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Franciscan Healthcare Foundation

Preventing the tragedy of suicide

Your support provides the knowledge and tools to save lives

Dave Clements is a member of an exclusive club — one no one wants to join. It's made up of people who have lost a loved one to suicide.

He and his wife, Carlynn, lost their 19 year old son, Joe, on March 10, 2008. Joe's death continues to weigh heavily on them as they do their best to cope with the enduring pain and sadness.

It's a pain shared by far too many families, as reflected in these statistics:

- Suicide is the 10th most common cause of death in Wisconsin, accounting for 629 fatalities in 2009.
- Alarmingly, it is the second leading cause of death among young people age 15 to 34.
- More people in the state die from suicide each year than from motor vehicle accidents.

"Joe died on a Monday," recalls Dave. "The next morning I told my wife we had to do something so other families don't have to go through this. I had to have something positive come out of the most negative, horrible thing any parent can experience — the loss of a child."

Within a couple of months he and Carlynn had established a foundation in Joe's memory called "Joe was just Joe" (www.joewasjustjoe.com). It's dedicated to suicide awareness and prevention, with an emphasis on programs for young people ages 12 to 24.

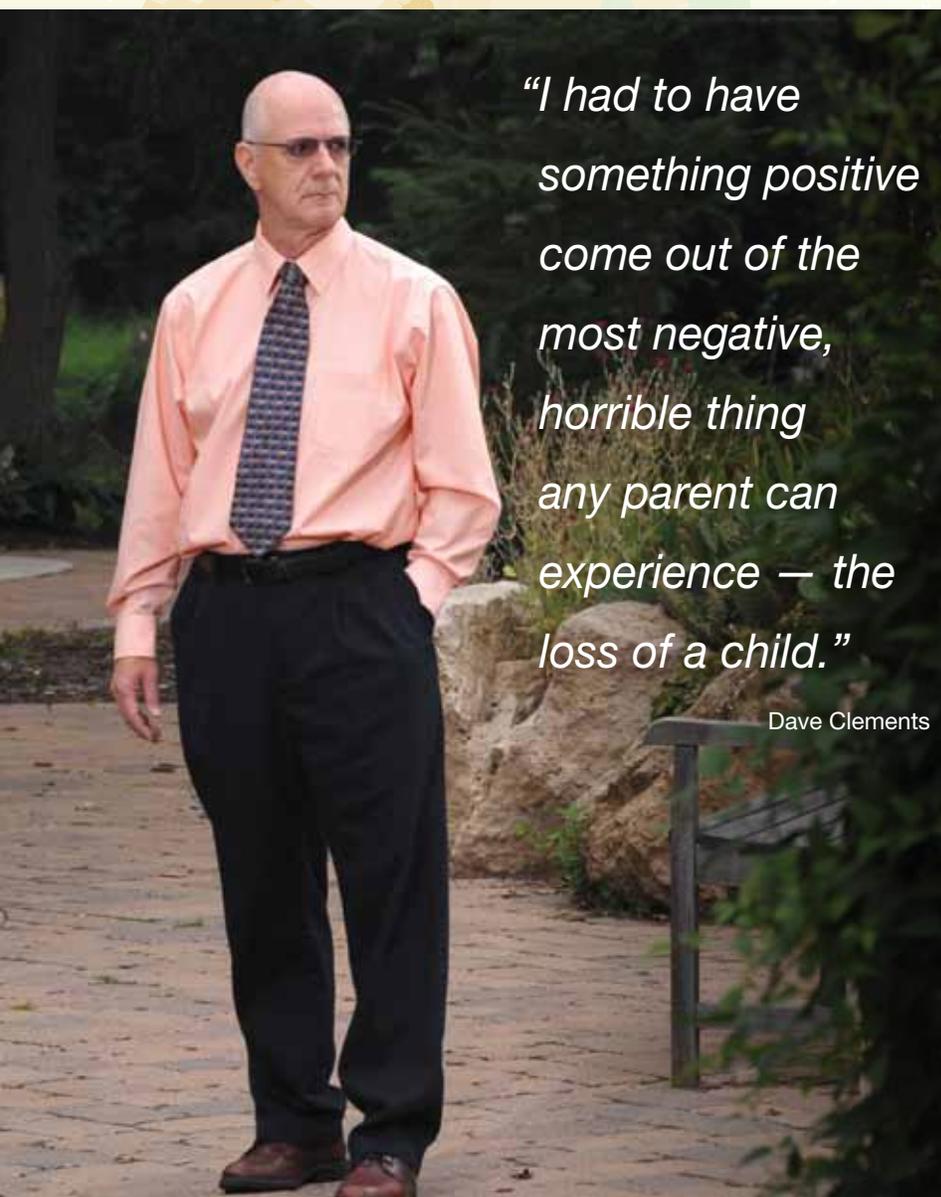
A few months later, Dave joined the La Crosse Suicide Prevention Initiative (LSPI). The group's mission is to raise awareness that suicide is a public health problem, and that it is preventable.

