

# Out of Darkness Walk raises suicide awareness, money for prevention



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On Sunday, the Pike County community will once again walk to help bring light to those who are living in darkness.

The annual Out of the Darkness Walk will be from 2 until 3:30 p.m. at the soccer track on the Troy University campus and everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in the community's suicide prevention fundraising effort, said Amy Minor, Troy Community Walk chair.

"This is the third year we have walked as a community to increase awareness and promote prevention of suicide," Minor said. "In the last two years combined, we have had about 1,200 walkers come out with a total of more than \$60,000 raised in the combined years. This year's goal is \$25,000. The raised funds go toward education, research and advocacy for suicide awareness and prevention."

Minor said the Alabama suicide figures are staggering, as are those across the nation.

"In Alabama, suicide is the third leading cause of death among ages 15-24, the fourth leading cause of death among ages 10-14, the sixth leading cause for ages 45-54 and the 10th leading cause for ages 55-64."

Minor said while all the figures are alarming, the most alarming is that so many young people are taking their lives. "The goals of the Walk Out of Darkness Walk are to save lives by increasing awareness and promoting prevention of suicide and to remember those lost to suicide and provide families an opportunity to know they are not alone in this struggle," she said. "The funds raised at Sunday's Out of Darkness Walk will be used to further these goals."

Josh Johnson from WSFA will be a guest speaker at the walk and Johnny Barron and Friends will perform.

Tents will be set up with counselors and mental health professionals available for those who have questions or would like information.

"We will have Out of the Darkness Walk T-shirts available for sale and Memory Beads," Minor said. "Free water and PowerAde will be available to walkers and there will be a safe kids' area provided by education majors at Troy University."

A butterfly release will be the culminating event for the 2017 Out of Darkness Walk.

Minor said more than \$7,000 has been donated by corporate sponsors and another \$7,000 donated in in-kind donations.

“The Pike County Out of the Darkness Walk would not be possible without the sponsorship of our community,” she said. “We thank our sponsors and all of those who work and contribute to the efforts to prevent suicide among all ages.”

Out of Darkness Walks are the signature events for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention which is the leading national non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy and to reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide.

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