

HOPES 10TH ANNUAL WALK FOR AWARENESS

“A Decade of Making a Difference”

Saturday, May 3, 2008

**OLIN-TURVILLE PARK
MADISON, WISCONSIN**

**Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
Walk commences at 10:00 a.m.
Light Lunch to Follow**

REGISTRATION FORM INSIDE!

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

**“From our deepest, darkest wounds
come our greatest gifts back to mankind.”**



From HOPES President – Pat Derer

This past 2007 was an exciting year for HOPES! We accomplished so much with your help as you read through the next few pages of our newsletter. Currently, 2008 looks to be just as eventful. We have numerous requests for speaking engagements including the Indiana Behavioral Health & Family Institute. As a Wisconsin statewide organization, it is always a good sign to see the results of others outside Wisconsin contacting us through our expanding website. Please note the most recent statistics for our state below.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank to one of our major sponsors, **Midwest Family Broadcasting** who has provided us with approximately 80 advertisement spots per week for our walk in the past. In addition, they also promoted our HOPES 2nd Annual Spaghetti Dinner this last February. As a not-for-profit organization, we could never afford such a great benefit so we appreciate all they do.

Please remember our "A Decade Of Making a Difference" 10th Annual Walk for Awareness being held Saturday, May 3, 2008 at Olin-Turville Park in Madison. (Registration enclosed with this newsletter)

WISCONSIN STATISTICS FOR 2005

Death Totals:

Suicide	651
Homicide	160

In 2005:

- Suicide was the tenth most common cause of death in Wisconsin.
- Among those ages 15-34 years, suicide was the second most common cause of death, following unintentional injuries. It was third nationally.
- Nine children ages 10-14 years died by suicide.
- The majority of suicides occurred in the working age population, those ages 18-64 years (641 of the 651 suicides).
- Each suicide death was estimated to affect the life of six other people. This means nearly 3,900 Wisconsin residents were affected by a loved one's suicide. This does not include friends, co-workers and classmates.
- There were 5,112 hospitalizations and 5,354 emergency department visits due to self-harm. Many who make suicide attempts never seek professional care immediately after the attempt.
- These hospitalizations and emergency department visits resulted in over 41 million dollars in hospital charges.
- Forty-five (45%) percent of suicides were by firearm.

Source: Resident death certificates, Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. Please visit: Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH). www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wish

News from Brown County

By Mary Doemel

In Brown County, we view ourselves as a work in progress. We have A Survivor's of Suicide group that meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at Bellin Administration Building, 2020 S Webster Avenue, Green Bay. The group was started by Don and Jonna Bostedt in their home 25 years ago. The group quickly outgrew their home and presently, we meet at Bellin.

We also have started a task force. We call it "Brown County Work Group". Our group is very diversified. We have representation from our 3 colleges--St. Norbert, UW-Green Bay, and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), in addition to NAMI, Survivors of Suicide, Green Bay School District, and several County Agencies, as well as the Green Bay Fire Department and the Medical Examiner. We started our group about 2 years ago, with 3 people and have grown to about 15 or so.



Our S.O.S. group has held the National Survivor's of Suicide Day Teleconference for the last 4 years. We have had approximately 25 people attending each year with the program running from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. During the last couple of years, I was invited to help start a S.O.S. group in Two Rivers, as well as a group in Door County. In 2007, I did several QPR training programs, including our Work Group, NAMI, and several religious groups. In March, I will be presenting QPR to CESA 7 for the school district.

There were 40 suicides in Brown County in 2007. That is very alarming to us. Rest assured that we will be working very hard this year to get those numbers on a down-ward swing. This is truly a work in progress.

2ND ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER IN MCFARLAND

By Sara Leikness

In early February HOPES hosted the second annual spaghetti dinner in McFarland. This was the first time I was involved with the spaghetti dinner and it was evident very early on that this was a community event. In July 2006, Eric Garland organized the first spaghetti dinner in honor of his son, Brandon Garland, and friend Natalie Wiegand who died by suicide that spring. The community showed support by packing the American Legion to capacity for this event. It was a huge success.

