

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



Waterloo Region  
Suicide Prevention Council  
www.wrspc.ca

**NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE 17  
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## **World Suicide Prevention Day 2019: “Working Together to Prevent Suicide”**

By: Linda Flemming, Member of the WSPD Committee, and Advisory Member of the WRSPC

World Suicide Prevention Day is observed each year on Sept 10th. This day is an annual recognition of individuals and their families / friends, and the community at large, who have been impacted by suicide. It provides a time to honour the memory of lost loved ones, as well as honouring those who are living with or have lived through struggles with suicide. It also reminds us and turns our focus on the importance of how we as a community can raise awareness of suicide, how we can look to ways in which we can prevent it from happening.

This year the event was held at the Kitchener Public Library, which gave us great visibility to the community. Over 16 agencies were represented in our Wellness fair; they set up displays and information on mental health and wellness resources in our community. We had over 200 people stroll through the fair to become familiar with local resources, ask questions, and connect with each other to have conversations. We hosted our charity BBQ close by, which was a great draw to the community. Many individuals came over to grab a bite then ended up talking to members of our council, learning about the day, and going into the library to view the Wellness Fair.

Conversations were happening!

Queen Street was lined with messages of hope, memories, and resiliency as people made butterfly signs and marked them along the street. This again created opportunities for talking about suicide and honouring those whose lives are impacted. Cavell Johnson, head coach of the KW Titans, was one of the

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Pro Am**

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speakers for the event. He shared his own personal story of loss, while centering his message around resiliency, keeping the dialogue open, and the importance of really listening. He was inspirational to hear.

Kim Hewitt, a past chair of the WRSPC and an Occupational Therapist at the Canadian Mental Health Association, shared her experiences in the suicide prevention field. She gave valuable insights about how we can all support each other, and ourselves, by being willing to listen and to reach out. The final part of this event and for many the highlight of the event, was the Butterfly Release. Dena Moitoso, a founding WRSPC member and continual supporter, shared the importance of the release, and how the butterflys are a symbol of hope, peace and renewal. Everyone was given a butterfly to release, walked outside to the adjacent park where a flautist was playing soothing live flute music, and took time and thought to release their butterflys.

Thank you to the World Suicide Prevention Day Committee of dedicated volunteers who planned and organized this event. It truly is a reach out into the community; Each year we engage and have more conversations that begin to remove the stigma and pain of living a life impacted by suicide.



## WRSPC's Third Year at the Westmount Oktoberfest Charity Pro Am Golf Tournament



By: Jenna Peacock, WRSPC staff member

WRSPC was honoured to attend the 54th annual Westmount Oktoberfest Charity Pro Am Golf Tournament presented by Raymond James on October 10th and 11th. This amazing tournament has donated to several charities in Waterloo Region over the years and WRSPC has been fortunate to have been the chosen charity for 2017, 2018, and 2019. Over the last two years the tournament has raised over \$130, 000 for the work of hope, help, and healing in the community.

Over 135 men attended the tournament this year and enjoyed two days of golf in perfect October weather. WRSPC's Executive Director, Elisa Brewer- Singh kicked off the tournament with opening remarks about taking care of our mental health, and how it is so important that we talk about emotional struggles just as we would physical pain both as the one experiencing the struggle and as a friend, family member or colleague.

WRSPC would like to express how honoured and grateful we have been to work alongside this committee and their community. The passion and commitment of the organizing committee to raise funds for suicide prevention initiatives in our community has been nothing short of amazing. It is because of these generous funds raised that WRSPC is able to continue raising hope, help and healing in Waterloo Region. WRSPC would also like to thank the additional sponsors and all those that have donated prizes to the tournament over the past three years. Due to these generous prize donations there has been an amazing silent auction each year! Thank you to each and every golfer, volunteer, Westmount Golf and Country Club staff members and board members for all you do to make this tournament run very much like a well-oiled machine.



