

## HOPES of Wisconsin

### *From the Desk of Pat Derer*

The board wishes to thank you for your continued support of HOPES, and on a more personal note, we would also like to extend our special thanks to our dear friend and colleague, Susan Conlin Opheim, who has been serving as President and Co-Founder of HOPES since its inception. Sue has recently moved out of the Madison area and resides in Tomahawk during the summer months while traveling to Florida for the winter. We appreciate Sue's dedication and numerous efforts to this worthwhile cause over the years. She has been an inspiration to so many, and we are happy to say she plans to continue to serve on our Board as the Community Development Leader. With that in mind, Sue was instrumental in our recent collaboration with the Dane County Mental Health Summit event (see article). Along with Sue's newly found position, we would like to announce the remainder of our **HOPES Board of Directors**.

President & Co-Founder/Treasurer: **Pat Derer**  
Vice-President & Volunteers Coordinator: **Sue Howell**  
Secretary & Newsletter Coordinator: **Mary Moldenhauer**  
Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Facilitator & Coordinator: **Dennis Gates**  
Advertising & Informational Materials Coordinator: **Sara Leikness**  
Memorial Quilt and Memory Book Coordinator: **Donna Bichanich**  
Fundraising Coordinator & Public Relations Consultant: **Eric Garland**  
HOPES Accessories & Jewelry Coordinator / PR Consultant: **Darlene Helming**

The walk this year was a huge success because of your participation, and without you, we could not make the impact we do. **YOU** raised \$17,000 this past May for our Annual Walk for Awareness. In addition, Trempeleau County raised \$1,000 for their own annual walk. With these yearly donations, we are better able to create the necessary awareness and provide the vital education about suicide prevention to many others.

Fortunately, we are finding more and more publicity about mental illness in our local papers, as well as state and national magazines. Some of the HOPES Board has been able to attend conferences in Wisconsin, New Orleans and Washington, D.C. in order to improve our programming. During the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) Conference in Washington, we were able to visit the offices of our senators and representatives on Capitol Hill. We participated in meetings with the offices of Senators Kohl and Feingold, as well as Representative Tammy Baldwin. It was our goal to obtain support to receive additional grant funds for mental health and suicide prevention through the re-authorization of the Garrett Lee Smith bill that initially passed in 2004. Congress is also contemplating the Mental Health Parity bill in order that mental health issues will be covered for everyone in the near future. Other senators promoting this effort are Senator Harry Reid who introduced the "Stop Senior Suicide" bill, with Senators Chris Dodd and John Kerry as the original sponsors. Additional bills being proposed are for Veterans and Suicide / Postpartum Depression Research and Care. If you are interested in contacting SPAN to have your voice heard, send your response at [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org).

We, as survivors, sometimes wonder if we are really making a difference, but when you see first hand the progress being made on behalf of suicide prevention nationwide, we know they are listening. Keep up the good work and **"thank you"** once again!

**HOPES 2007 Walk For  
Awareness – “One Step at a Time”**

***By Sue Howell***

It was a cool and cloudy start to our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual HOPES Walk For Awareness at Olin Park in Madison. In spite of the weather, almost 300 people came to walk, to remember, to support each other. We were once again entertained before the walk by Greg Matysik and Casey Day. Their music and a cup of coffee were a great way to start the day. The walk started with the reading of names for those we lost. It was an eloquent and somber reminder of why we came. Members of the McFarland High School band led us off in leading the walk. The views of the lake and skyline were beautiful as we walked to the Monona Terrace Convention Center. It felt good to be doing something physical. The simple act of walking together with others who have shared this experience is powerful and healing. Returning for lunch at the park pavilion is always a chance to share your experience with others. It gives people an opportunity to see the “Many Faces of Suicide” memory quilt – it gets larger every year. Those walkers having collected donations earn tickets to be placed in prize boxes that are drawn and then they can check to see if they were indeed a lucky winner. It’s fun to watch everyone studying their tickets as the major prizes are awarded. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the generous donors who make it possible to offer such amazing prizes.

During the luncheon, HOPES chose to honor and thank some very special people this year. First of all, Blaine, Tina, Amanda, and Brandon Neupert from Don’s Home Furniture for all their years of support and wonderful oak furniture contributions; Aaron LaVoy and Lynea Strassman from Great Wolf Lodge for their donation of a free stay; and Eric, Trudy, and Brittney Garland from the McFarland community. These individuals are a lifeline for our walk

with their generous gifts and personal efforts for HOPES. Thank you!

And we can’t forget the many volunteers who baked cookies, made jewelry, coordinated registration, t-shirt, prizes, and food tables. Your help is appreciated more than words can say. Our major donors include: Don’s Home Furniture, Great Wolf Lodge, Greenway Station, Hill Street Bed & Breakfast, Midwest Engine Service, Sunrise Resort, Cakes & More, Stoughton Garden Center, The Ginkgo Tree, Pete Gunderson, James Dupor, Paradise Printing Company and Midwest Family Broadcasting for donating all the air time for our Public Service Announcements.