The scene was no different this time around with lines out the door at times. With nearly 500 people in attendance, the American Legion was once again packed. Looking around the room I could tell people were generally happy to be there, happy to be a part of something, happy to be making a difference. There was a huge sense of community and I don't just mean the community of McFarland. I mean the mental health community because, the way I see it, hosting events like this is a great service to the mental health community. We raise money to help prevent and educate about suicide and we break the stigma involved with mental health by putting it out in the open. Simply stated, we made a difference! There was a wonderful group of volunteers and an awesome crowd in attendance. Everyone was so

kind and easy to work with. I really enjoyed the opportunity to volunteer and I know this is not an event that I'll soon forget.

**Support for HOPES Spaghetti
Dinner Greatly Appreciated**

By Darlene Helming

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the residents and business owners of McFarland for supporting and helping make the 2nd Annual Spaghetti Dinner to benefit HOPES a success. We raised over \$6,000 that will be used for suicide awareness and education.

Thank You!

Special thanks to Eric and Trudy Garland, Briana Wiegand and Katie Helming for their long hours both planning and working at the dinner and to John Johnson for cooking a fantastic meal.

I also want to acknowledge the hard working volunteers from McFarland High School including Erik Blank, David Johnson, Mike Johnson, Austin Brandt, Leah Grinvalsky, Taylor Chambers, Dakota Chambers, Brandon Zimmermann, Taylor Starczyk, Jon Dahl, Zachery Jones, Travis Hustad, Kolin Walker, Alyse Weber, Melanie Kloes, Brett Kloes and Drew Kloes.

It is never easy to lose a loved one to suicide. Thank you McFarland for your continued support. Together, we can ...

Make a Difference!

Mennenga Partners with HOPES

By Sue Howell

When Marshall & Betty Mennenga decided to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Mennenga Tax & Financial Service they did it with a bang! They wanted to thank their clients and the community. The MTF team celebrated by partnering with 12 area non-profit organizations to promote their missions in 2008. HOPES was excited and honored to be the selected charity for February. We were able to meet with the MTF team to talk about HOPES mission & our efforts both local and state wide. Our information table was set up in the reception area of the newly expanded Mennenga building. Marshall & Betty supported our spaghetti dinner by generously purchasing tickets for the team members & their families. HOPES would like to thank Mennenga Tax & Financial Service & the MTF team for their support. Congratulations on your 20th Anniversary and we wish you continued success!

A Personal Moment ...

By Dawn Leikness



November 12, 1997

It was a Wednesday, like any other. I was 14. Looking back I remember having fun at school that morning. This would later come to make me feel incredibly guilty. I remember laughing with my friends at the lunch table, just like any other day. But it wasn't any other day... it is a day I still vividly remember.

* * *

I am sitting in my afternoon math class when daily announcements come over the loud speaker. Towards the end of announcements they say "Dawn Leikness please get your things and come to the office". This is odd, I think. My parents never pull me from school. I knew something had happened. I gather my things and head for the office. I pass by my friend's lockers and shrug my shoulders as they asked me where I am going. My mind starts to race and I come to the conclusion that something had happened to either my brother or my grandmother. I reach the office and push open the heavy door. Everyone inside is silent as they glance over at me. I immediately take notice that something is off. There seems to be more staff in the office than usual and no one is smiling. Everyone is somber. They keep their eyes down, occasionally glancing at me. I start to feel my heart race along with my thoughts of what could have happened. The secretary tells me that my mother is waiting out front for me.

The November air is cold. I see my godmother's car is parked out front of the school. My godmother is coming up the sidewalk to look for me. She is not smiling. She looks distressed. The passenger side door is open and my mother is in the back seat. She is weeping. I climb into the backseat next to her and stare into her eyes for an answer. I ask her what happened. I feel the gravity of the moment. My heart is pounding. She hugs me and says "Dan is dead". This phrase would change my entire life. However, I didn't hear her clearly. We hug and cry for a moment as I frantically try to recall her words. Did she say Dad or Dan I think to myself, but I don't ask. I am scared and

confused. Instead I ask how. She tells me he was in a car accident. She tells me that my Dad is on his way home from his doctor's appointment in Madison. He will meet us at home. So that is it, Dan is gone.

