

Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation

February 2016

Dear Friend of Katrina Tagget,

It is hard to believe we started this grief journey seven years ago. 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 144 golfers, over 25 volunteers, and raising a record \$28,588. This year, Andrea Ingram, Executive Director for Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center spoke about the increasing suicide rate in Howard County and the work Grassroots does to combat suicide. This brings the total funds raised in seven years to \$156,000. *See KatrinaTagget.org for a complete list of sponsors.*



Kara Tagget Open 2015

Corporate Sponsor - \$2,500+

Dell
Jerry and Marian Hengemihle, Microtel
ProSys

Platinum Sponsor - \$1,500

Dr. James Otto

Gold Sponsor - \$1,000

Ben Franklin Plumbing
Court Place Advisors, LLC
INTEL
The Propeller Club of Baltimore

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- KTMF supports **Art for Life**, an Open Art Studio for families and loved ones who have survived a suicide loss and for those who have survived a suicide attempt. The reasons someone takes their life are individual, but those who survive a suicide attempt may be able to help the survivors of suicide loss in their quest for understanding by sharing their story. Through the art process, survivors come together to create artistic pieces that

shed light on the subject of suicide and mental illness. The creation of the art leads to transformation and healing that augments traditional therapy programs. **Art for Life meets the 2nd Sunday of the month at Grass Roots in Columbia.** *For more information, contact Julia Andersen at andersenjulia2@gmail.com*

- **Garden of Life.** There have been many delays, but the Garden of Life is expected to break ground this spring in the Howard County Conservancy's Honor Garden! The **Garden of Life** is a memorial garden to honor and to celebrate the lives of our loved ones who have died by suicide and to raise awareness about suicide. Those of us who have been left behind by suicide know all too well the shame and silence that follows grief of suicide. As survivors of suicide, we need to remind the world that our loved ones are worthy of our remembrance regardless of how they died; their death does not define their life. The garden is a way to remember and celebrate the lives we have lost to suicide.



The garden will be funded by donations and all donations are 100% tax deductible. We are asking for those who may want to honor a loved one with a memorial plaque for a minimum donation of \$250. Donations can be made by check and mailed to Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation at 10351 Waverly Woods Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042. Online donations can be made at KatrinaTagget.org. A GoFundMe site will also be available.

- The **Katrina Tagget Fellowship at Michigan State University** was awarded to senior student, **Brent Schwarz**. Brent is a senior majoring in Supply Chain Management in the College of Business. Like, Katrina, Brent is well regarded for his significant services as a tutor and mentor in the State Program. He plans to use the financial help from the scholarship to extend his reach within that program. KTMF does not provide financial support for the KT Fellowship. If you want to donate to the scholarship, you can donate online at the following address: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/scholarships/tagget>



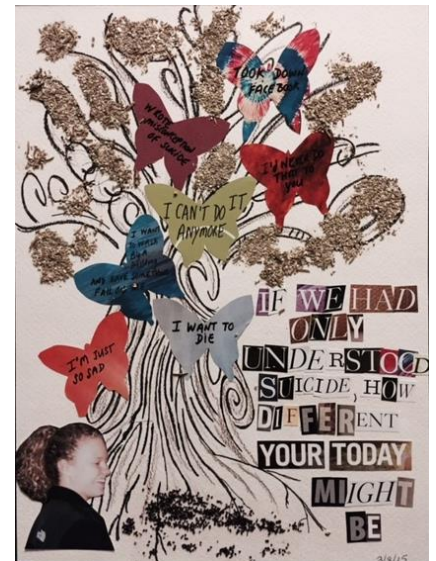
**The Katrina Tagget Fellow, Brent Schwarz with David and Sara Tagget, and Darryl Steele, MSU
2015**

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- KTMF continues to support local and national organizations and programs according to KTMF's mission. AFSP Party for Life raised \$41,000. The Out of the Darkness Campus Walk was the largest campus walk ever. AFSP Maryland had a record year raising \$585,000 from 11 walks. Sara spoke about Art for Life at Risky Business, Carroll County Mental Health Conference in June. The following are some of the organizations we supported this year:

Active Minds
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Art for Life
Carry The Fallen Ruck-March event for Active Heroes
Change Matters for Grassroots
Families for Depression Awareness
Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center
JED Foundation – Love is Louder
National Alliance for Mental Illness of Howard County
New Day Campaign
The Compassionate Friends
Christopher Benz Foundation (Survivor Stories Printing)
Friends of HC Library
Parents of Suicide (POS)

Artist Statement. A person who is considering suicide often speaks in a secret coded language. My daughter, Katrina spoke in this “secret language” the week before her suicide. She said things like, “I want to walk by a building and have something fall on me” and “I can’t do it anymore”. When I told her of her cousin’s step-father hanging himself two days before her own suicide and asked if she was “thinking about doing something like this”, she replied “No Mom, I would never do that to you”. Ironically, just two hours before that conversation she had been researching on the Internet, ways to kill oneself and where to get a gun. With her friends, she was more upfront with her thoughts and she said, “I want to die”. But they were ignorant about suicide and that someone as highly functioning as Katrina was at risk of suicide, so they didn’t understand she needed help.