We are already hard at work on the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk for Awareness in 2008. Every walker makes a difference. We were pleased to see teams walking this year and hope to have more teams next year, so mark your calendars. . . hope to see you there!



**10<sup>TH</sup> Annual Walk for Awareness  
Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008**

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**Suicide Prevention Summit:  
How to Save a Life Through  
Awareness and Education**

***By Bonnie Schmidt***

*If someone you know is suicidal, would you know what to do? You can learn how to save a life. Safe Communities and HOPES, along with community partners are sponsoring this special event on **Monday, September 24, 2007**, from 1:00-6:30 p.m. at the American Family Insurance Education and Training Center located at 6000 American Parkway in Madison.*

Suicide is a serious public health problem in Wisconsin. Facts include:

- In 2004, suicide accounted for 74% of violent deaths; of 880 violent deaths, 650 died by suicide.
- In Dane County, there were 48 deaths by suicide and 441 attempts in 2004.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24. One in five Wisconsin high school students reported seriously considering suicide.
- Adult working men and women ages 25-64 represent more than two-thirds of the total suicides in Wisconsin.
- Elderly males (ages 75+) are three times more likely to complete suicide than the general population in Wisconsin.

Join us to learn the full scope of the problem, what resources exist in Dane County and become trained in QPR – Question, Persuade, and Refer - three simple steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.

**Intended Audience:** Anyone who is interested in suicide prevention for their community; anyone who has the potential to come in contact with someone who is suicidal. **Examples of those who may benefit from this seminar are:** Public Safety Workers, Employee Assistance Program Staff, Health Care Providers, Mental Health Providers, Youth Service Providers, Senior Service Providers, Faith Communities, School Personnel, Librarians, Survivors, and individual community members.

Registration materials can be downloaded starting August 1 at:

[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net). Registration deadline is Friday, September 7, 2007. Registration is \$30 and includes a light supper. Limited scholarships will be available.

For more information, contact:  
[info@safercommunity.net](mailto:info@safercommunity.net) or call (608) 256-6713.

### **Report from Brown County (Green Bay Area) Program** **By Mary Doemel**

I became involved with HOPES when I went to the first HOPES walk in Madison, and it was to be just what I needed. My husband Tim and I knew no one there, but still found it to be a very positive experience. I wanted to know more about it. I talked to Sue Opheim about how I could be involved with this group. I told her that I didn't live anywhere near Madison. She said that it didn't matter where I lived, I could still do the work of HOPES even though we were living in Florence County at the time. So I set myself on a course to make a difference. I started a Survivors of Suicide group. That was going well, but I needed to get the word out -- to be more vocal. I also needed to find a way to get materials printed. One day I found myself at the courthouse talking to the Human Services Director who was very interested in what I had to say. He helped me out a lot, not only giving me ideas, but offering me the services of their copying machine and also loaned me a computer.

I went to Madison to get certified in QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training. Sue came up to Florence and we did several QPR trainings and also went to the senior meal sites to talk about suicide prevention. I moved back to Green Bay three years ago and have been busy ever since. I facilitate an SOS group in Green Bay once a month and have talked to youth groups at churches, as well as having done several QPR trainings for seniors and county agencies. I'm also involved with a suicide prevention task force in Brown County that meets once a month. I have gone to several conferences in Wisconsin, in addition to the National Suicide Prevention Awareness and Training event in Washington, D.C.. I want to do more. I want to take a refresher in QPR and take a Train the Trainer course so that I can

teach people in my area to learn QPR. In November, we will host our 4<sup>th</sup> local National Day for Survivors of Suicide Teleconference. There is so much more I want to do. I want get into the schools to train teachers, staff and students. Prevention can be taught to funeral directors, Knights of Columbus, Lions Clubs, to mention a few. I could not have done all this without Sue Opheim. She has made me aware of a lot of the conferences that I've attended. Sue has been my eyes, my ears and my mind. She has taught me so much. Sue has been such an inspiration, a mentor, and a great friend.

### **The Beautiful Gift of HOPE**

***By Amy King***

Suicide prevention is a complex puzzle with many different pieces. Today, as a psychotherapist, my mission is to complete my piece of the puzzle by educating and persuading others that help and hope are available when battling depression. Why? I am living proof that this is true. Depression has been a pest in my life for many years. Its symptoms peaked for me in my late teens. I didn't quite know how to handle it at that time and had thoughts and a plan to end my life in order to make the emotional pain melt away. When I close my eyes right now I can remember specific details, thoughts and feelings I was experiencing at that time and it scares the hell out of me! I thank the Lord that my aunt saw how my depression was destroying me and took me to speak with a therapist. My therapist, along with the right medication, has provided hope and guidance to more appropriately cope with my depression.