I have a hard time recalling the rest of the conversation in the backseat. Although I know it was mostly crying. I clung to my mother and her to me. I thought about that phrase over and over, *Dan is dead*. I thought about what it meant. My mind raced with many, many overwhelming thoughts. We drove passed the high school on our way home. I remember looking at the kids laughing, smiling, walking with friends and I felt hurt. I thought, don't they know what's going on? Didn't they realize that my brother died today? This was one of the first moments I realized that my world had stopped but time wouldn't.

I was numb. Crying in the backseat of my godmother's car was followed by crying at home. I remember wandering into the front living room. There was a notepad open on the sofa. It simply said "Goodbye, I love you all", his last words. I was confused. I broke down. When my dad arrived home we broke down all over again. I remember my brother's friend, Matt stopping by that afternoon to see my brother. As soon as he walked in the house he knew something was wrong. I remember him repeating that it couldn't be... he just saw Dan days before... he just talked to him the night before... it couldn't be.

In fact we would later recall that Dan had called all of his friends the night prior. I remember fighting him for the phone because I wanted to talk to my

friends. I was angry with him most of that last night. But before he went to bed he told me he loved me. I thought nothing of it. I wish that I would have told him that I loved him too. How would I have known that night was his last? The last time I would see him, walking down the hallway to his room.

The night of Dan's death my parent's went to the nursing home to tell my elderly grandmother that Dan had died. She never spoke again. The doctors said she had a stroke that night. She died the following year.

Mostly, I remember all the people who came to be with us during those following days and weeks, family friends, relatives, my friends, Dan's friends and Natasha. My sister arrived that night from Minnesota with my oldest nephew. I never felt so close to my family in my entire life. We would spend the next few days together preparing to deal with things... preparing for a funeral... preparing for a different future.

You see that morning my brother Dan took his life. He was 18. He drove his car into a large truck. The truck swerved away but he turned even sharper with determination. No one else was hurt. Dan was still alive and taking his last breaths when the first two witnesses approached. His eyes were open. He could not speak. He was bleeding. He appeared scared. Then he got what he longed for, no more pain, no more suffering. He died in his car on the side of the highway.

I couldn't even begin to explain. For so long we waited for him to come home. He'd walk in the door anytime, we hoped. But that was it. He was truly

gone. He wasn't coming home to sleep in his room anymore, although his room waited perfectly intact for him for months and months. His blue Lumina wasn't going to pull in the driveway anymore, although we looked for him in every blue car that passed. We would never hear his voice again or look into his beautiful blue eyes, although he was in our dreams. He had left us. He couldn't have known the pain he would cause when he left us.

It's hard for me to fathom that it has been 10 years since that awful day. It's still difficult to live in a world without my big brother, without my Dan. I miss him. It's true though, time does heal. You eventually find your way back to happiness. Life goes on... and I bring him with me.

HOPES invites all personal stories if you care to share your experience. It is part of the healing and support that we all need. If you are interested, please contact us at our website:

www.hopes-wi.org

Gone, but not forgotten . . .

By Mary Moldenhauer

In losing your loved one to suicide, those first few years are exceptionally difficult. We don't want that person who is so dear to us to be forgotten. Often times, we fear society will only remember the **way** they died. It is important that we **honor** those individuals for the valuable human beings they were, and for their many worthwhile contributions throughout their lifetime. The following are ideas that we offer to help reflect on the goodness of your loved one.

These suggestions can be utilized on a more personal level, shared with close friends, or used for family celebrations in remembrance of that special person.

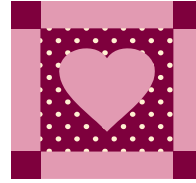
- Write and share a symbolic poem or story about your loved one
- Plan a celebration of their life on a milestone birth date or anniversary date
- Share special dreams you had of your loved one
- Gather at the gravesite to share memories and release balloons to celebrate their past life
- Recall your special loved one by serving his/her favorite foods, lighting a (prayer) candle or playing their favorite songs



- Plant a tree/flower in their honor
- Attend a grief retreat to give yourself time to reflect and express honor for that person
- Purchase special personalized items to have in your home or garden to keep their memory alive
- Create a quilt square to add to the HOPES *Many Faces of Suicide* memory quilts
- Participate in the Annual HOPES Walk for Awareness

Do you have some ideas for helping others heal through their grief process? Let us know so we can share them in our next newsletter publication. Email your story or suggestions to Mary at paoligal@tds.net.