Katrina spoke in this secret coded language in part to conceal her plan from me. She wanted help, but she was such a perfectionist and planner, she was so afraid any help would derail her future plans. I learned after her death from her writings that she had been struggling with anxiety and depression since high school. I feel strongly that if we had understood suicide better, that we would have recognized Katrina's secret plan for suicide and gotten her proper help to live.

Katrina's Secret
Children's Mental Health Awareness Week
Open Eyes, Open Minds: Raising Mental Health
Awareness Through Art
May, 2015

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**David, Sara, and Blake Tagget
AFSP OOTD Walk
Boston, 2015**

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 41,149 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. 22 veterans die a day by suicide! 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 second 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.

This past June, the Tagget family walked in the yearly Out of the Darkness Overnight walk held in Boston. The 16.4 mile walk started at dusk on Saturday, June 27, and concluded the following morning on June 28 to bring suicide and mental illness “out of the darkness”. The Overnight walk in Boston raised over 3 million dollars!



“Honestly, walking 16 miles is quite difficult. This year was even more challenging because we walked in the rain. But we do it, to honor Kara and all those who died by suicide, to support suicide loss survivors like ourselves, and to show those who continue today to struggle to live in secret that they need be silent no more. Walking through the night with thousands like us gives me hope that we can stop the stigma of mental illness and suicide.” Sara Tagget, Out of the Darkness Overnight, 2015

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AFSP OOTD Walk
Boston, 2015

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.



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.

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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 this year, Brian Greenbaum and the HAHA group, Sara's friends who come every year to volunteer for the Kara Tagget Open, Mike O'Malley who graciously donated the dinner for the Kara Tagget Open, Andrea Ingram (Grass Roots), Ryan Newcomb, Julie Matheny and the AFSP Maryland Chapter, Beverly Francis-Gibson (NAMI), Julia Andersen (Art for Life and Mike Hudson and the MSU RCPD Staff.



Tree of Life
OOTD Community Walk
Columbia, 2015

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Upcoming events

Art for Life is held on the **4th Sunday** of each month. *For more information, contact Julia Andersen at andersenjulia2@gmail.com*

April 11 - Katrina Tagget Fellowship 2015 will be awarded at MSU.

June 3-4 - National Out of the Darkness Walk in New York City. The walk is up to 20 miles around NYC, 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 Your Life Matters team. 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.](#)

June 8 - 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.](#)

July 25 – 8th annual Kara Tagget Open
[click here to get information, register, or sponsor.](#)

September 7-13 – National Suicide Prevention Week with World Suicide Prevention Day **on Sept 10** and Suicide Prevention Symposium at Robinson's Nature Center **on Sept 9.**

September 10 – October 3 - Active Minds Suicide Prevention Month
October 3 – National Day without Stigma, Active Minds

September 20 – 8th anniversary of Katrina "Kara" Tagget's death

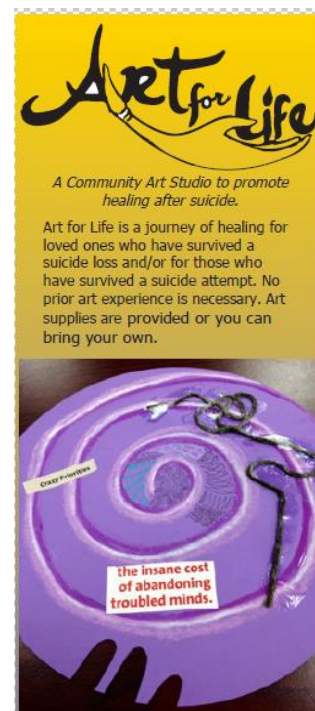
October 5 – Maryland Annual Suicide Prevention Conference at Martin's West, Baltimore.

October 6 – National Depression Screening Day

October 1 - Out of the Darkness Walk at Lake Elkhorn in Columbia, Maryland. [click here to join Team Katrina "Kara" Tagget or to support a team member.](#)

November 19 - International Survivor of Suicide Day. [click here for information.](#)

December 11 – Worldwide Candle Lighting Service from The Compassionate Friends.



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If you are having suicidal thoughts?

If someone is at home with you, please tell that person how you feel right now, and ask him/her to help you find professional help. (Or call a dependable friend or family member)

CONTACT A PROFESSIONAL

Of if you have a counselor or medical doctor, please call him/her right now. and tell a professional that you are having suicidal thoughts.

CALL A HOTLINE

If you don't have a close family member, friend, or counselor nearby to help you please call one of the numbers below and tell the person answering how you feel.

National Lifeline ----1-800-273 Talk (1 800 273 8255)

National Hopeline ----1-800-Suicide (1 800 784 2433)

Your Local Emergency Help (Grassroots – 410 531 6677)

911

THERE IS HELP IF YOU REACH OUT. PLEASE CHOOSE TO LIVE!!!!

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

Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation

About 41,149 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 20** 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 Boston on June 27-28 and/or the community walk in Howard County on October 18.** This will be our team's seventh year doing the walks and we have raised over \$25,000 for AFSP Maryland. You can join the team and walk by going to www.OutoftheDarkness.org and searching for either Team "Your Life Matters" 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 21.** 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 survivors of suicide loss panel discussion. 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)*