

*Committed to the Reduction of
Suicidal Behaviour and its
Impact on Individuals, Families
and Communities*

Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council



Waterloo Region
Suicide Prevention Council
www.wrspc.ca

**NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 7
JUNE 2014**

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Clara's Big Ride



The inspirational Clara Hughes

In March, Waterloo Region was fortunate to have Clara Hughes roll into town ... literally .. on her bike! This was one of her first stops on her 12,000 kilometer journey across Canada to raise awareness for mental health. Grand River Hospital was chosen as the host for the free, family fun event and did so with great style. The night was a true community event bringing together over 900 people. Wow! Families got to try their luck at hockey, Wii, take part in arts and crafts, have their picture taken at a photo booth, have their face or body painted with inspiring messages and watch a bicycle genius perform tricks. The highlight though was the unveiling of a mural designed by students from 30 local schools to be hung in the psychiatric unit at Grand River Hospital

and hearing the inspiring words by Clara herself. Clara will finish her cross country tour on July 1 in Ottawa for Canada Day.



Love cakes

Once again a team of volunteers led by Laura Barker created delicious cupcakes called Lovecakes which were sold on Valentine's Day at Grand River Hospital in memory of her son Josh. The cupcakes were once again a hit and were sold out in a just a couple of hours raising almost \$500. At Country Hills Public School, five student leaders were determined to keep the event going and promote suicide awareness. They too were successful and were honoured to present a cheque to the WRSPC for \$160. These youth are the ambassadors of tomorrow and are committed to social change.



Tana receiving the cheque from Yuval, Jaxon, Lily and Kristen, Kirk's Crew, Country Hills Public School.

Pledge to End Bullying

In February, the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council was honoured to be included in CTV's Pledge to End Bullying event at Fairview Park Mall. For eight hours, a team of six volunteers handed out literature, resource cards, engaged in dialogue, and encouraged shoppers to spin the 'Sources of Strength wheel' which focused on eight key sources of strength: medical access, mental health, positive friends, mentors, generosity, spirituality, healthy activities and family support. One of the volunteers commented on how surprised she was to have such meaningful conversations on suicide in a shopping mall. This underscores the reason why having these conversations in public spaces reaches out to individuals in need by meeting them where they are at.



Long time volunteer Deb Emery spinning the Sources of Strength wheel

Elmira Skate



A huge thanks to the Elmira Sugar Kings for coming out and skating with the kids!

For the second year in a row, a generous gift has been made to the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council from the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival committee. Understanding that strong connection to family and community support is one of the many protective factors that may enhance our personal resiliency and serve to counterbalance risks related to suicide, the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council wanted to share the proceeds of this gift with the Woolwich community. On January 2, 2014, we hosted our second annual My Life Matters Free Family Skate at the Woolwich Township Arena in St. Jacobs. We were joined by the local Junior B hockey team, the Elmira Sugar Kings and approximately 70 friends and family for a leisurely skate followed by some lovely hot chocolate and treats. We thank those of you who were able to join us!



Happy skaters at the event

Shhhh... It's Mental Health

WRSPC partnered with Lutherwood during Mental Health Awareness Week to provide a free presentation on suicide and self harming behaviour featuring speaker Hendrike Isert-Bender from Interfaith Community Counselling Centre. A very tough and emotional topic, Hendrike combined facts with a caring sensitivity to outline the difference between the two issues while providing helpful tips and resources.

Volunteer Appreciation

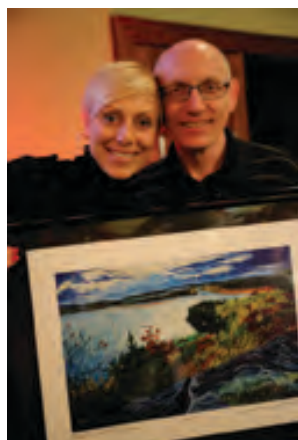


Dale Wombwell and Stephanie Cheri with the Daniel Tudisco Memorial Golf Tournament

It is hard to put into words and say thank you to our volunteers for their hard work throughout the year – but we do our best to try. The Council is very grateful for the work of forty-five active volunteers who help the Council annually. Twenty-five volunteers and several Council members came out to enjoy a relaxed evening of networking, games and food. A slide presentation reviewing the year was highlighted. Thank you volunteers!