## School of Pharmacy Receives Training on Suicide Prevention

By: Lisa Ros-Choi, Doctor of Pharmacy Student (Candidate), Class of 2021

Healthcare providers – such as pharmacists – are advocates of personal well-being. However, throughout our education, we've

been taught to see mental health from a medical model; we aren't provided the tools needed to aid those with mental health emergencies, such as suicide. For this reason, the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy annually works in collaboration with WRSPC to train future pharmacists in identifying those at risk of suicide through the SafeTALK training program.

Healthcare providers play an essential role in the prevention of suicides in the general public. Pharmacists, in particular, may be the front line of suicide prevention given their day-to-day contact with the community. Unsurprisingly, a recent study indicated that those at risk of suicide have had recent contact with a healthcare provider. Thus, it is essential that pharmacists and other healthcare professionals are proactive in engaging those at risk of suicide, subsequently providing them with the resources and utmost support during a personal struggle.

On July 11th, 2019, students of the School of Pharmacy were grateful to have future pharmacists trained in SafeTALK. This half-day in-person program emphasized the importance of aiding those at risk of suicide while helping us develop powerful tools in suicide prevention. This included: recognizing identifiers of self-harm such that we don't dismiss the possibility of suicide; how to confidently and comfortably communicate with someone in a mental health crisis; and resources available in the Kitchener-Waterloo area to keep an individual safe and out of harm's way. As a community of health care providers, students and general members of the KW-region, we came together to discuss the future of mental health, and the potential roles we can play in it.

The provision of the SafeTALK training program through funding from WRSPC has allowed us future healthcare professionals come one step closer to increasing awareness and challenging the stigma around mental health. Without a doubt, the experience will make a lasting, positive and life-saving impact to an individual's life.

## WRSPC and SACWD Co-Host AfterWhys Production

By: Heather Glenister, Coordinator |Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin

AFTERWHYS – A PLAY ABOUT SENIORS' MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE, HOPE AND RESILIENCY

Written by Catherine Frid  
Directed by Valerie Senyk

WRSPC was honoured to welcome back the AfterWhys performance for a second year on September 27, 2019 following positive community engagement and response the first year.

AfterWhys is a part of the Suicide Awareness Council's ElderTALK program. With age comes wisdom, and with age comes the impact of many life experiences... some joyful and some painful. Life stories are so important to share, for both the teller and the listener. Stories represent the journey of living, and sharing them can provide validation for what they have been through and a sense of hope for those who need to believe that their life matters. The Council has embarked on a unique opportunity that creates a way for seniors to share their life stories and capture their experiences.

AfterWhys is a 40-minute stage play about the importance of hope and resilience for seniors who face mental health challenges, including suicide. This live performance also depicts, with humour and compassion, how we can better

support those around us who may need help. Following the play the audience participates in a facilitated discussion titled 'Seniors & Suicide: Risk, Myths and Conversation'.

Canadians age 60 and over are one of the most at-risk groups for suicide. AfterWhys opens the conversation about this sometimes-taboo subject, and opens our minds to how we can each help family and friends who may be struggling and even at risk of suicide.

The play was created for the community through story sharing and input from seniors who have been impacted by suicide.

The Council's video gives a glimpse into the themes of why it is so important to be present, intentional and non-judgmental and be aware of the signs of suicide risk.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtGmlhFdi5k>.

## Tana Nash Leadership Award Recipients

The Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council presents an annual award to an individual(s) or group in the community who demonstrate outstanding community leadership in the area of suicide awareness or suicide prevention.

This award, known as the Tana Nash Leadership award was created in honour of WRSPC's former Executive Director not only to recognize her continued contributions to suicide prevention both locally and throughout the greater suicide prevention community but also as a way to remember her legacy through the recognition of continued outstanding leadership and commitment to Hope, Help and Healing in Waterloo Region.

This year's recipients hold a very dear place in the heart of the WRSPC staff, Council and community, and anyone who has had the opportunity to speak with them will instantly know why. They have been connected to our community and the work of the Council over the past 5 years, and through a memorial basketball tournament in honour of their son Jacob, have provided a community platform, especially for our youth, to continue the discussion about suicide awareness and prevention.



