



NEWS

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Montco Event Shares Powerful Message of Suicide Prevention Awareness

Norristown, PA (May 25, 2018) – Almost 400 people attended a Suicide Prevention Awareness event at Montgomery County Community College to hear Kevin Hines, a suicide attempt survivor, share his story of survival, resilience, and hope. He is one of 36 people to survive the fall from the Golden Gate Bridge. He has turned his story into a message about living healthy and spreading hope and kindness to others.

The event was held at Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell and streamed live to a second audience at the Montgomery County Community College, West Campus, in Pottstown. The speakers at this event included the Chair of the Montgomery County Commissioners, Dr. Val Arkoosh; Joanne McFall, the Market President at Keystone First; Patti Dille, a Suicide Loss Survivor & Suicide Prevention Trainer; as well as Hines, a nationally celebrated speaker and suicide attempt survivor.

“In Montgomery County, we lose an average of 100 loved ones, friends, neighbors, and community members to suicide annually. In 2017 alone, we lost 107 people,” said Dr. Val Arkoosh, Chair, Montgomery County Commissioners. “Yet, suicide is preventable. When we know the signs, and come together to support one another we can connect those who are struggling with the help they need. With help, comes hope.”

The presentation was coordinated and planned in partnership of the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce, Montgomery County Teen Parent Taskforce, Keystone First, Brooke Glen Behavioral Hospital, POWER Program, and Montgomery County Community College.

This free event was open to the public. Approximately 375 people attended the live event in Blue Bell, and 25 people at the live-streaming in Pottstown. Montgomery County Mobile Crisis and Suicide Prevention Taskforce members were on site at both locations.

The Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce is a collaborative community effort between the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services and a group of dedicated and passionate loss

survivors, attempt survivors, community members, and helping professionals from across several service systems.

There are many ways to get involved and obtain resources. Anyone is welcome to join the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce. There are free Mental Health Children's and Adult resource guides available to anyone living in Montgomery County who may be looking to get support and connected. The Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce also provides resources and QPR trainings to anyone in Montgomery County, for free.

Additional tips to keep in mind in regards for Suicide Prevention Awareness:

- Be kind: Suicide happens as the result of incredible pain, hopelessness, and often isolation, we can all be a part of acknowledging pain, offering hope, and making connections with others.
- Be curious: We can and should ask people if they're ok and if we're concerned, ask clearly and directly about suicide, talking about suicide is a major component of prevention- this principle extends to professional helping environments like physical and mental health where universal screening should be a part of everyday practice.
- Be safe: If you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, make your home a safe place to be, restrict means, get rid of old medications, lock up guns, store ammunition separately, or better yet, remove the firearms entirely during periods of concern, have a trusted friend, family member, or local law enforcement hold on to them.
- Get help, with help comes hope (all available 24/7)
 - Montgomery County Mobile Crisis: 1-855-634-4673
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (Veterans Press 1)
 - National Crisis Text line: 741741

About the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce

The Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce is a community initiative. If you or someone you know is interested in joining, please contact Erin Hewitt at ehewitt@montco.pa.org. For more information, please visit: <https://www.montcopa.org/1439/Suicide-Prevention-Task-Force>.