Side by Side facilitator and volunteer Bernice Burnett



Carla Johans from Simpson Print with Chair Rob Martin.

Grand River Hospital Update

The Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council has been part of a working committee formed by the Mental Health and Addictions Program at Grand River Hospital titled 'Suicide Prevention.' The purpose of this group was to look at ways to help individuals admitted following a suicide attempt. In the adult unit, a wellness follow up phone call is now provided within 72 hours reconnecting with individuals to see how they are doing, a safety plan and laminated wallet resource card is provided and a new booklet titled "After a Suicide – a guide for the individual" and a second booklet for the family is now available. The child and adolescent unit has also updated their safety plan, provides the booklets and a youth laminated wallet card and will be looking at ways to best implement the wellness call over the summer months.



New resource materials available

Carizon Family and Community Services: A Brief History

On April 1st, 2013, Mosaic Counselling and Family Services, and kidsLINK (Notre Dame of St. Agatha) amalgamated to form Carizon Family and Community Services, providing a comprehensive integrated approach to delivering community services. The name "Carizon" is a combination of the words care and horizon, representing their hope and vision for this community.

Having just celebrated their first anniversary as Carizon, the agency is motivated by their increased capacity to provide services that care for individuals, families and communities. Carizon specializes in children's mental health, youth engagement and development, family violence services, individual and family counselling, parental support and education, credit counselling, workplace resilience, settlement support and community wellness.

Operating in four business locations, Carizon services are delivered to numerous locations throughout Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and the Townships of Wellesley, Wilmot, Woolwich and North Dumfries. More than 19,000 children and adults receive direct service from Carizon's therapeutic, supportive and preventative programs. Carizon provides a full range of services that work together to create a community of wellness. This means that:

- people get the help they need when faced with difficult and challenging circumstances
- preventative programs are in place to build strong families and resilient individuals
- children and youth are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential, and
- families live and work in a supportive and healthy community of wellness.

For additional information, please refer to our website at <http://www.carizon.ca>

5th Annual Bowlathon



"Gail's Gang" from the Waterloo Region District School Board

On April 26, 160 bowlers and 25 volunteers dressed in inspiring t-shirts and zany costumes congregated at Frederick Bowling Lanes for the 5th annual bowlathon fundraiser for the Suicide Prevention Council. In addition to the teams bowling in honour of someone they had lost to suicide, there were many local organizations that supported the cause including: Grand River Hospital with nine teams, Canadian Mental Health Association, Waterloo Region Regional Homes for Mental Health, Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Region Catholic School Board, Lutherwood, Carizon, Renison College, Community Care Access Centre and Erb & Good Family Funeral Home. Ambassador for the event, Rondi McFarlane, shared her personal story of how the Skills for Safer Living twenty week program helped to save her life, a program (for individuals with suicide attempts) the Council has partnered on bringing to this community.

In total, over \$9,500 in prizes were given away and generously donated by businesses in our community and a total of \$37,718 was raised! A huge thank you to everyone for making this event a success.



GRH Myth Buster Ivana Matic



2014 Ambassador, Rondi McFarlane

WRSPC bowl-a-thon FUNdraiser! by participant Shawna Percy

This year my family and I got to experience our first

bowl-a-thon for suicide prevention. Why dress up to bowl? Because it's super fun, of course! And it shows that we can take the traumas in our lives, the losses that have scarred us, and transform them into something creative, practical, life-changing, and fun!

What was the result? 160 bowl-a-thon participants raised a whopping \$37.718!!!

How will these funds be used? Here's where previous year's fundraising efforts have been directed.

- * Accredited trainings for primary care providers
- * Laminated crisis contact wallet cards
- * Development of a risk assessment app, currently being piloted for family physicians
- * Professional conferences, community forums, and special guest speakers
- * Rachel's Challenge kindness project into schools
- * Helped fund safeTALK trainings for 454 people
- * Piloted two new After a suicide attempt guides
- * Funded a Skills for Safer Living ideation group

The WRSPC is serious about making good use of the generous funding they receive, whether it's creating new programs, FUNdraising, or connecting people with valuable resources.

