



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MAHONING VALLEY (YOUNGSTOWN) OUT OF THE DARKNESS WALK
BENEFITING SUICIDE PREVENTION**

250 Similar Walks Being Held Nationwide Through December 2012

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio — Hundreds of people from throughout the Mahoning Valley and surrounding area are expected to participate in the upcoming Out of the Darkness Community Walk scheduled for Oct. 13, 2012, at Mill Creek Park here. This third annual fundraising walk supports the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) by helping provide local and national suicide prevention and awareness programs.

The Mahoning Valley (Youngstown) Out of the Darkness Walk is one of nearly 250 Out of the Darkness Community Walks being held this fall nationwide through December. The walks are expected to unite more than 80,000 walkers nationally and raise nearly \$5 million for suicide prevention efforts.

“Suicide is a national health problem, but in addition, suicide is plagued by silence and stigma that continue to be barriers for seeking help,” said Amy Neral, one of the local walk organizers. “This walk will help bring suicide out of the darkness in the Youngstown area and raise money to fund research and prevention programs here in the Valley and nationwide.”

The Mahoning Valley community walk will begin at Mill Creek Park with registration at the Wick Recreation Area at 9 a.m. and opening ceremonies at 10 a.m. Walkers can register for the event through the AFSP’s website, <http://www.outofthedarkness.org>.

It is estimated that close to 1 million Americans make a suicide attempt, more than 34,000 die by suicide, and more than 20 million suffer from depression each year. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults

and the second leading cause of death for college students. Additionally, older Americans over the age of 65 account for 16 percent of all suicide deaths.

“Every 15 minutes someone dies by suicide in the U.S,” said Robert Gebbia, executive director for AFSP. “This fall, thousands are walking to raise money for prevention and awareness, and offer hope to the millions of Americans who have lost a loved one to suicide or who battle personally with depression, bipolar illness and other mental illnesses.”

Local sponsors for the Mahoning Valley Out of the Darkness Community Walk include Millcreek Metroparks, Massage Café, Mahoning Valley Tent, Help Hotline, D&E Counseling Center, Associates in Counseling and Child Guidance, Alpha Phi Omega Kent State University Chapter and Agápē Photographic.

Last year, approximately 250 people participated in the Mahoning Valley walk and the event raised more than \$16,000.

About the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is the leading national not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy as well as reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide. For more information please visit www.afsp.org.

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