



Proceeds from the 11th annual “Be Aware” 5K walk/run support suicide awareness and prevention programs offered locally through KnowResolve and the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families. The race is scheduled for Oct. 12.
Photo provided by Charlene McGunn

Coalition to host suicide awareness 5K in Macomb Township

By: [Alex Szwarc](#) | [Macomb Township Chronicle](#) | Published October 1, 2019



Macomb Intermediate School District School Safety/Student Assistance Consultant Nancy Buyle presented on youth suicide at the coalition’s Sept. 17 meeting. She said suicide is the second-leading cause of death for adolescents.
Photo by Alex Szwarc

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — September was Suicide Prevention Month, but that’s not stopping organizations from continuing to spread the word.

The 11th annual “Be Aware” 5K walk/run for youth suicide awareness and prevention is 10 a.m. Oct. 12 at the Dakota High School Ninth Grade Center, 21055 21 Mile Road in Macomb Township.

Check-in starts at 9 a.m. A \$25 registration fee includes a T-shirt. Participants can register at beaware5k.com. The event is open to anyone.

Proceeds raised support awareness and prevention programs offered locally through KnowResolve and the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families.

KnowResolve is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting mental health and preventing youth suicides through outreach, advocacy and education.

The event is described as one that unites the community in preventing youth suicide and spreads the message that there is help and hope.

"In 2008, I had a student approach me whose mother died by suicide," Stephanie Lange, Chippewa Valley Schools student assistance specialist, said when describing how the event got its start. "We started talking about the intense emotions of suicide and she wished there was somewhere she felt safe to go and honor her mother's life and talk openly about suicide."

The 5K begins at the school and heads north through the Cornerstone Village neighborhood, before heading across Cougar Drive.

Last year, over 400 people participated in the race, honoring lives affected by suicide, in support of mental health awareness.

Lange, also a coalition member, said the coalition wants to do all it can to help keep youth safe and healthy.

"It's part of our campaign throughout the district to promote mental health and talk about it," she added. "It's OK to not be OK."

As a lead-up to the 5K, Macomb Intermediate School District School Safety/Student Assistance Consultant Nancy Buyle presented on youth suicide at the coalition's Sept. 17 meeting.

"Too often, a youth will end up hospitalized for a weekend, a few days, absent from school maybe one or two, and the school has no idea they were even in the hospital," she said.

She said that, sometimes, students think that if they don't bring up suicide, someone might not think about it.

"When you say it out loud, any of us here would move mountains to try to get somebody help, if we knew where to go and what to do to get the help," she said.

During the presentation, Buyle provided updated statistics on suicide. She said suicide is the second-leading cause of death for adolescents.

"Up until about 2015, suicide was the leading cause of death for adolescents, behind accidents and homicides. Now, it's behind accidents," Buyle said.

In 2018, Michigan ranked 36th in states with the highest suicide rates. Statistics from the Macomb County Medical Examiner show that in 2015, eight students ages 15-19 died by suicide, seven in 2016, and four in 2017.

Citing the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, she indicated for every youth who dies by suicide, anywhere between 100 and 200 youth attempt suicide but don't die.