

Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation

Spring 2014

Dear Friend of Katrina Tagget,

Looking back on the past five years since Katrina's suicide, we are humbled and amazed at the community of support which has embraced our mission towards awareness and education of mental illness and suicide prevention. We feel honored towards everyone who has helped us to honor and remember Katrina in such a positive way. Our work will continue until the stigma, shame, and silence of suicide is no more.

Sara, David and Blake Tagget
Co-Founders

- The **Kara Tagget Open** was another sell-out, hosting 132 golfers, over 25 volunteers, and raising a record \$24,500. This year, Beverly Francis-Gibson, Executive Director from NAMI Howard County spoke about mental illness and the mental health services available in Howard County. This brings the total funds raised in five years to \$100,000.
- The **Katrina Tagget Fellowship at Michigan State University** was awarded to two junior students, **Jason Baumhover** and **Sara Sherman**. Both recipients truly exemplify Katrina, talented and giving young people who live with a learning disability. Sara is a second time recipient of the scholarship. Jason was the first recipient of the scholarship but unfortunately he had to decline the scholarship as he took a leave of absence from MSU. Jason returned to MSU last year to finish his degree. If you want to donate to the scholarship, you can donate online at the following address: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/scholarships/tagget>



Kara Tagget Open 2013



The Katrina Tagget Fellows
with David and Sara Tagget,
and Darryl Steele, MSU

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- KTMF continues to support local and national organizations and programs according to KTMF's mission. Our support includes **Michigan State University's** Freshman Accessing Community and Facing Survival (F.A.C.E.S.) program which includes depression screening and suicide prevention training; a local **Art for Life** program, an art therapy program for survivors of suicide loss and those who have survived a suicide attempt; **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**, our various Out of the Darkness Walks have raised \$25,000 in five years for AFSP; **National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI)** and **Active Minds** for their programs targeted at adolescents and young adults, **I'M ALIVE**, a teen hotline on the eastern shore of Maryland, **Families for Depression Awareness**, a national organization helping families cope with mental disorders and prevent suicide, and **Grass Roots Crisis Center** for support of survivors of suicide and suicide prevention.

Thank you for allowing us to honor and remember Kara in so many positive ways.

If you are reading this newsletter because you have lost someone to suicide or you love someone who is struggling to live, our heart goes out to you. We know all too well what it is like to live with someone who is struggling. Unfortunately deaths in the U.S. to suicide continue to rise; about 38,000 Americans die by suicide annually, twice the number of homicides. Suicide is now the number one cause of injury death in America, surpassing car accidents and unintentional poisonings including overdoses. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., and the only cause of death that is increasing, not decreasing. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds and the second leading cause of death among college students. Even one loss to suicide is one too many.

Most suicidal people are not psychotic or insane, they are usually upset, grief stricken, depressed or despairing. Suicide is preventable, 90% of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death. The CDC estimates 10% of the U.S. population has suffered major depression within the past year, at an estimated 311 million people in the US, that is 31 million people who have suffered major depression. One in four has a diagnosable and treatable mental health condition but only 25% seek help. Worldwide, over 1 million people die by suicide annually and that number is thought to be low. A death due to suicide is not always reported as a suicide due to the stigma associated with suicide. An estimated 1 million people in the U.S. survive a suicide attempt, and that number is low too as many attempts go unreported. Mental illness and suicide does not discriminate; it can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, age, religion, or socio economic standing. We are all at risk. Surely the risk of mental illness and suicide to all of us warrants awareness, education, and treatment at least comparable to other illnesses such as breast cancer.



Out of the Darkness Overnight Walk, Washington, D.C., 2013

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Out of the Darkness Walk, 2013

Mental illness is treatable and suicide is preventable but only if we acknowledge the issues and aren't afraid to talk about them. Someone who is suffering mental illness will often suffer in silence and shame, afraid to seek treatment for fear of the consequences. Can you imagine having a heart attack and not going to the hospital for treatment? Why do we allow those who are mentally ill to not get proper diagnosis and proper treatment? Most of the time those who are willing to talk about mental illness and suicide are those who have either suffered a loss due to suicide or

they themselves have survived an attempt. It shouldn't have to be that these issues get addressed only when and until someone is directly affected. If this continues, the problem will just continue to grow, and the sad thing is death by suicide is largely preventable.

So, what can we do? Help dispose of the myths. Talk about suicide with your family and friends. Talking actually lessens the incidence of suicide. Don't be afraid to get someone help for a mental health issue even if it means they will be angry that you did. A living ex-friend is better than a friend who is dead. Understand that suicide is not a disease; the mental illness issue that leads to suicide is the disease. There is proper diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. Acknowledge that mental illness and suicide does not discriminate; we are all at risk. Familiarize yourself with the warning signs of someone at risk for suicide. Put the national suicide prevention lifeline phone number in your cell phone (1-800-273-8255). If the time comes, don't be afraid to make the call. You may just save a life.

