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Sparkman High students host suicide awareness event



One student is sharing her personal story of loss and tragedy in hopes of helping others.

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Posted By: Alyssa Martin

A night of hope is organized by a group of Sparkman High School students. One of the student organizers is sharing her personal story of a recent loss that's impacted her life forever and motivated her to raise awareness for suicide.

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Abi Kunkle is a senior at Sparkman High School.

She knows the pain of losing someone to suicide all too well.

Her father died by suicide in January.

"I spend a lot of time crying about my dad, missing him and searching over all of our conversations trying to find the answers or the messages I thought I was supposed to pick up on," said Kunkle.

In the days after her father's death, Abi searched tirelessly for help but her searching led to the discovery of another problem.

"I found that Huntsville is severely lacking in mental health resources, especially ones that are readily available," said Kunkle.

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"When I called the hotline number, I was on hold for 20 to 30 minutes, when they did answer they transferred me to the local branch and the local branch is supposed to be moderated 24/7. And I didn't get the help I needed," said Kunkle.

Abi is one of 9 Sparkman students organizing "A Night of Hope," which stands for; healing, overcoming, preserving and enduring.

The goal is to raise awareness for suicide and let people know where and how they can find help.

"My dad was an adult and he did not get the help through his work so he didn't speak out. I think if we have more resources that are reaching out to people, finding out what's going on in their life, for all ages, that would help alot," added Kunkle.

A Night of Hope is sponsored by Spark Industry Robotics, a student-led simulated company at the school.

The event also serves as their community service project and raises money for Crisis Services of North Alabama.

Renee Quaife is a Sparkman teacher, involved with the robotics team, whose watched her students plan and prepare for a big night.

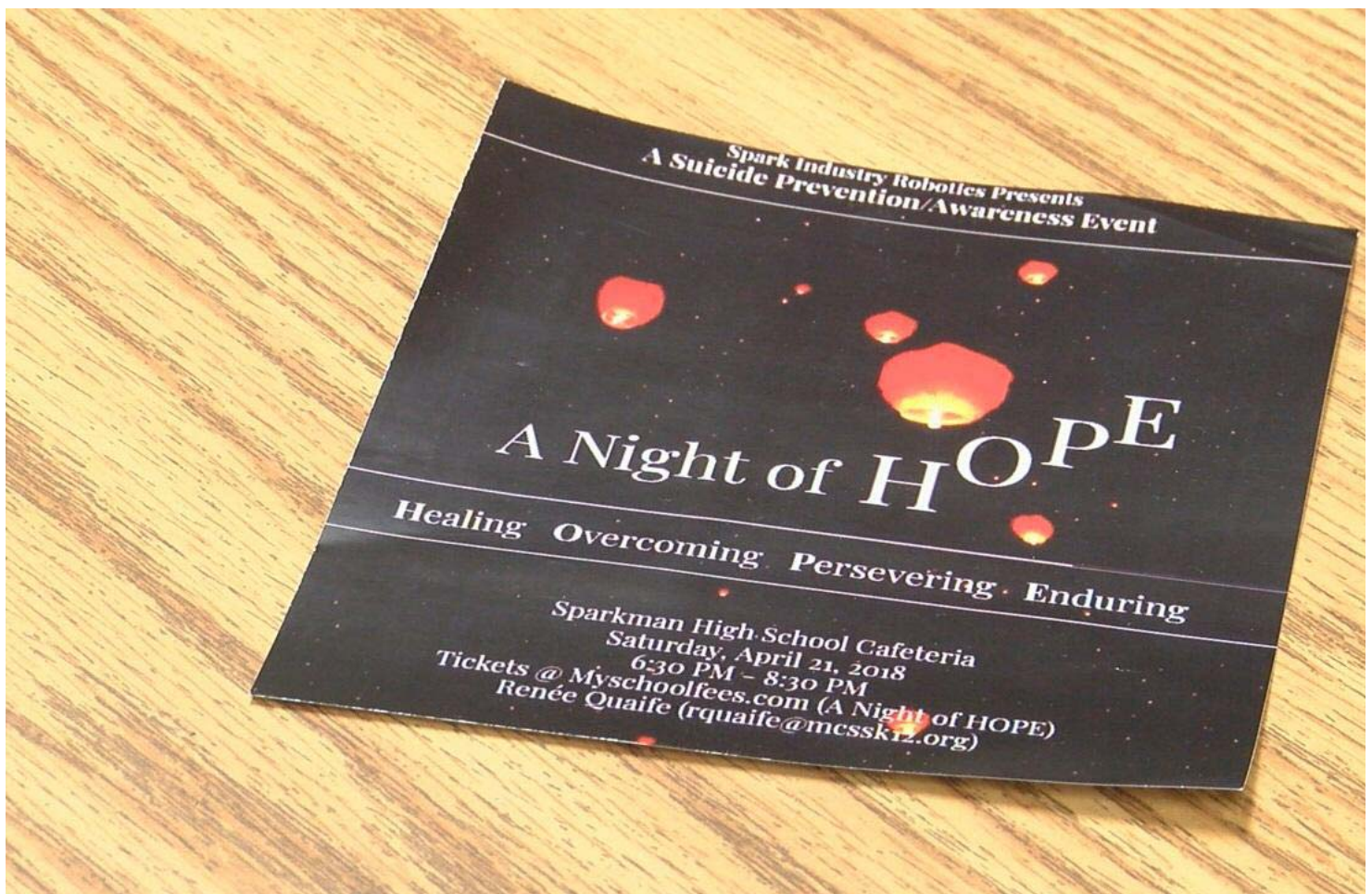
"Being able to say, 'this happened to me but I turned it into this.' I think that is powerful and I think that will serve these kids well. The power of what these kids can do, they're changing the world," added Quaife.

The event requires a ticket for entry.

Tickets are \$20 per person.

To buy tickets visit : https://secure2.myschoolfees.com/guest_home.aspx?sid=261

For more information on "A Night of Hope" visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/1617999494934054/>



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