

*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 14
June 2018**

A Message From Tana Nash

I love storytelling. I love stories and books and my monthly book club gatherings and Elisa and Jenna will tell you, I am big lover of the library. I also love weaving stories into verbal presentations. What I know to be true is that we all have stories to share. It is through these stories that we make sense of events in our lives and it is often through these stories that we are able to connect at the heart level.



Over the past nine years with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, I have interlaced my own personal stories of suicide loss (my grandmother and my sister) with advancing the important work of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention – hope, help and healing. I have also been blessed with the opportunity to listen to many stories that individuals in our community have had the courage to share. Combined with my own story, it is the accumulation of all our

Like us on
Facebook!



Follow us on
Twitter!



Follow us on
Instagram!



**A Message from New
WRSPC Executive**

Director ...PAGE 2

**A Tribute to Linda
Bender** ...PAGE 3

**With Special
Thanks** ...PAGE 7

stories that fueled advocacy efforts, pleas for an increase in services and programs and heightened the profile of suicide prevention efforts.

I also know that each of us have multiple stories to share. Yes, I am a suicide loss survivor, AND I am also a wonderful wife, daughter, aunt and friend. I enjoy figure skating and golfing, am a Canadian champion skydiver and love to travel and plan trips. I was a marketing and sales representative and sales trainer for twenty years before bringing these complementary skills to suicide prevention efforts. None of us are defined by just one story. It is these multiple stories that contribute to the chapters of our lives. I am so grateful for this chapter in my life to contribute to suicide prevention efforts, work for a dedicated and passionate council and meet so many wonderful people in our community. I look forward to the opportunities and stories that will unfold in my next chapter and look forward to hearing about the incredible work that will emerge during the next chapter of the council.

Tana S Nash



Tana Nash Community Leadership Award

Submitted by WRSPC Chair, Mark Beadle

On March 2, 2018 the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council was thrilled to announce the creation of the Tana Nash Community Leadership Award. The award honours the tremendous contribution that Tana has made in suicide awareness and suicide prevention to the Waterloo Region Community over the past ten years. Tana has created a culture of community involvement and leadership development within and outside our region.



This will be an annual award given to an individual or group in Waterloo Region who demonstrate outstanding community leadership in the area of suicide awareness or suicide prevention. The award takes the form of financial support for education, teaching, presentations, research, or events that align with the WRSPC strategic pillars of community awareness, partnership and capacity building, training and education and research and evaluation. Nominations for this award will be accepted throughout the year and reviewed by Council. The award will be presented annually at the WRSPC Annual General Meeting. The Council is pleased to be able to recognize Tana and all her amazing qualities through this legacy award.

A Message From the New WRSPC Executive Director

First and foremost, a heartfelt thank you for the support and words of encouragement that I have received as I have transitioned into the role of Executive Director. I am so thankful for our community and your passionate hearts for suicide prevention. When speaking with colleagues from other regions I often share how humbled and encouraged I am by our community. We know there is so much work to be done and we also recognize the programming and support within our Region that we can proudly share; supports that were a direct result of hard work, advocacy, collaboration and dedication.



We continue to work hard on our three key priorities: developing a hospital care resource for individuals who present at the hospital ER but who are not admitted, conducting a scan of the current available statistics to determine who is dying by suicide versus who is attempting suicide and increasing stress and resilience strategies and tools on our website, as well as our pillars that guide our work in hope, help and healing.

A Message From The Program Coordinator

By Amanda Demmer

Hello! I'm Amanda, and I'm proud to be introducing myself to those of you I haven't met yet as the Program Coordinator for the WRSPC. I feel honoured to be part of the WRSPC. My passion for suicide prevention work originally comes from my own lived experience of struggling with long-term suicidal



ideations, and that passion has been further fueled by connecting with others who have been touched by suicide loss or struggles. Since starting with the WRSPC in March I've met many of our volunteers and supporters within the community, I've assisted in planning for the Bowl-a-Thon, and I've taken the lead on organizing our My Life Matters Day, our volunteer appreciation event, and the upcoming World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th (with the help of a fantastic committee of volunteers!) One project I'm particularly

passionate about is co-chairing the WRSPC Research Priority Committee; we're now in the process of analyzing local data with a goal to better understand the context of, and therefore better prevent, suicide attempts and suicide deaths within our community.

So far, the most rewarding aspect of this role has been seeing the support we receive any time we're out at an event in the community. To those of you who volunteer with us, support us, or have come up to our booths to say hello, buy a My Life Matters t-shirt, ask a question, or share your own story – Thank you. If I haven't met you yet, I hope to meet you soon.