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Their work goes well above and beyond that mentioned- they

are supporters for many others in the community who have experienced loss, champions for suicide prevention and their continued advocacy around the messaging that "it's okay not to be okay" and the importance of reaching out in these moments has no doubt had a lasting impact on the community they serve.

It is for these reasons, and so many more, we were honoured to present the 2019 WRSPC Tana Nash Leadership award to Doug and Sandra Ranton.

## 6th Annual Mitchell Snider Memorial Golf Tournament

By: Marlene Brown, MSMGT Committee Member

On Saturday July 6 we had our 6th Annual Mitchell Snider Memorial Golf Tournament!  
Together we raised over \$13,000 for a total of \$86,500 in 6 years.

These funds support the WRSPC in continuing to provide resources, suicide alertness workshops, community events such as the Annual March Break Skate in Ayr, and to bring



awareness and reduce the impact of suicide in our community.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers, friends and family who come out each year to support, golf, donate silent auction items and remember Mitchell. Next year we'll be back at the New Dundee Golf and Country Club on Saturday July 11 and hope to reach \$100,000.....

## 4th Annual "Reach Out Awareness" Fundraiser

Article written by Kaleigh Robinson, "Reach Out Awareness" Support Fundraiser, Committee Member.

The 4th annual "Reach Out Awareness" Fundraiser in support of suicide prevention took place this year on July 13th on Spragues Road, with a live performance by Flash Johnson. This event is in memory of Rachel Ann Sousa and Sam Vitale, and all those who have lost loved ones by suicide or who are struggling with mental health. The purpose of this event is to bring the community together, while raising awareness and giving hope to those who are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

The event included local bands Ties That Bind, Craig Dubecki, Jay Epsteina and Suze Burmester. We also heard from our special guest speakers, Carlos and Laura from 91.5 THE BEAT, and Jesse Parent.

Elisa Brewer-Singh, who is the Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council also spoke at the

event. Elisa's passion and dedication for ending the stigma around mental health is truly remarkable and we very much enjoyed having her return to speak at our event this year. Raffle prizes, delicious BBQ food, Portuguese donuts, as well as a silent auction table were just a few of the many attractions set up at the event. "My Life Matters" T-shirts were also sold and our lantern table was set up, where attendees could decorate their lantern, and light a candle in honour of a loved one that struggled with mental health and suicide. A total of over \$15,000 was raised at the event, which will go towards the WRSPC and community events like a free skate at the Cambridge Centre mall taking place on January 4th from 12:30-2:30. Hot chocolate and coffee will be provided as well. The committee encourages everyone to attend. We are committed to working with WRSPC to strengthen hope, help, and healing efforts in our community.



A huge thank you to our amazing sponsors and all those who donated to this important event, as well as a job well done to our wonderful volunteers - this wouldn't be possible without all of you! Last but not least, a very big thank you to our committee members; Joanne Martin, Julia Thornton, Eddie Sousa, Sandy Patterson, Deborah Myers, Leanne Love and Kaleigh Robinson.

Please visit our website for more information:  
[www.reachoutawareness.wixsite.com/we-all-matter](http://www.reachoutawareness.wixsite.com/we-all-matter).



## Martyn Johannis Memorial Golf Tournament

It was a beautiful Friday afternoon on August 9th, 2019 when friends, family, colleagues and volunteers came together at the Conestoga Golf Course for the Inaugural Martyn Johannis Memorial Golf Tournament.

The founder of the tournament, Carla, shared it was created not only in memory of her brother but more importantly to drive awareness for men's mental health; to continue the important dialogue around vulnerability, nurturing and expressing struggles and reaching out for support. "It's not uncommon to struggle with darkness, yet we have been given the gift of life and for that reason my husband and I were so honored to begin what I hope will be an annual tradition of golf, happiness and awareness... Small steps for healing, one golf tournament at a time!"

