Founders Award. After hearing their story I do not know how they have time for anything else with all the work they did for SPAN over the years.

Thank you Elsie and Jerry! Monday was all kinds of meetings. Tuesday we were off to the Capital! We had a special meeting with Senator Harry Reid from Nevada. (He lost his father to suicide and has been an advocate for SPAN.) We delivered our letters to the Congressmen, Congresswoman and the Senators. We were there all day. Wednesday morning we attended Senator Kohl's breakfast and had our pictures taken.

Ann Abel in memory of my son Brian who died Oct. 10, 1998

Ann returned to Ladysmith and submitted an article about her trip to Washington to her local paper. She was surprised at the number of people that commented on her trip. She found they were supportive of what she is doing. She is planning 2 QPR trainings on October 20th at the Greenwood Manor, 700 Miner Ave. West. They will be at 10:00a.m -12:00 and in the evening at 7:00 p.m. She plans to meet with people in her community to personally invite them to come.

Forest, Vilas and Oneida Counties

This tri-county area has hired a coordinator for their suicide prevention program. They had their first planning meeting in September. They are having their next meeting Tuesday October 8, 2003 at the Potawatomi Health and Wellness Center in Crandon. from 1-3. Contact info: Natalie Wetzal at 715-362-7463x187 or 715-610-0580.

Suicide Survivor Support Group Training

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is hosting this training October 3rd and 4th in Minneapolis. You can find the information on our website www.hopes-wi.org

Mental Health Day at the Capitol

HOPES will join other Wisconsin United for Mental Health partners in displaying our quilts and our information Tuesday October 7th. The program at noon will include Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton, Sue Ann Thompson and other people who will talk about mental illness and recovery.

QPR Programs

HOPES will present the gatekeeper program QPR at the following locations:

- Mon. Oct. 20th Ladysmith, WI see the article “Ann Abel goes to D.C.”
- Wed. Oct. 22nd Waukesha NAMI 7:30 at the Mental Health Center, 1501 Airport Rd.
- Mon. Oct. 27th Milwaukee CO. NAMI 7:00 at 3732 W. Wisconsin Ave.
- Nov. 13 and 14th Price County. Times and places to be listed on our website.

In this program we teach people how to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicide and how to persuade someone to get help and who to refer them to. QPR is also offered at many conferences that we are asked to present at. For a listing check our website.

1st Annual Suicide Prevention Conference Changing Minds, Saving Lives

HOPES will be hosting our first conference about suicide prevention. It features Jerry and Elsie Weyrauch, Survivors of their daughter’s suicide and founders of Suicide Prevention Action Network. It is an opportunity to let the people in WI know about the problem and gain some knowledge on how we can implement suicide prevention strategies in our communities. We will have workshops for professionals and community members of all levels. The Surgeon General said that suicide occurs in the community and that is where the changes need to happen.

Please take time out of your busy schedules and join other survivors and community members in welcoming the Weyrauch’s to WI. See what is happening in WI and across the USA. Together we can truly making a difference.

National Survivor Day

Saturday November 22, 2003 HOPES is partnering with the Mental Health Center of Dane County to present the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention National Survivor Day by Satellite. We will also have a program and lunch locally. Check our website at www.hopes-wi.org for a registration form.