



New Nonprofit Hopes to Build Memorial Park for People Lost to Suicide or Overdose

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Christina Foster Beegle knows grief. She has lost three brothers to suicide and a best friend to a drug overdose. Beegle herself was once homeless and struggling with substance use.

Today, Beegle is 26 months clean, and she has decided to do something with her pain. She started Foster's Light in the Dark, an organization that aims to bring awareness to suicide and overdose deaths while commemorating the loved ones who are lost. Foster's Light in the Dark has a goal to eventually create a memorial park for people who die by suicide or overdose.

"Me helping others helps me in my grief," Beegle explained. "I can show people that, look, I've been through three suicides. All my mom's sons are dead by suicide and a best friend to a drug overdose. If I can try to help the next person, so can anybody, because we need to get through this together. We need to be a voice for people that can't."

While it's a big goal, Beegle knows how much this park will matter to people. She remembers sitting at her second brother's memorial bench, still in active addiction, and coming up with the idea. It wasn't until she was on the way home from her third brother's funeral service, almost one year clean, when the name came to her and, she said, "I just knew it was God."

Foster's Light in the Dark was established in January 2023. Now, they're working on creating a website and raising the funds needed to build the park. The organization wants to raise \$50,000 over the next few years to purchase two acres of land in Madison County. They will have their first fundraiser on July 7, 2024, at the Edwardsville Moose Lodge.



In the meantime, Foster's Light in the Dark has donated a bench to the Alton Police Department to honor them for the work they do toward suicide and drug overdose prevention. The organization also commemorates people on their [Facebook page](#), giving them a space to be remembered even if there's no physical burial site.

Beegle hopes to eventually provide that site, to share hope and comfort with the people who are grieving. She is open about her feelings of guilt and how she has blamed herself for her loved ones' deaths. But through recovery, she knows now that her brothers' decision wasn't her fault. She hopes to help other people realize that, too.

"The look on my mom's face when my first brother died, every time that I see somebody that passed away from suicide, they have that same look on their face," she remembered. "They're just lost, because suicide, we want to blame ourselves...If I can

help one person not carry the baggage of their loved one's suicide or drug overdose, then it was all worth it, in memory of the ones I lost."

Beegle said the Foster's Light in the Dark board is "really amazing" and "passion-driven." She noted that many of the board members, like her sister-in-law, help people through their own grief. The organization attends a lot of suicide and substance use prevention events throughout the Riverbend.

Foster's Light in the Dark hopes to eventually host their own event to raise awareness and money for the park. Beegle noted that no matter how deep into the darkness someone might feel, they can always be helped into the light.

"We just want to raise awareness and help prevent those deaths, but at the same time, be a little hope to the families that can't afford a burial place for their loved ones," she added. "At the end of the day, you can't blame yourself for somebody else's actions. And we really need to let people know that. Just because they choose to, you know, take their own life, you don't got to carry that. You can put that down, because that was their choice. But you can be a voice for them."

And Beegle will be a voice for her loved ones. She is "very grateful" to have the opportunity to help, and she is excited to watch Foster's Light in the Dark grow as more people join their mission.

"For the first time in my life," Beegle said, "I'm happy."

For more information about Foster's Light in the Dark, visit their [official Facebook page](#).



Chicken DINNER Fundraiser

Sunday, July 7, 2024

Time: 11am-3pm

\$12.00 per person

Includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, corn, salad and tea or coffee.

Carryout available

Loyal Order of Moose

7371 Marine Road
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Portion of the proceeds benefit:

Foster's Light In The Dark

For more information, please contact Christina B. @ (618) 225-9357



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