Thanks to everyone who helped raise funds, bowled, or cheered us on. Remember, your life matters.

Highlights from the American Association for Suicidology Conference

by Tana Nash

In April, I had the honour of attending the American Association for Suicidology (AAS) Conference in Los Angeles. Close to 1000 people from across the world attended the three day conference and the numerous seminars that were presented. While I attended a cross section of presentations – from youth to the elderly to assisted suicide to new clinical findings – one key presentation has really stuck with me and was the buzz of the conference; ensuring that the voices of suicide attempt survivors are included in conversations, committees, and in all of our work to advance suicide prevention. In fact, the AAS went as far as to implement a new division dedicated to empowering this group across the States – the Suicide Attempt Survivors (SAS). In Waterloo Region, the WRSPC is proud that we listen and include this important group of people in our work from presentations to the inspiring "Stories of Living" brochure we developed a couple of years ago featuring courageous individuals from our community who share their stories of hope and resilience. It was however a reminder that those that struggle with suicidal thoughts or who have attempted suicide have the most intimate knowledge with suicide itself. We have much to learn from these individuals if we take the time to listen and

ensure they are included in decisions as we move forward. As one of the inspirational speakers said, "We are not untreatable; we are not a lost cause". I highly recommend looking at the following website: LiveThroughThis.org to read stories of suicide attempt survivors and view their portraits.



The Canadian Contigent – Pat Doyle CMHA PEI, Tana Nash WRSPC, and Jenn Ward CASP Survivor Chair

\$28,500 grant received from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services for youth suicide prevention efforts in our Region.

Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council partnered with a number of agencies to receive this funding: Lutherwood, Grand River Hospital, Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Region Catholic School Board, Family and Children Services, Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, the French Catholic School Board, the French Public School Board and Parent's for Children's Mental Health. The money allowed us to purchase and circulate a laminated wallet size resource card including a new French version, provide training materials for suicide prevention training in the schools, provide a community Safe Talk training, provide support for the annual Youth Talk Conference, purchase and circulate My Life Matters t-shirts for youth staying in shelters and residential settings, and review the current Skills for Safer Living Group and determine how best to apply the group for adolescents. This group is for individuals who have attempted suicide and provides tactile and practical skills that have been found to reduce further suicide attempts.

WRSPC around the Community

The Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council continues to provide educational and awareness presentations throughout our community in addition to attending events and providing educational displays. A highlight of where we have been the past few months include: Victim Services, Bethany Evangelical Missionary Church youth, UW Renison College Residence Dons, WAYVE Youth Talk conference, Ministry Child and Youth Services, WLU School of Social Work speaking on suicide grief, St. Mary's High School, Resurrection High School, Galt Collegiate Institute and St. Benedict's Secondary School for Youth Mental Health Awareness Week.



"Where Kindness Matters, Wellness Matters." Speakers Troy Smith, Coach of the Kitchener Rangers and Tana Nash with VP Joan Grundy, St. Mary's High School

A big thank you to the following funders:

- Cambridge Sunrise Rotary
- Maple Syrup Festival
- May Court Club of Kitchener-Waterloo
- Ministry of Child and Youth Services
- Preston Chapter IODE
- Rotary Club of Kitchener Grand River
- Stantec – a contribution made as a result of Bob Leguerrier's volunteer hours with the WRSPC
- Unique Boutique

Plus the numerous personal donations and donations raised through the bowlathon.

Thank you!

Unique Boutique hosts fashion show for WRSPC



Tana with Unique Boutique owner Gosia Jurgel

Unique Boutique's owner Gosia Jurgel hosted a fabulous fashion show in April to 200 women – and a few men – that not only highlighted this summer's best fashions and where to purchase them, but highlighted the beauty of the power of women and the important role they can play while connecting with others on this journey through life. Gosia shared her own struggles and encouraged people to reach out to find the help they need. A highlight of the evening was a pink quartz heart she gave all the attendees as a gift. "If you feel you need this in your life right now then hang on to it. If you don't need it, then pass it on to someone else that could."

