Suicide Prevention Awareness Week And Community Walk

On September 2, 2008, at 1 p.m., Representative Mark Strama, Farren Sheehan Smith, Attorney and Survivor of Loss, and Travis County Sheriff’s Office Captain Art Cardenas with the will be at the South Entrance to the State Capitol announcing an upcoming “Out of the Darkness” community walk, on Saturday September 6, 2008, as well as bring awareness to Suicide Prevention Awareness week, September 7-13, 2008.

The subject of suicide and depression makes some people nervous, for others it brings to light painful memories in which they've spent years trying to repress. The public will be invited to participate in the community walk in Austin, Texas. We hope to reduce the stigma, fear and shame that may prevent people from reaching out for help during times of emotional distress or suicidal crisis. This will also be an opportunity to embrace, learn and discuss depression and suicide, as well as to remember the loved ones who have died by suicide.

District 50 Representative Mark Strama’s key issues include health care, transportation and economic development, but his passion and top priority is education. The “Out of the Darkness” walk will raise funds to educate the citizens of Austin in the importance of talking about mental illness and depression. Rep. Strama encourages participation at the “Out of the Darkness” walk and supports the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as the leading non-profit organization that is exclusively dedicated to understanding and prevention of suicide through research and education.

Ms Farren Smith and her family are third-year organizers of the event. “We are opening the discussion about depression and mental illness and we hope that more people will feel free to get the help they need.” Ms. Smith lost her brother Ryan in September 2005.

Capt. Art Cardenas extends support from the Travis County Sheriff’s Office for the walk and supports the educational opportunities afforded by the American Foundation’s for Suicide Prevention’s Central Texas Chapter.

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