A Tribute to Linda Bender

by Tana Nash

In November of 2017, the Waterloo Region suicide prevention community lost a wonderful advocate, friend and colleague, Linda Bender. Diagnosed with cancer in April of 2017, she died suddenly of a heart attack on November 18. Linda was a very special person to many and is missed deeply by her family, colleagues and friends.

2 There are many beautiful words and images that come to mind



when thinking about Linda. Her gentle approach, her wisdom, her inclusiveness, her wide smile, her sense of adventure and willingness to try new things, her unhurriedness and ability to slow you down as an individual or in a meeting (definitely something that is good for me) and her ability to stay in the moment and stay grounded. When you spoke to Linda, she completely connected with you and listened with her whole heart. Being around Linda has made me a better person and I will treasure the time I spent with her and the gifts she imprinted upon my heart.

From a professional level, let me share about some key work that Linda accomplished for suicide prevention in our region. Linda spent her last year making a difference as a mental health worker at Kitchener's Reception House, a support centre for refugees. For three decades prior, Linda had been a team leader for mental health prevention and education services at the Waterloo Wellington branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association which included overseeing the large, collaborative community suicide prevention training team.

The community suicide prevention training team provides workshops for three important trainings related to suicide prevention: SafeTALK, a three and a half hour suicide alertness workshop that prepares participants to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources, ASIST, which stands for Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, a two day interactive workshop that prepares caregivers to provide suicide first aid interventions and finally, Suicide 2 Hope: A recovery and Growth workshop that offers a unique training opportunity to improve professional helpers preparation to provide effective suicide care.

Initially this training team was much smaller and comprised solely of CMHA employees. Linda had a vision to expand this team to include community trainers from various agencies. Securing a Trillium grant in 2010, a steering committee was developed to "increase the skills of staff in suicide intervention, training and facilitation, and strengthen ties with other community members while advancing suicide prevention efforts." Along with Linda, steering committee members included Dr. Liana Nolan, the Chief Medical Officer for the Region, Kathy Payette, Director of Children's Mental Health at Lutherwood, Jessie Baynham who at the time was the Executive Director of Community Torchlight and Elly Harder, now retired from the Waterloo -Wellington Regional Crisis System.

Linda was again instrumental in assisting the expansion of the community training team in 2015. With \$40,000 in financial

support from the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, the team was able to train an additional fifteen trainers in the community, including a focus on workplace trainers to increase capacity within larger workplaces such as the post-secondary schools. With Linda's vision and guidance, today the community training team has eleven SafeTALK trainers, sixteen community ASIST trainers and an additional six ASIST trainers in the workplace and one Suicide 2 Hope trainer, one of the first ten trainers trained in the world. For Linda's exceptional work of contributing to building a suicide-safer community, she was awarded a certificate of recognition in 2016 by Living Works, the internationally recognized organization that develops these educational workshops and is active in more than 23 countries.

Not only did Linda manage this training team, Linda was also an ASIST trainer herself for more than 15 years and brought her gentle and caring approach to each one of her trainings. Additionally, Linda was a long time member of the WRSPC and was chair of the council during 2008 – 2010. She did so much for the council in every way that it is hard to describe the magnitude of her contributions. Linda was part of the hiring committee for myself and provided clear direction and guidance as I carved out a position for the council that had never existed. If you have attended an event by the WRSPC, you may have seen Linda at the annual butterfly release on World Suicide Prevention Day, bowling at the annual bowl-a-thon fundraiser, shopping at the silent auction table at the



Daniel Tudisco Memorial Golf Tournament or at one of the Dimensions of Suicide Conferences. Linda was an active member of the planning committee for this well-attended annual conference. If you have ever picked up one of the many WRSPC educational brochures, there is a strong chance that Linda helped to contribute or edit. Linda also created the helpful nine minute video "How to talk to someone who is having thoughts of suicide", with individuals who have attempted suicide a few years ago which we still use as an educational tool today. Linda was also part of the steering committee which provided accredited training for local family physicians to increase confidence in identifying and responding to suspected suicide risk.

Linda was so many things to so many people. She was compassionate, kind and caring; wise and insightful. She could debate with you but do so in a respectful way. She always had time, looked you in the eye and was never hurried. She slowed things down when you were around her and you always left her company better for it.

Our community has much to owe Linda for our advances in suicide prevention. She believed whole heartedly in

prevention and advocating for those that could not do so themselves. She is dearly missed but the legacy of her work lives on.

9th Annual Bowl-a-thon Raises \$38,787!!