3rd Annual My Life Matters Day at Benjamin Road



In May, the youth attending the school at Lutherwood and those in residential care, were treated to a full day of positive messages all targeted on suicide prevention. They listened to speakers Troy Smith, Coach of the Kitchener Rangers and to the youth led WAYVE team from Canadian Mental Health Association. Troy's key message focused on how important it is to surround yourself with a good team and that it is the courageous person who seeks out help. WAYVE's full long inspirational presentation touched on bullying, kindness and empathy and being the change to stand up and make a difference. In the afternoon, the students rotated through four different activities: body art, inspirational writing, yoga and music where the music therapist had the youth rearrange pre-made words into lyrics and perform a song. At the end of the day, the students received a goodie bag with a t-shirt, water bottle and other treats.

Breathe



Breathe: a true story about marriage, faith, and attempted suicide
by Shawna Percy

Have you ever wondered how you're going to survive this next week, day, or hour? Perhaps you are standing on the fault line in the battle of your life. Perhaps you are already engaged. Whatever the case, whether your struggle is physical, spiritual, emotional, or mental, in the accumulated losses and taxing stressors you face, know you are not alone. There is hope, and a way through.

In *Breathe*, Shawna shares her story of marriage; an arranged marriage of sorts, that was rooted in



ambiguous faith, submerged in mental and emotional captivity, and survived with glimpses of hope, learned coping strategies, and tremendous support found through vulnerability. *Breathe* speaks to the caregiver of someone who has attempted suicide, the individual struggling to survive mental illness, and the supportive friend

or family member who wants to understand the all-to-often hidden life of a family raped by these realities. Some moments make you lose your breath. In others, all you can do is breathe. Shawna's desire is that by sharing her story others will feel empowered to do the same. *Breathe* is an inside look into her life. It is also a map for hope, and a legend to help you find your way.

Learn more about the book and how you can purchase it at <http://www.shawnapercy.com/about-the-book-breathe/>

Dr Turecki



The community was very fortunate to have Dr. Gustavo Turecki from McGill University present four free presentations to 500 people during a twenty-four period the beginning of April; one presentation tailored for community clinicians, one for nurse practitioners and family physicians, one

for the general public and a final presentation targeted to mental health hospital clinicians. This presentation was also video conferenced live to Specialized Mental Health, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, S. Joe's Hospital in Guelph, the mental health hospital in Cobourg and a children's mental health facility in Windsor. Dr. Turecki's research has focused on the study of biomedical risk factors for suicide and depression. He has made important contributions to the understanding of the suicide phenotype, conducting multidisciplinary studies on suicide completers, as well as molecular studies aiming to understand the suicide brain. More recently, his work has focused on epigenetic mechanisms and has conducted pioneering research leading to our understanding of how early-life adversity stably impacts the genome and increases long-term risk for suicide. The powerpoint slides of one of his presentations can be found at our website www.wrspc.ca, under the resources tab.

A big thank you to Grand River Hospital for partnering on these presentations.

Song Arizona -Miss you Most donates 100% of money to suicide prevention and awareness



Songwriter and singer Brian Byrne, lead singer of I Mother Earth, has created a beautiful song titled "Arizona: Miss you Most" in honour of those bereaved by suicide and those we have lost. It is a beautiful song that can be purchased through iTunes with all proceeds going to The Collateral Damage Project – an initiative that focuses on suicide prevention through pictures and storytelling. Google Miss You Most Arizona to watch the emotional video.

120 Faculty of Education Students trained in Safe Talk



Safe Talk trainer assistants Rondi MacFarlane and Neville Daniels

120 Faculty of Education Students trained in Safe Talk picture – picture of two volunteers – caption under picture - Safe Talk trainer assistants Rondi MacFarlane and Neville Daniels.

The Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University has continued their commitment to train future teachers in Safe Talk, a suicide alertness program. In January, four concurrent trainings took place to train all 120 students simultaneously. Here are just a few comments from the training: "I felt the training was helpful and important in the teaching profession." "As a future teacher and a girl guide leader, this training is very valuable. This would be valuable training for all people who work with youth or any other high risk groups." "It gave me words necessary to help someone with suicidal thoughts. It also encouraged me to step in and not avoid this

kind of conversation with anyone." A big thank you to the second Annual Karim the Dream fundraiser who helped to fund this important initiative.