In the past, when I allowed my depression to build a dark and lonely cave around me, I never considered how others would have been affected if I actually went through with the plan to end my life. This realization came to light after I attended my first "H.O.P.E.S. - Walk for Awareness" in Madison. I

witnessed the depth of pain the many Survivors go through with their loss, and it inspired me to take on a higher level of action. I recognized what an excellent organization H.O.P.E.S. is and I decided to have a walk-a-thon in the small town of Whitehall, Wisconsin with all the proceeds going directly to H.O.P.E.S. The walk went so well in 2006 that another followed in 2007. Each walk earned a total donation of over \$1,000, but the higher purpose for which the walk served ran much deeper. It provided participants a time to: shed tears of pain and tears of hope, remember loved ones, take another step down the path of personal healing, pray for those lost and for those struggling today, share stories and "be there" for each other, speak openly and battle the silence of suicide, encourage others to overcome the stigma of help-seeking behaviors for depression, celebrate overcoming personal traumas involving thoughts of suicide, recognize a renewed life after an attempt, distribute and collect educational materials on depression and suicide prevention, send a clear message to the local communities that depression is real and suicide is a serious problem, and a time to feel pride for giving support to organizations such as H.O.P.E.S. that are determined to make a difference.

At this point in my life I am 33 years old, married to a phenomenal man and have been blessed with a beautiful new baby girl. My heart aches as I think about the people I would have hurt and all the experiences I would have missed out on in life if someone hadn't taken me by the hand and guided me in the right direction to show me that help and hope were available for my depression. I encourage each and every one of you to figure out what your piece of the puzzle is in preventing suicide. Don't put it off; you could help save a life today by giving someone HOPE. Can you think of a more beautiful gift to give? I can't.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### Upcoming Events:

- ***Suicide Prevention Week: Memory Quilt Display at the Capitol***, September 9-14, 2007; quilt display throughout the week
- ***Beyond the Blues***, Benefit for Charles E. Kubly Foundation, Saturday, September 15, 2007, 5:30 p.m./ Milwaukee County Zoo-Zoo Terrace, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- ***Suicide Prevention Summit: How to Save a Life Through Awareness and Intervention***, Monday, September 24, 2007, 1:00-6:30 p.m. / American Family Insurance Education & Training Center, 6000 American Parkway-Bldg. A, Madison, Wisconsin
- ***Out of the Darkness Community Walk***, Sunday, September 30, 2007, Registration at 8:00 a.m. & Walk at 10:00 a.m. / Vilas Zoo, Madison, Wisconsin
- ***NAMI of Dane County Walk***, Sunday, October 7, 2007, 11:00 a.m. Check-in & Walk at 1:00 p.m. / Olin-Turville Park, Madison, Wisconsin
- ***Out of the Darkness Community Walk***, Friday, October 19, 2007, Registration and Start time TBD / Marian College, Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin
- ***Out of the Darkness Community Walk***, Saturday, November 3, 2007, Registration at 8:00 a.m. & Walk at 10:00 a.m. / MGA Research Corp., Burlington, Wisconsin
- ***National Survivor's Day Event***, Saturday, November 17, 2007, Registration at 8:30 a.m. with Program beginning at 9:00 a.m. / St. Mary Hospital, Madison, Wisconsin
- ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser***, Saturday, February 2, 2008, 4-8 p.m., American Legion Hall, McFarland, Wisconsin
- ***HOPES Annual Walk for Awareness***, Saturday, May 3, 2008 / Olin-Turville Park, Madison, Wisconsin

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Send your donation today and help HOPES to create more awareness and educate others about the signs and symptoms of depression and suicide.

Let's work together to reduce this very serious public health problem.

Mail your donation today to: **HOPES, 1902 Tarragon Drive, Madison, Wisconsin, 53716.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my contribution *In Memory of*: \_\_\_\_\_

# **SUICIDE PREVENTION SUMMIT:**

**How to Save a Life Through  
Awareness and Intervention**

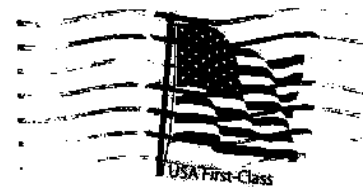
**September 24, 2007**

**1:00 – 6:30 p.m.**

**American Family Insurance  
Education and Training Center  
6000 American Parkway, Building A  
Madison, Wisconsin**

**REGISTER TODAY!**

**HOPES of Wisconsin  
1902 Tarragon Drive  
Madison, WI 53716  
[www.hopes-wi.org](http://www.hopes-wi.org)**



Patrick/Heather Conlin/Anderson  
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**“From our deepest, darkest wounds  
come our greatest gifts  
back to mankind.”**