WRSPC would like to thank Carla, Joe and the incredible team at Simpson Print for their support in raising close to \$5,000 for hope, help and healing in the community.

"We have a myriad of ideas for next year and only wish to further assist all those who have been touched by suicide"

... we hope to see you there!



## 2019 Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference

The WRSPC was proud to give two presentations at the 2019 Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference – an annual, national conference that took place this year in Edmonton in October. Each year, this conference shares best practices, emerging research, and tools for suicide prevention from various communities across Canada.



WRSPC Program Coordinator Amanda Demmer and Region of Waterloo Public Health & Emergency Services Epidemiologist Jessica Deming gave two presentations at this conference sharing findings and learnings from the ongoing WRSPC research project. The first presentation was a workshop-style presentation that taught participants about community-based research and how to apply this style of research to suicide prevention work. The second was an informational presentation of the key findings from the quantitative research that has been completed, as well as the learnings and successes of this stage of research.

## Roots Of Hope

On August 20th, Waterloo Wellington announced that they had signed on as the seventh community in the national Roots of Hope suicide prevention project. This was celebrated at a launch event at Galt Country Club in Cambridge, where we were joined by representatives of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and by many of our community partners and supporters. This five-year partnership with the MHCC is being lead locally by the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, with local community partners Here4Hope, Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington, and Wellington County.

The Roots of Hope project draws on international best practices while allowing space for communities to tailor implementations to their own local strengths and needs. Five pillars will guide the



work within this project: 1) Public education and awareness; 2) Means restriction; 3) Training for community leaders; 4) Research and evaluation; and 5) Specialized supports for individuals in need.

“Waterloo Region is one that truly embodies a sense of community and strength when it comes to the work of suicide prevention as it has driven and continues to support the journey of hope, help and healing. We are proud to partner with the Roots of Hope project and continue our mission to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on individuals, families and communities while also helping to advance the work of suicide prevention with key national partners.” – Elisa Brewer-Singh, Executive Director, Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council

## Suicide Bereavement Workshop for Professionals

By Sue Werden

I had the opportunity to attend the Educational Workshop for Professionals on Suicide Bereavement in November. I have worked with youth and families for over 28 years and am often working with clients affected by grief. I was hoping this workshop would provide valuable knowledge and skills that I could use in my professional and personal life as well, and I was not disappointed.

I found this training to be very eye opening. It allowed me to have more understanding of and empathy for the grief people experience when they lose a loved one to suicide. I have lost a friend to suicide and this training better equipped me to provide support to their loved ones by having a better understanding of the suicide bereavement grieving process.

One of the themes that I found most important in this training is the unique considerations for suicide bereavement. There are a number of factors that can complicate a person's grief process when they have lost someone to suicide, such as possibly experiencing guilt, questions about preventability, anger, unanswered questions, social stigmatization, and religious or faith based conflicts that could make the process more difficult for someone grieving.

This suicide bereavement training helped me enhance my knowledge and skills related to trauma. In the past number of years I have been trained on how trauma can impact individuals and families, but this training took previous trainings even further. Suicide is a complex issue. I found it very helpful to learn about trauma-informed grief therapy and some of the strategies that can be helpful for someone who has suffered a loss of a loved one to suicide. To share a quote that resonated with me from this training, “The nature of someone's death doesn't define the nature of their life”.

## Upcoming Why...? Suicide Bereavement Groups

Why...? Support after a suicide loss is a Free 9 week bereavement group led by professionals. This group provides a safe, confidential and non- judgmental place to share with others who understand. 4 groups are held per year in Waterloo and Wellington County.

Upcoming group starting January 30th at the Family Centre.

Groups will take place in Wellington County in the Spring.