**INTERESTED IN DESIGNING A
QUILT SQUARE FOR OUR
“Many Faces of Suicide” Memorial
Quilts?**



Or
**SUBMITTING A PICTURE OF
YOUR LOVED ONE FOR OUR
NEW
“Memorial Remembrance Book”?**

Contact: Donna Bichanich at
608.644.9019 *or* **Email:**
bichanch@chorus.net

Are you interested in having QPR Training for a specific group to teach others the signs and symptoms of depression/suicide? HOPES (contact us at 608.274.9686) offers certified trainers to educate the general public.

What is QPR?

Question the person about suicide
Persuade the person to get help
Refer them for help

QPR gatekeeper training is taught in a format that is clear, concise and applicable for a wide variety of audiences. QPR was created and developed by Paul Quinnett, Ph.D. of Spokane, Washington. Dr. Quinnett began a QPR Instructor Certification Program to allow qualified candidates to teach QPR and increase the number of people trained to act in a bold, positive manner to prevent suicide and save a life.

What Has HOPES Done for Wisconsin?

As a non-profit organization, HOPES (Helping Others Prevent and Educate about Suicide) offers the State of Wisconsin assistance for suicide prevention in many ways. We maintain an informative website (www.hopes-wi.org) containing useful resources and contacts. We also provide many informational brochures and materials to educate the public, as well as offer QPR Presentations. These presentations teach individuals how to recognize symptoms of depression and suicidal signs, then direct them in getting the help they so desperately need.

We network and support other organizations addressing suicide prevention and our Board of Directors are often called to assist survivors of the community when a suicide occurs. In spreading awareness, HOPES also collaborated with the Charles F. Kubly Foundation of Milwaukee to create advertising billboards persuading those in need to get help—the eight billboard signs targeting ***Men and Depression*** were posted throughout Wisconsin.

HOPES also joined forces with Safe Community of Madison and Dane County co-sponsoring a Summit Conference for suicide prevention engaging 300 participants. More specifically, members of HOPES have participated in the following events and activities throughout the past year.

HOPES Contributions and Participation in 2007

- Presentation about suicide prevention made to clergy in Stoughton
- Attended the annual American Association of Suicidology (AAS) Conference held in New Orleans, learning the most current research and philosophies regarding suicide
- HOPES 9th Annual Walk for Awareness, Olin Park – Madison
- Continuing to accept quilt squares for our Memory Quilts, the project entitled *The Many Faces of Suicide*
- Attended and offered resources at a Wisconsin Conference focusing on *Suicide Prevention: Beyond Crisis Intervention* – Stevens Point, Wisconsin
- Participated at a community Walk for Awareness held in Whitehall, Wisconsin
- Attended the Suicide Prevention of America Network (SPAN) Conference held in Washington, D.C. working with legislators on a national, state and local level for suicide prevention

- Attended and offered resources at the Wisconsin State Prevention Conference focusing on *Bridging Research and Practice*, Stevens Point
- Circulated our bi-annual HOPES Newsletter to over 2,000 recipients
- Held Forum at the Wisconsin State Capitol in September for Suicide Prevention Week where a media event was conducted
- Attended and offered resources at the annual event called *Beyond the Blues* sponsored by the Kubly Foundation, Milwaukee County Zoo
- Late September, co-sponsored *Suicide Prevention Summit: How to Save a Life through Awareness and Intervention*
- Gathering in Green Bay featuring *Terry Wise*, a national speaker and survivor of suicide
- QPR Presentation held at Lakeview Lutheran Church, Madison
- Materials circulated at Sennett Middle School and West High School, Madison
- Participation in the local community *Out of the Darkness* walk held at Vilas Zoo
- Attended the annual NAMI walk for mental illness
- Circulated resources at the United Methodist Church Health Fair in Stoughton
- The National Survivor's Day of Remembrance event was held in three locations in Wisconsin – Madison, Green Bay, Beloit
- United Way Youth Resource Network, QPR Training
- Attended the Wisconsin Memory Tree ceremony held in Milton, Wisconsin
- Suicide Prevention presentation given at Oak Crest High School, Wisconsin
- Inception of Brown County Work Group task force for suicide prevention
- Numerous QPR trainings in Brown County, including NAMI and various religious groups

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 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:* _____