Article written by Program Coordinator Amanda Demmer

The WRSPC 9th annual Bowl-a-Thon took place on Saturday, May 12, 2018. Hard to believe that while we are celebrating the success of 9 years, it was still a year of many firsts. This was the first Bowl-a-Thon without the leadership of past Executive Director Tana Nash. This was the first Bowl-a-Thon with the equally strong leadership of current Executive Director Elisa Brewer-Singh. This was the first Bowl-a-Thon I've been fortunate enough to be a part of. Most surprisingly, this was the first Bowl-a-Thon that we've ever had to re-schedule from its original April date (due to an ice storm – in April!). Despite having re-scheduled this event on short notice, Frederick Lanes was still full of fun and wild costumes from bowlers and passionate, dedicated volunteers.

Although this is a fundraiser for WRSPC, the event is also



about a community collectively coming together to say this issue is important and deserves attention— we are all in this together —organizations, counsellors, schools, families and friends. Thank you to the 26 teams who were able to join us including many familiar faces: Carizon, Here 24/7, CMHA WW including OT and the Skills for Safer Living teams, Youth Mobile Crisis, Grand River Hospital, the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, the WW LHIN- MHAN and the My Life Matters Minis who made their return, some new faces: CBI Health, Lutherwood Finance and HR, Waterloo Fire Rescue and the



several personal teams bowling in honour of someone dear to them who had died by suicide.

Kat Katsambrokos along with several of the Junior Ball Stars were this year's ambassadors and spoke to the attendees about the importance of resiliency, inclusivity and community. Kat is a CYW with the Waterloo Region District School Board that has developed a sportsmanship basketball program that teaches elementary school aged children about strength and resiliency both on the court and off. The youth shared testimony about the impact the program has had on their self-esteem and sense of community.

In total, an astounding \$38,787 was raised for the WRSPC which will go towards our work in hope, help and healing.

Our sincerest of thank-you's to the council members, volunteers, and bowlers who took part in the day, as well as the generous sponsors of the event who donated prizes, and the staff at Frederick Lanes who worked hard to ensure our event was a success.

Grant Recipients

A newly formulated, formalized grant process for the WRSPC showed success in its first year. This new grant application process encourages community organizations aiming to implement activities or programs that are in line with the mission, vision, and strategic pillars of the WRSPC to complete a grant application in the fall of each year for programs or activities they hope to run the following calendar year. The first round of this grant process saw three grant applications, all of which were approved for funding by the WRSPC in December 2017. These three grants included:

- 1) A grant to Waterloo Fire Rescue to provide 8 fire fighters within their organization ASIST (Applied Suicide intervention Skills Training) training to increase their knowledge and capacity to support those in crisis both as peers and as first responders
- 2) A grant to Conestoga College to purchase five light therapy lamps to be placed around campus for use by students to improve mental wellness



- 3) A grant to Sanguen Health Centre to provide ASIST training to 21 staff and volunteer members as well as Compassion Fatigue training for 8 individuals in order to support the teams at Sanguen as well as equip them to better support the populations they serve.

The next application round will be open from September 15- November 15, 2018.

Top Home Chefs Gala

by Mike Denomme

On April 28, 2018, KW Legacy (www.kwlegacy.ca) had its inaugural Legacy Gala event with all funds raised going to WRSPC. KW Legacy was formed in 2014 with its mantra "Good Friends, Greater Deeds". Its first initiative titled GFS (Golf for Scholarships) going into its 4th year has raised over \$250k for local scholarships to future leaders in the community. KW Legacy's next initiative, focused on mental health and suicide prevention, began as a conversation with Tana Nash more than 5 years ago as a few people on the Legacy team had been impacted by both mental health and losing someone to suicide. Over the last several years the conversations



continued as did the desire to do something for the WRSPC. From these conversations came the Gala event: a "Top Home Chef" competition where 4 local celebrity chefs voted on 50 local home chefs signature dishes. The event also included Radio Host Mike Farwell as the emcee, a great speech by WRSPC Executive Director Elisa Brewer-Singh and an inspirational speech by our very own Waterloo Regional Police Chief Larkin discussing mental health and suicide prevention that reached over 500 people in attendance. The event raised over \$45,000 and Legacy continues discussions with WRSPC around how they can get further support mental health and suicide prevention within our community.

KW Legacy would like to dedicate the funds raised to Tana Nash as she has been instrumental in leading and mentoring many people on the team and in the community – Tana has left her mark on so many people and is a driving force for us to do more.

3rd Annual Jacob Ranton Memorial Basketball Tournament

This year's edition of the Jacob Ranton Memorial Basketball Tournament was held on December 15th and 16th and was a tremendous success. Doug, Sandra and Trevor Ranton were joined by University of Waterloo Women's basketball coach, Craig Nickel and the K-W Titans coach, Serge Langis, with players Derek Hall and Greg Morrow at the opening ceremonies.

The speakers had the opportunity to address a full gym of students, athletes, teachers and members of our community on the importance of asking for help and taking care of our mental health, as well as developing our resilience skills. This year's silent auction was even bigger and better than last year.