Special Thank you

A very special thank you to the following individuals and groups who went above and beyond in their efforts to help us with our mission, Brian Greenbaum and the HAHA group, Sara's friends who come every year to volunteer for the Kara Tagget Open, Tamara Van Newkirk (Grass Roots), Ryan Newcomb (AFSP), Susan Helsel, Julia Andersen (Art for Life), Scott Becker, and the MSU Counseling Staff, Mike Hudson and the MSU RCPD Staff, and Ann Marie Lindley from MSU.

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Upcoming events

April 4 - Katrina Tagget Fellowship 2014 will be awarded at MSU.

June 12 - Party for Life hosted by the Maryland chapter of AFSP in Baltimore. Click here to get information or to register online. [click here to register or sponsor online.](#)

June 28-29 - National Out of the Darkness Walk in Philadelphia, PA. Last year was our first year walking, but the experience was amazing, there are no words to adequately describe the impact the walk has had on our lives. The walk is up to 20 miles around Philadelphia, if you can't make it all the way, they will pick you up and bring you to the finish line. We are walking with the AFSP Maryland Chapter team as this way a portion of the funds we raise come back to Maryland for suicide prevention programs in Maryland. Sign-up to walk or volunteer at the walk, or donate to a walker. If you are serious about walking and are having difficulty raising the required \$1,000 (\$750 if you are a student), send an email to stagget@verizon.net to find out about the grant program KTMF is offering. [click here to signup to walk, volunteer, or donate online.](#)



**Out of the Darkness
Overnight Walk, 2013**

July 21 – 6th annual Kara Tagget Open
[click here to get information, register, or sponsor.](#)

September 8-14 – National Suicide Prevention Week with World Suicide Prevention Day on **Sept 10**

September 20 – 6th anniversary of Katrina “Kara” Tagget’s death

October 4 - Out of the Darkness Walk in Columbia, Maryland. [click here to join Team Katrina “Kara” Tagget or to support a team member.](#)

November 22 - International Survivor of Suicide Day. [click here for information.](#)

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How you can get involved in stopping the shame, silence, and stigma of mental illness and suicide

About 38,000 children, teens, and adults die by suicide in the U.S. annually. Unfortunately, the rate of deaths by suicide is increasing in this country calling for a greater urgency to do more to stop suicide. Below are six ways to get involved to raise awareness about this public health problem and to help save lives:

- 1. Take a moment to learn about suicide** at www.AFSP.org and click on [understanding suicide](#). To further spread awareness, click the "share" icon on the top right of these pages to post to your social media accounts. If you haven't already done so, join the Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation and Katrina Tagget facebook groups.
- 2. Help us make suicide prevention a local and national priority.** Simply attending a local awareness and education event helps stop the silence of suicide. Organizations like NAMI , AFSP, and Grass Roots host local events and announce them in the local news, their web site, email, facebook, twitter, and other social media. You can join these organizations facebook pages and email lists free of charge to get the latest news. You could use your contacts and help arrange for awareness and education events in the school(s), your community, or local businesses. You could arm yourself with the skills to identify and prevent a possible suicide by getting trained in QPR (Question, Persuade, and Respond). You could join AFSP's field advocacy program to make suicide a national priority. [Click here](#) to find out more about the advocacy program.
- 3. Get involved with the "Kara Tagget Open" event on Monday, July 21** at the Waverly Woods Golf Course, Marriottsville, Maryland. You do not have to be a golfer to be involved in this event. Consider being a sponsor or getting sponsors for the event. Ask someone you know to donate item(s) for the silent auction, prizes, and awards. Tell everyone you know about this amazing event; handout the brochures or direct them to KatrinaTagget.org to get involved. Help on the day of the event by volunteering your time. Come to the event and play golf by yourself or get a team together to play.
- 4. Join us at the Out of the Darkness Walks, either in Philadelphia. on June 28-29 and/or the community walk in Columbia on October 4.** This will be our team's sixth year doing the walks and we have raised \$25,000 for AFSP Maryland. You can join the team and walk by going to www.OutoftheDarkness.org and searching for either Team "AFSP Maryland" for the National walk in June, or Team Katrina "Kara for the Community Walk in October. Once you join the team, you can get supporters, or not. Or you can make a donation online, even just \$20 helps!!! Donate to the Tagget Family. If you are going to walk with us in Philly, email stagget@verizon.net to find out about the grant program.
- 5. Join us for International Survivor's Day on November 17.** If you have lost a loved one to suicide, please know you are not alone. For resources visit [coping with suicide](#). There will be nearly 300 healing conferences around the world. Last year, our local Howard County event was held at the Miller Library and had about 45 attendees. The program featured the national program as well as local speakers, Gordon Livingston and Julia Andersen. To watch the program online, visit <http://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide/international-survivors-of-suicide-day>.
- 6. On September 20, remember Katrina "Kara" with a simple thought, smile, memory, or prayer.** Suicide does not discriminate; suicide knows no race, gender, ethnicity, or financial status. Just look at the picture of Katrina below. Does she look suicidal?



Katrina "Kara" Tagget

When we work together we can STOP, the SHAME, SILENCE AND STIGMA of mental illness and suicide. For EVERY LIFE MATTERS.

*Save a Life. Make the Call.
Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at
1-800-273-TALK (8255)*