

"Out of the Darkness" Suicide Prevention Walk Scheduled for Sept. 9

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ROXANA - Whether you've struggled with suicidal ideation, lost someone to suicide, or just want to help, the "Out of the Darkness" Madison County Walk is the place to be on Sept. 9.

The day starts at 11 a.m. at Roxana Park. Speakers will share their experiences with suicide and stories about loved ones they lost to suicide. The walk itself is estimated to take 20–30 minutes and will end back at the park, where attendees can enjoy vendors and food trucks until 4 p.m.

“It’s not sad. It’s really a happy occasion,” Jen Herring, who chairs the event, said. “This year, I really wanted to grow it and I wanted to include the community... You can come out and show your support for those people.”

Currently, there are almost 100 participants and 15 teams registered for the Madison County walk. They have raised approximately \$8,500 of their \$12,000 goal for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. To donate or register to walk, you can visit the [official Madison County page](#) on the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) website.

Whether you walk or not, Herring invites people to come out and enjoy the festivities. Food trucks will include [Sweet Little Things](#), [Rachel & Co. Coffee House](#), [Ray’s Soul-Touching Tacos](#) and [Taylor’s Fire and Smoke](#).

Herring explained the event’s importance for people who have been affected by suicide, including those who are impacted after the loss of a loved one. She told the story of her friend who lost his life to suicide eight years ago.

“His name was Ryan. He was in a band. He was a great friend of mine,” she said. “It’s about his memory. And I don’t want anybody to go down that path. I don’t want you to ever have to deal with what I did. So that prevention part of it is me getting out there, like, ‘Hey, I really don’t want you to have to do this.’ Because it’s hard.”

She spoke about the aftermath of her friend’s death and the pain of wondering whether she could have done something to prevent it. Herring understands that it’s easy to blame yourself, but she reminds people who have lost a loved one to suicide that it’s not their fault.

“It gets easier,” she explained. “My family and friends can tell you how much of a struggle it was in the beginning, because there’s always so much doubt. ‘What did I do wrong? How could I have stopped it?’ And you can’t, and you have to realize that. You have to realize you probably did everything that you could.”

Above all else, she hopes that the “Out of the Darkness” event will encourage prevention and provide support to those who need it.

“Mental health is a taboo. Suicide is a taboo...We need to let people know that it’s okay to have that struggle and to feel heartache,” Herring said. “It lets people know that you’re not alone.”

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. For more information about the “Out of the Darkness” Madison County Walk, visit the [official Madison County page](#) on the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) website, or check out their [official Facebook page](#). If you are in crisis, call 988.