



Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Coalition of Portage County -Quarterly Newsletter- April 2021

Hello - Again!,

We have decided to start our quarterly newsletter again. We are so thankful for the support of many people and business in our community that have helped to make vital programs happen. The support this past year, especially during Covid, is really appreciated. We are writing to say “thank you” and to keep you abreast of important information around mental health.

In the summer of 2020 the Coalition began discussions in regard to our goals and projects as well as the lack of capacity for our volunteer Chair position. CAP Services made an offer to dedicate 10 hours a week for Mental Health Navigation staff to Co-Chair the Coalition. The group approved an annual stipend to assist in funding the position, which is mainly funded by the Mental Health Navigation program. The duties of the position include communication for sharing resources, identifying and facilitation of Coalition subgroups for community outreach and education, as well as special projects.

The Co-Chair position was established in September and filled by Trina Bierman. Together Trina and Michelle Nelson are responsible for all Chair duties. A special acknowledgement and thank you goes out to Michelle Nelson for the 14 years of dedication and commitment to the Coalition as the Chair. She is an inspiration to our work of reducing suicide and advancing mental health awareness and education.

Thanks Michelle!!

Trina Bierman
Coalition Co-Chair

Mission Statement:

To prevent suicide by providing hope, creating mental health awareness, and facilitating change in the community

Thank You!



We wanted to bring appreciation to those organizations who have active participants in our Coalition to show our gratitude for the support they provide to our community during these unprecedented times. We were successful in doing so by collaborating with Zest Bakery to design “Thank You” cookies. The Coalition will be expanding our appreciation and cookies to other organizations and businesses within our community.

Walk for Hope 2020

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the annual Walk for Hope was held virtually. We had approximately 190 participants and all were provided with a H.O.P.E (Hold On Pain Ends) mask along with their shirt to promote safety during the walk. We asked participants to walk at a time that was convenient for them and encouraged them to walk with household members if at all possible. Participants were also asked to post pictures of themselves and share why they walk on the Facebook Walk for Hope Event Page.

The 2020 Providing Hope Award was given to St. Michael's Mental Health Unit for continuing to provide hope to members of our community who struggle with mental health issues. The Mental Health Unit staff have worked tirelessly to provide patients' with hope since they opened in 1983. Michelle Nelson, unit social work and Coalition Chair for the last 14 years was also recognized for her tireless work to reduce stigma, prevent suicide, and educate our community about mental health and mental health resources.

We are very grateful to all of our sponsors for their continued support of the Walk for Hope. Anderson O'Brien Law Firm was a PLATINUM (\$2500.00+) sponsor for the walk while NAMI Portage Wood Counties was a SILVER (\$500.00) sponsor and Wood Trust Bank, Delta Dental, Advice Period, Michael Smith & Associates-Ameriprise Financial, Okray Family Farms, Team Schierl Company, Stevens Point Fire Fighters Local 484, Cherek, Pucci & Quick, Jean Banks Memorial Fund and Donaldson were BUSINESS (\$250.00) sponsors.

Walk for Hope 2021 is scheduled for Saturday, September 11th. We are hopeful that we will be in the position to hold the walk in person this year!



Walk for Hope Shirts & Masks



Walk for Hope
Mental Health Rocks



Platinum Sponsors:
Anderson O'Brien



Providing Hope Award Recipients: St. Michael's Mental Health Unit

Question, Persuade, Refer

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) is an approach to suicide prevention that can be taught to businesses and organizations in Portage County. The purpose of the training is to help empower our community to effectively intervene on behalf of people who are suicidal or in crisis. People will learn the signs of suicide, causes of suicidal behavior, and how to get help.

In accordance with their mission of providing hope, creating awareness, and facilitation change in the community to support mental health and prevent suicide, the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Coalition of Portage County is financially supporting Lisa Grasshoff and Trina Bierman to become QPR Trainers. Lisa and Trina are Co-Coordinator of the Mental Health Navigation Program at CAP Services where they provide mental health resources, support, and education to residents of Portage County.

Feelings Thermometers

In late 2020, a large undertaking took place to distribute “feelings thermometers” to all families with daycare and school-age children in Portage County. The “feelings thermometer” is a visual tool that helps children (and adults) measure how they are doing emotionally and the steps to take to shift their mood when things are getting difficult. The thermometers were supplied by the Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health in partnership with First Lady Kathy Evers. Thermometers were printed with financial support of the Coalition in collaboration with The United Way and NAMI Portage-Wood Counties. Packets included a “feelings thermometer,” instructions on how to use the thermometer, Portage County Mental Health Navigation information, and NAMI information. The packets were put together by the Portage County Adult Drug Treatment Court participants and Coalition Members distributed the packets to daycares and schools. Additionally, packets were printed in Hmong and Spanish and will be distributed as requested.



Anxiety Tip Sheets for Parents & Children

Over the course of the pandemic, there has been an increase in anxiety for children & youth in our community, as well as challenges for parents. In order to address this, the Coalition is supporting the creation of tip sheets for parents of tweens/teens, parents of elementary aged children, and for tweens/teens & elementary aged children themselves. The tip sheets contain resources for parents and youth as well as skills to reduce anxiety. The sheets will be distributed to students and their parents in Portage County School Districts during the month of May.





In Memory of Mary Ann Krems



Mary Ann Krems, a former member of the Coalition, sadly passed away in August 2020. To honor her memory and the tireless work she did for Portage County, the Coalition, in partnership with the AODA Coalition, purchased a bench in her memory. The bench was donated to Pacelli Catholic High School, where Mary Ann was a Guidance Counselor for several years. Mary Ann was a passionate advocate for this community, and her work and presence is dearly missed. We are happy that this bench will serve as a subtle reminder for everything she did in the community.

Meet Our Coalition Members!

Aimee Burazin, Amy Marcott, Bob Finn, Andrea Behnke, Cassie Berding, Rob Golla, Chris Hanten, Jen Berdan, Christina Lorge, Dave Ficken, Gary Garske, Elizabeth Beck, Kate Giblin, Gretchen Hintz, Heather Grassl, Jennifer Knecht, Joe Rickert, Karissa Scott, Travis Koch, Karli Kirchhoefer, Kate Hanson, Kathy Hartman, Kristi Ahrens, Lynn Frost, Lisa Falduto, Lisa Grasshoff, Mike Radsek, Morgan Potter, Amy Pond, Steve Bierman, Michelle Nelson, Rob Simon, Rebecca Rogge, Samantha Varga, Ciara Schultz, Sara Grant, Connie Sherd, Tonya Callahan, Trina Bierman

Social Media :

Our Coalition is actively revamping our website to make sure we have a strong resourceful webpage for our community members. We continue to post daily on our Facebook page and recently developed our own Instagram! Search for us and join, like, or follow!



Facebook Page: Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Coalition of Portage County



Instagram Page: pococoalition



Website: www.suicidepreventionportagecounty.org/

Questions? Articles to share?

Contact:

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Helpful Links:

Prevent Suicide Wisconsin Annual Conference:

<https://www.preventsuicidewi.org/psw-annual-conference-registration>

Mental Health America May MH Awareness Month Toolkit. IT has TONS of cool stuff!

<https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month-2021-toolkit-download>

Transracial Adoption Parenting Webinar Series:

<https://www.championclassrooms.org/learning-paths/transracial-parenting-series>

Teen Mental Health and the Pandemic:

<https://time.com/5943896/covid-19-teen-mental-health/>

Here is news from MHA including their updated screening tools site. :

<https://mhanational.salsalabs.org/newsfromnationalfebruary2520211?wvpId=3c902d38-3ad1-48b6-964e-8407826ecb06>