Our volunteers were able to mingle, dialogue, open up and share stories about each other's challenges. The conversations about our own mental health help people realize they are not alone and that there are people and resources to help them take care of their total well-being.

The Ranton family and the WRSPC would like to thank members of our community who made monetary donations, provided silent auction items, purchased items and came out to show their support. Also, a huge thank you to all of the volunteers who helped make this event such a powerful weekend. Together, we were able to raise close to \$41,000 to support the WRSPC to continue to provide the services and programs that are so valuable in reducing the impact of suicide in our community. Remember, it is OK not to be OK! Your Life Matters!

Volunteer Appreciation

On the evening of May 14th, the WRSPC staff and Council members had the pleasure of hosting our Volunteer Appreciation Event at a room within the Kitchener Auditorium.



We were joined by 19 wonderful volunteers & council members who do the work of the heart for the Council within the community at information booths, world suicide prevention day activities, speaking events, fundraisers, memorial tournaments, bereavement groups and so much more!

We are so thankful for each and every volunteer and the 2,187 hours they dedicated to the work of hope, help and healing in our community. To all of our volunteers, our sincere and heartfelt thanks!

4th Annual "I am Passion in Fashion!" Event

Written by Gosia Jurgiel, Owner of Unique Boutique

This past May I hosted my 4th annual "I am Passion in Fashion!" Event at The Pines in Cambridge.

This year we had over 300 guests in attendance and were able to raise \$10,000 for the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council. Although the event is a fashion show, there is a larger impact extending beyond showcasing the latest trends. I use this event as a platform to encourage everyone to follow their heart, and to inspire hope within the community for those who find themselves in difficult times.

I share that I too have struggled as many have, and I now strive to live life to the fullest, as the act of living is the greatest and most important meaning of life. I believe life promotion and suicide prevention in our community is an incredibly important topic that has to be discussed. Throughout this event, I try to



show others they too can find meaning in life by following their hearts. The way I follow my heart is through fashion and helping to show women that they can be beautiful both on the inside and the outside.

By sharing my passion, I hope to show everyone who attends that they too can feel life's fulfillment when they funnel their positive energy into what matters to them.



7Th Annual My Life Matters Day

On May 24, 2018 the 7th Annual My Life Matters Day took place at Lutherwood and was a huge success! This annual event was created for youth and staff at Lutherwood and focuses on positive messaging and life affirmation as a form of suicide prevention. This positive and fun-filled day featured activities such as body painting, exotic animals, physical activity, art, mindfulness, and musical expression. There was also an engaging presentation given by WRSPC's past Executive Director Tana Nash and Lutherwood's CEO John Colangeli on how lessons they learned as a skydiver (Tana) and a pilot (John) relate to Dialectical Behavioural Therapy teachings.



Upcoming Events

911 Baseball Tournament June 14, 2018

Reach Out Awareness Event July 7, 2018

Daniel Tudisco Memorial
Golf Tournament August 9, 2018

Mitchell Snider Memorial
Golf Tournament August 25, 2018

World Suicide Prevention
Day September 10, 2018

THANK YOU

Westmount Oktoberfest Charity Pro-Am



KW Legacy Group Top Home Chef Gala



Lutherwood For Co Sponsoring a Free Public Skate In Elmira



Jacob Ranton Memorial Basketball Tournament



Mitchell Snider Memorial Golf Tournament for Sponsoring a Free Public Skate in Ayr



Ian Prong... Breaking the Silence Blue Jays Event



With Gratitude Section

Our gratitude to the families directing memorial donations to WRSPC

- Marilyn Craig
- Jim Richardson
- Josephine MacLeod

We would also like to thank the following Community Organizations for their generous donations

- Jacob Hespeler Public School
- Preston Chapter IODE
- Women of the Moose
- The May Court Club of Kitchener Waterloo
- KW Community Foundation

The title 'WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY' is centered. The word 'WORLD' is in a dark blue font, with a globe of the Earth replacing the letter 'O'. 'SUICIDE' is in a medium blue font. 'PREVENTION' and 'DAY' are in a large, bold, green font. Numerous blue and green butterflies are scattered around the text, some appearing to fly towards the center.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

A large, detailed butterfly with blue and green wings is positioned to the left of the text.

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT SUICIDE!

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2018
VICTORIA PARK PAVILION • KITCHENER
FREE COMMUNITY BUTTERFLY RELEASE

INFORMATION FAIR AND PRESENTATIONS 4:30 – 7:00

CHARITY BARBEQUE 4:30 – 6:00

SPEAKERS 5:30 – 6:00

BUTTERFLY RELEASE 6:00



Waterloo Region
Suicide Prevention Council
www.wrspc.ca