To register go to [www.wrspc.ca](http://www.wrspc.ca) or call Dena at 519-580-1076

## Community Corner

### Upcoming Trainings:

#### SafeTALK – SafeTALK training in February 2020

When: Saturday, February 22, 2020

Where: 502 Scott St, Ayr ON - **Cost: FREE!**

Sign up: <https://ayrsafetalk2020.eventbrite.ca>

### Community Resource Highlights



Thresholds provides a range of housing and supports for individuals experiencing and/or recovering from mental health issues or concurrent disorders. Programs and services include:

#### Housing and Housing Support Services

Currently, the organization provides subsidized accommodations through agency-owned properties and partnerships with private and non-profit sector landlords. All individuals housed by Thresholds receive a range of ongoing support services that respond to their individual needs. Thresholds staff including community support coordinators, practical support workers, and nurses assist individuals in their recovery.

#### Crisis Respite Residential Program

Individuals experiencing a psychosocial crisis or in need of a planned respite stay, find support and safety while working toward crisis recovery goals in the Crisis Respite Program. This program provides a 24/7, short term, voluntary, non-medical and supportive residential environment.

#### Assertive Community Treatment

The Assertive Community Treatment (ACTT) team is an interdisciplinary team that provides intensive case management with focus on support, rehabilitation and treatment to individuals with severe and persistent mental health or concurrent issues.

#### Extraordinary Needs Program

The Individualized Support Extraordinary Needs Program facilitates the transition of individuals with complex mental health and other needs from hospital to an appropriate living arrangement in the community, with individualized supports reducing over time as the person stabilizes.

#### Concurrent Supportive Housing

The Concurrent Supportive Housing (CSH) Program works to provide counselling support, opportunities and experiences within a supportive housing environment, to those who have made the choice to eliminate or change their alcohol/drug use in order to live a healthier life free from the harms of substance use and/or addiction.

#### Community Homes for Opportunity (CHO)

Community Homes for Opportunity (CHO) is a recovery-oriented person-centered supportive housing program for people with serious mental illness who may require 24 hours supportive care. The program is intended to assist tenants by providing appropriate housing and support services to achieve and maintain housing stability that is safe and affordable.

## Upcoming Events

Free Community Skate in Ayr... March 16 2020

11th Annual Bowl-a-thon... April 4

3rd Annual Top Home Chef Gala... April 18

6th I Am Passion... In Fashion Event... May 2020

Mitchell Snider Memorial Golf Tournament - July 11, 2020

Martyn Johans Memorial Golf Tournament- August 2020

## Thank You

"Party with a Purpose in Memory of Kim Filer, Cambridge Claims – The Co-operators"

Modo Yoga Cambridge

911 Baseball Tournament

Raymond James & Steele Wealth Management

Mitchell Snider Memorial Golf Tournament

Reach Out Awareness and Support

CLAC

MOA class at triOS College

Remembering Paul Event

Martyn Johans Memorial Golf Tournament & Simpson Screen

Print & Lithography Ltd.

Westmount Oktoberfest Charity Pro-Am Golf Tournament

Edelweiss Tavern

5th Annual Jacob Ranton Memorial Basketball Tournament

**Each and every donor, volunteer, sponsor, and advocate for suicide prevention/life promotion.**

## Community Snapshots



"Party with a Purpose in Memory of Kim Filer, Cambridge Claims – The Co-operators"



Tana Nash Leadership Award 2018 recipients Joe and Louise Tudisco presented with bench dedicated to them.



Remembering Paul Event- Artwork by Paul featured at Remembering Paul Event in support of Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council

## DEAR BUTTERFLY

Sing me home  
Dear Butterfly  
For I am lost  
No one nearby

Splash of colour  
Nature's beauty scene  
Harmony with flora  
Amongst the green

Sing me home  
Dear Butterfly  
For I am lost  
YOU are nearby

Wings to freedom  
Keep the beat  
Cadence of hope  
When we meet

Speed up then rest  
A rhythm I admire  
Sipping sweet nectar  
Sun's warmth you desire

My heart dances  
To your silent song  
My spirits lift  
Fragile yet strong

Music to soul  
As you flutter  
Eyes embrace  
To see you putter

By Brenda McDonald