

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Suicide prevention endowment under way

The Putnam County Community Foundation is pleased to announce a new endowment that will support suicide prevention programs in Putnam County. The Endowment is a field of interest fund, but asks that the Community Foundation involve an approved student organization at DePauw University in deciding the best use of grants from the endowment. Preference will be given to projects that train leaders to identify symptoms of suicide and to prevent suicide.

The Endowment was started by Jimmy Kirkpatrick, a DePauw junior and President of his fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, and DePauw sophomore Stephanie Sharlow. After the tragic suicide of their friend in May 2011, Mr. Kirkpatrick and Ms. Sharlow felt the need to take action. “I see depression and suicide as being stigmatized,” said Kirkpatrick. “People are ashamed to talk about these types of feelings, and this contributes to the problem.”

Kirkpatrick named the Endowment the Be Great Today! Suicide Prevention Endowment. “Be great today” was a favorite expression of Marshall Mathew, the DePauw student who took his life earlier in the year. “Marshall was a very positive and encouraging person,” said Kirkpatrick. “Only a few people knew that he also struggled with depression.”

To raise money for the Endowment, Kirkpatrick and Sharlow organized a 5K race called the “Be Great Today” 5K Race. “The race was a great way to spread awareness and give closure to the people affected by suicide,” said Sharlow. “It was a positive event, and I see it as only the tip of the iceberg in this conversation.” They formed a university-recognized suicide prevention club on the DePauw campus. They are working with Julia Sutherlin to organize classes that will educate faculty and students about suicide and its prevention. In addition, plans are being made to bring Joshua Rivedal to campus for a lecture in February. Rivedal is a motivational speaker, whose father committed suicide. The classes and the lecture will be partially funded with proceeds from the race.

“I am honored to work with Jimmy,” said Elaine Peck, Executive Director of the Community Foundation. “And I am looking forward to working with him for years to come.” Peck said that she hopes to connect local mental health organizations, local high schools, and the Putnam County Youth Philanthropy Committee with the work of the new Suicide Prevention Club on DePauw’s campus.

Anyone may contribute to the Be Great Today! Suicide Prevention Endowment or start a new endowment in his/her own name. Contributions to the Endowment may be made online or checks should be made payable to the Putnam County Community Foundation with “Be Great Today!” in the memo and mailed to 2 South Jackson Street, Greencastle, Indiana 46135. Community Foundation staff are available to help donors make gifts of cash, stock, retirement assets, life insurance, bequests, real estate and other types of gifts.

The Putnam County Community Foundation is a nonprofit public charity established in 1985 to serve donors, award grants, and provide leadership, enriching the quality of life and strengthening community in Putnam County. The Community Foundation administers more than 225 funds and endowments for donors supporting a variety of charities. To have a representative from the Community Foundation speak to your group, please contact the office at 765.653.4978 or visit the website at www.pcfoundation.org.