308 Conversations - MPs become champions for suicide prevention

Suicide prevention is a strategic priority for the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), requiring a truly pan-Canadian approach. To reach every part of the country, the Commission has plugged into what is perhaps the most established and influential national network of all – the Parliament of Canada. On May 5, Joe Comartin, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, hosted a luncheon for Members of Parliament (MPs) to spark "308 conversations" about suicide and prevention in each of Canada's 308 federal constituencies. #308conversations is an initiative of the MHCC, featuring leadership from Mr. Comartin who used his neutral position as Deputy Speaker to urge participation from all MPs, regardless of political affiliation. His task was energized by the fact that each year, nearly 4,000 Canadians from all regions and walks of life die by suicide – of these, it is estimated that 90 per cent were experiencing a mental health problem or illness. Each of the participating MPs was given an "Event in a Box" with everything required to host a successful meeting around suicide prevention, including an event plan and messaging around mental health and suicide (prevention, intervention, and postvention) as well as templates for media relations activities. With these tools, plus each MP's stature in the community, Parliamentarians are well-equipped to attract an influential audience in the ridings they represent, and spark a wider conversation about suicide at the community level. The relationship between mental illness and suicide is a topic of concern to many Canadians, including Parliamentarians who are eager to make a difference. However, despite growing general awareness of mental health issues, many Canadians living with suicidality are reluctant to seek help or are unaware of available options. Hence, #308conversations is designed to inspire individuals to take an active role in preventing suicide within the community, and ultimately encourage people coping with thoughts of suicide to connect with local support networks and service providers. As well, resources related to suicide prevention will be made available on the MHCC website, and support services – such as Mental Health First Aid – will be promoted in the weeks to come. The timing of the #308 Conversations corresponds with government plans to create a federal framework for suicide prevention before the end of 2014. Bill C-300, a private members bill that became law in 2013, calls for the Government of Canada to develop the framework in consultation with relevant non-governmental organizations, provinces, territories and relevant federal departments.

Waterloo Region's event will take place July 16 for 80 invited guests. More details to come!

See more at:

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/mhcc-newsletter-may-2014-308conversations#sthash.sSDTdZaw.dpuf>

Why???

Suicide Let's Talk About It

First Fruits Feast Fundraiser!



150 guests and 25 volunteers came together at Elevation church in Waterloo to celebrate the tastes of new growth after a long, harsh winter. The First Fruits Feast was a four course dinner with powerful symbolism that spoke to the fruits there are to enjoy when we hold on through the winters of our lives to finally greet the dawn of a new season. This event helped us focus on mindfulness meditation (breathing while we eat...ever noticed the word "eat" is in the word "breathe"?) mental health and working the land, and suicide prevention resources.

With guest speakers MP Harold Albrecht, Tana Nash, Fanis Juma Radstake, and Shawna Percy, local musicians Jesse Maranger, Richard

Garvey, and the fun rhythms of the Organic Groove drummers, plus the incredible food put together by chef Jon Rennie and his talented team, this first-time event raised \$1,139.55, which will be used to make safeTALK training accessible to members of our community.

safeTALK is evidence-based, suicide prevention training, for anyone 15 years of age and older. Our goal is to equip individuals from all walks of life to have the tools they need to keep someone safe who is at risk for suicide.

Community Safe Talk Suicide Awareness Training

With funding from the May Court Club of Kitchener-Waterloo and the Kitchener Grand River Rotary, the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council was able to provide a free Safe Talk training for 30 individuals in partnership with Lang's Health Centre in Cambridge.

Bereaved by suicide?

We have a free, monthly open support group focused on learning to live with the loss. We ask you to please register and then you can come and join us any 4th Wednesday of the Month from 7:00 - 8:30. 519-662-3092 or email interfaith@golden.net.

Coming Events

#308 Conversations	July 16
11th Annual Daniel Tudisco Memorial Golf Tournament	August 14
World Suicide Prevention Day	September 10

Suicide Information and Awareness is Important - You Are Not Alone
www.wrspc.ca