Critical void filled, with your help

In September, the LSPI held its third annual Suicide Prevention Summit in La Crosse. The summit is a full-day conference attended by mental health, medical and public safety professionals as well as crisis workers, families impacted by suicide and the general public.

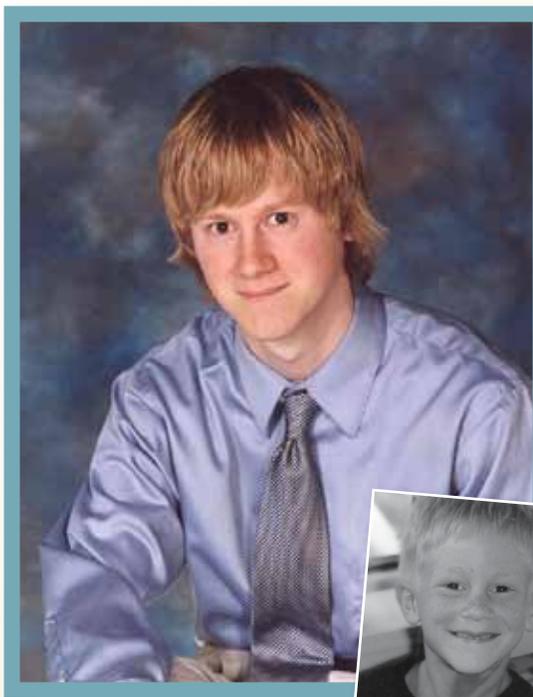
The summit helps fill a critical void in suicide prevention education.

"The first year, we were hoping to register 200 people, and got 320; the next year we got 350," recalls Dave. "That told me two things



"I had to have something positive come out of the most negative, horrible thing any parent can experience — the loss of a child."

Dave Clements



Joe Clements' tragic suicide at 19 created a ripple effect reaching far beyond his family. Suicide is a public health problem that can be prevented. Your gifts help fill a critical void in suicide prevention education.

— that there is a need for suicide prevention education, and that people are eager for the opportunity to learn.”

About 40 professionals from Mayo Clinic Health System attend the summit each year to improve their ability to identify patients at risk for suicide and take effective action.

Annual grants from Franciscan Healthcare Foundation — made possible through your support — help bring nationally known speakers to the summit to share the latest research and information on suicide. The grants also help keep registration fees affordable so cost does not become a barrier to attendance.

Training provides knowledge, skills to save lives

Paul Quinnett, Ph.D., was the keynote speaker at the first summit in 2009. He is the creator of a highly regarded program called QPR, short for question, persuade and refer. QPR training provides the tools to prevent a suicide and save a life. Each summit since the first has offered QPR training as part of the program.

Bob Hillary, administrator for Behavioral Health Services at Mayo Clinic Health System – Franciscan Healthcare, is also a member of the LSPI. After learning about QPR, he was anxious to implement the program. “We now require anyone who is formally involved with Behavioral Health Services, both inpatient and outpatient, including our vice presidents responsible for those areas, to take the QPR training.”

QPR training addresses one of the greatest hurdles to suicide prevention — peoples’ general discomfort with talking about the subject.

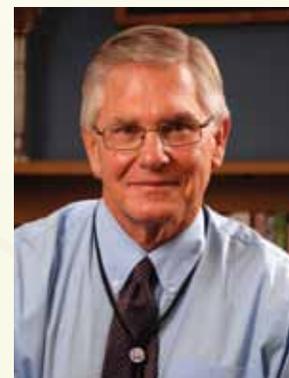
“I think anyone who has taken QPR training feels like they have the tools to directly impact someone; to ask the right questions in the right way to get a candid response,” says Bob. “Studies show when you ask someone if they’re thinking about suicide, it’s not insulting. It opens the door to getting help. Stepping over that threshold is a crucial part of prevention.”

Your gifts help prevent tragedy

Three years after his son’s suicide, Dave says he still thinks of Joe about a hundred times a day. Raising awareness about suicide and suicide prevention helps him deal with the sorrow.

“The loss of one person to suicide impacts so many people. If we can save one life, we can save all those people from having to suffer that loss. That’s why I do what I do. It gives meaning to something that is terribly sad and terribly painful.”

It’s a rare thing to be able to save a life. Your gifts help do exactly that, and we are so grateful for your support. •



Bob Hillary



Dave Clements