Community Awareness
Honest Expression Leads to Prevention
Elementary to High School Age Students
3,846 Students in Target Audience
Cole Lancaster & Chloe Smith
Mountain Home Chapter/75086, Secondary Division
Mountain Home High School, Idaho
Summary

In choosing the subject for our community awareness project, we wanted a topic that would bring our community together and positively impact the lives of others. After doing research and finding out Idaho’s second leading cause of death is suicide and through our own struggles and observations, we came to an agreement that we should bring awareness to our community about breaking the barriers surrounding the taboo topic of death by suicide. As a team, we have simultaneously raised awareness and funds for suicide awareness. Our goals were to put up educational suicide awareness posters in our schools and installing buddy benches, which is intended to provide a safe zone for someone feeling alone and to teach people from a young age to include all.

We raised money by holding the “Battle of Both Worlds” game in which the varsity volleyball and soccer teams played against each other for our cause. At this event we held a silent auction and we sold event shirts to fundraise money and we raised $2,392.60. Also, we partnered with a local coffee shop, Brie’sta, in which they sold a white chocolate mocha with caramel named, “A Cup of Hope”. The drink was special for our cause because the funds from it were donated to our project, totaling about two hundred fifty dollars.

Due to our communities endless support, we were able to well exceed our original goals by: installing 9 buddy benches in local parks and playgrounds, educating and connecting our peers to local suicide prevention associations, and bringing our community closer throughout our project. We did not only bring awareness and education to our community, but we also educated ourselves on how much Idaho is truly affected by suicide. By the completion of our project, we raised approximately ten and a half thousand dollars.
2018-2019
COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECT TIMELINE

AUGUST
- We chose Suicide Awareness and Education for the topic of our project and we started brainstorming fundraisers and events to bring attention to this matter.

OCTOBER
12th- Fund raised $442.49 for the Suicide Awareness event
13th- ‘Out of the Darkness’ (Suicide Awareness Fun Run in Meridian)
19th- Sent out sponsorship letters to local business to help fund our project and this raised $125.36.

SEPTEMBER
24th- We decorated our HOSA Homecoming float to promote our Community Awareness Project.
- We finalized and started to execute the events and fundraisers we wanted to host.

NOVEMBER
3rd- We hosted “The Battle of Both Worlds Event” and this event raised $1,191.31
17th- National Survivor’s of Suicide Awareness Day (Partnered with a local coffee shop, “Brie’Sco”. They sold a coffee drink called ‘A Cup of Hope’ to raise proceeds for our project and by the end of the day we raised $266.02.

DECEMBER
We finalized our ideas for the Buddy Benches

FEBRUARY
- Planned locations of the Buddy Benches in local parks and schools
8th- American Auxiliary donated $452.00 to purchase a seventh bench

JANUARY
We bought three Buddy Benches, the City of Mountain Home donated one and Parks and Recreation of Mountain Home donated two. This added up to six benches in all. The donated cost of the benches totaled $1654.00.
29th- Suicide Awareness Presentation to our peers during our lunch hour

MARCH
6th- Suicide Awareness Presentation to our high school staff about the 5 Signs of Depression
14th- Decorated the HOSA bulletin board with Suicide Statistics and Hotline numbers
18th- Buddy Bench Ground Breaking Ceremony with the Mayor of Mountain Home
22nd- Buddy Bench Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with all of our sponsors, the Mountain Home City Council, our School District Superintendent and our HOSA Advisor
23rd- Local Business owner donated $452 to buy a bench

LGBTQ+ Suicide Prevention Hotline

Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline
Fundraisers and Events

Make Mental Health a National Priority
Battle of Both Worlds

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Every Life Matters

SPONSORED BY:
Trinity Mountain Clinic
H.R. Physicians of Twin Falls
Desert Sage Health Centers
The Upper Cut
The Gettin' Place
N9's Creations
Century 21 Southern Idaho Realty
The House of Flowers
Shannon and John Crowe
SSTs LLC Screenprinting

SEIZE THE AWKWARD
Buddy Benches

“No one else can play your part!”
Community service project turns into year long awareness campaign

by Karen Brescia

What started as two MBHS HOSA students' Community Service Project, has turned into a year long awareness program on suicide and its many forms to help prevent it in the community.

Lauren DeShazo was asked to choose a topic that could bring the community together by positively impacting the lives of others and break the stigma surrounding the topic of suicide. This simple idea of providing a safe zone for students feeling alone by installing buddy benches and placing informative posters about suicide prevention, has grown with the support from a number of MBHS staff, community business leaders and even our own Mayor Sykes.

Both Cole and DeShazo set out to gain the support of their community through donations for the project and created an event to bring both MBHS students and the community together through the Battle of Both Worlds. This event took place on Saturday, Nov 3rd with a volleyball and indoor soccer game between the girls MBHS Varsity Volleyball team and the boys MBHS Varsity Soccer team. The event included notable volunteers such as MBHS Vice Principal Jessie West and Mayor Sykes volunteering for the pie in the face auctions. The students also hosted a silent auction and sold merchandise to raise funds from the community.

The event raised $267.67 and their main event “Tag Your Friends” was well attended with the participation of the school’s orchestra, a mental message and a tragic shirt wearied with the plaque numbers of the Idaho Suicide Prevention Helpline and the words “We need you. Be there.” The event was “raised awareness and money, but also raised awareness for the cause.”

Cole and DeShazo continued their service ideas by Principal Shan Carver who has the students hand out free shirts to their students to increase awareness of the cause. Cole and DeShazo also help out in the promotion of the event and they are very proud of their efforts.

The MBHS HOSA students and American Association for Suicide Prevention held a 24-hour which they have been able to raise $399.49 for the American Association for Suicide Prevention. The idea came from the list of activities around the topic of suicide prevention is continuing to grow. Conversations have begun on what we can do as a school for the community.
Certificate of the Commemorative Ribbon Cutting is presented to:

The "Buddy Bench" Project

March 22, 2019
Carl Miller Park
Mountain Home, ID 83647

Lynne Lord
Chamber Director

Julie Davis
Administrative Assistant
Suicide in Idaho: Fact Sheet
February 2018

- In 2016, there were 44,965 deaths by suicide in the United States, an average of 1 person every 12 minutes.
- Idaho is consistently among the states with the highest suicide rates. In 2016, Idaho had the 8th highest suicide rate in the U.S. with a rate of 20.8, 50% higher than the national average.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for Idahoans ages 15-34 and for males up to age 44.
- Between 2012-2016, 105 Idaho school children (ages 6-18 years old) died by suicide; 27 of those deaths were among children age 14 or younger.
- Between 2012-2016, an estimated 7,100 adults age 18 and up attempted suicide in Idaho; resulting in an attempt rate of 686 per 100,000.

Idaho Resident Suicides By Public Health District

<table>
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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Anchor City</th>
<th>Suicides 2016</th>
<th>Rate (per 100,000)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Suicides 2012-2016</th>
<th>5-Year Average Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coeur D'Alene</td>
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<td>1,683,140</td>
<td>1,640</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Rate per 100,000 population

Idaho & US Rates by Year: 2006-2016

Idaho Method: 2012-2016 (All Ages)

*Rate per 100,000 population
References

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https://www.canva.com/design/DADVieLR86c/jCXirQ8eacjg66eWyJLABA/edit


Local youth raise funds for 'Buddy Benches'. (2019, March 26). Retrieved from
https://www.mountainhomenews.com/story/2597142.html