



Birmingham foundation prepares for annual suicide prevention walk

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BIRMINGHAM, AL (WBRC) - A suicide prevention group agrees with a family of a north Alabama teenager who took his life that [more access to mental health services](#) are needed.

Each year the Birmingham Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention sponsors their Out of the Darkness community walk.

This year's walk will be held Sunday, Nov. 3 at 2:30 p.m. in Birmingham's Heardmont Park.

The foundation sets out pairs of shoes to symbolize those who have committed suicide. The latest numbers from 2011 shows 640 died that year.

"What research tells us is that most people who die by suicide are suffering from some form of mental illness. Most often that is clinical depression," Leslie Dunn with the Foundation for Suicide Prevention said.

Dunn and Marris Grayson with the foundation said the walk is their biggest fundraiser and is a major awareness campaign. Grayson joined the foundation after her father took his life in 2005.

"What people don't realize is depression, for example, is a physical ailment. Yet it's something we don't talk about," Grayson said.

Fifteen-year-old Christian Adamek hung himself after video of his streaking at a Sparkman High School football game appeared on the internet.

His father, [Daniel Adamek, said this week](#) his son's death shows the need for more access to mental health services in Alabama.

"[We] did follow every avenue apparently available to us. Through the medical community, through the hospital system, through the mental health treatment, but still couldn't get the necessary diagnosis treatment and monitoring that he so needed," Adamek said.

The foundation suggests a number of steps to deal with suicide: calling 911, contacting your doctor, a counselor, a psychiatrist or a psychologist.

While resources are needed, the foundation said the stigma surrounding suicide must be addressed first.

"A lot of people look at depression as a sign of weakness or a character flaw or something they should just be able to pull themselves up out of," Dunn said.

For more information on the Out of the Darkness walk, visit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website at www.afsp.org.

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