



## Edition 56 - August 2014

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### COMING EVENTS

Sock it to Suicide  
 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October 2014

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## SOCK IT TO SUICIDE



*Wear bright coloured socks*

★ DURING THE 3RD WEEK OF OCTOBER ★

## Director’s Report

“Sock It To Suicide Week” held during the third full week in October (20 – 14 October) is one of the most important fund-raising activities conducted by White Wreath Association.

It is a vital to promoting White Wreath in the broader community and spreading the message of White Wreath’s continuing campaign to educate and spread awareness of suicide/mental illness within the community.

Revenue raised during “Sock It to Suicide Week” is the main source of finance for White Wreath’s primary ambition to raising \$20 million to establish Safehaven Centres to provide special treatment programs for those considering suicide.

Encouraging everyone to wear bright coloured socks/stockings to their workplace, school etc not only raises funds in support of White Wreath Association, but makes people aware of the abysmal state of the nation’s mental health services.

For extensive information on our Safehaven Centres go this link: [www.whitewreath.com/articles/safe-havens](http://www.whitewreath.com/articles/safe-havens)

To take part in “Sock It To Suicide

Week” organise a day to host an event – invite friends, family and colleagues to wear coloured socks or stockings.

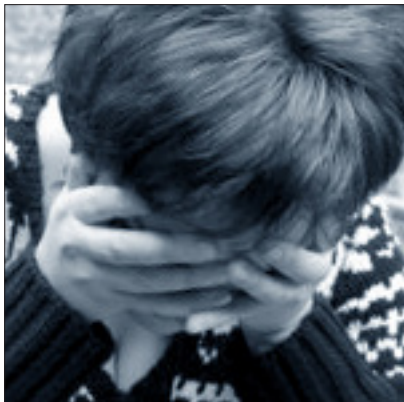
You can then raise funds by creating an Online Fundraising Page through our Partners Everyday Hero. This lets you email Facebook or Tweet regarding details of your activity and allows people who can’t come to still sponsor your important efforts. Click the same link to register a page.

You can also collect money on the day and either deposit funds here or deposit funds through your Everyday Hero Fundraising Page. Have fun and lets “Sock It To Suicide” .

Grow also holds a fund-raising activity – “Odd Sock Day” on one day in the first week of October. Grow has no connection with White Wreath Association.

Fanita Clark  
 CEO

# Peter Neame, Research Officer White Wreath Association Ltd



I have campaigned for more than 30 years about suicide for I was well aware that the closure of all 10,000 medium and long term mental health beds in New Zealand would lead to a sustained high rate of suicide. I have made the point more than a thousand times that suicide is the yardstick of the effectiveness of the mental health system.

Suicide runs in families and is related brain function and directly to murder and violence. Many of my generation the post war baby boomers foolishly mouthed phrases like 'suicide is the ultimate choice' 'suicide is personal choice'. The problem with that hideous line of thinking is that a suicidal person may go to a school or place of large population and kill as many people as they can before killing themselves. A suicidal person may drive a vehicle straight at another sometimes killing all the people in the other vehicle but not themselves.

All major religions outlawed suicide and suicide was once a crime for those very reasons... an attempt to drive people to seek treatment. Our views on suicide now are not "enlightened" and no suicide prevention "initiative" implemented since the closure of all medium and long term beds from 1972-1992 has ever worked.

I am author of three books on the subject of suicide murder and violence and remain Research Officer for White Wreath Action Against Suicide an Australian group set up by Fanita Clark who lost her own 19 year old son to suicide. She read my book 'Suicide and Mental Health in Australia and New Zealand' then rang me and asked if I would help her set up the group... she could not believe that someone would describe exactly what would happen if a person was discharged too rapidly from the mental health services.

Unlike Government policy White Wreath is direct and open about suicide and with the consent and permission of families of people who have committed suicide publish all the details. We have been invited to every major review of Suicide by the Australian Government since our group was formed in 1999.

\* \* \*

Law Commission President Sir Grant Hammond is recommending a relaxation of the most restrictive suicide reporting rules in the world. If, according to experts, reporting the method of suicide resulted in "copycat suicides" then everyone who suicides would blow themselves up because suicide bombers get international headline coverage, but the fact is the most common form of suicide has remained the same for more than ten thousand years.

All that has happened in N.Z. is that we have covered up the monumental mess that is called modern mental health.

# World News

## Calls for renewed funding as figures reveal suicide rate highest in 10 years



Australia - The Federal Government is being urged to renew funding for suicide prevention programs across Australia, with the latest figures revealing suicide rates are at a 10-year high.

Source: abc.net.au

The figures, released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last week, show there were 2,500 deaths by suicide in 2012.

The National Mental Health Commission is set to report on the effectiveness of current suicide prevention strategies in November, but \$25 million in funding for prevention programs will run out in June.

CEO of Sane Australia, Jack Heath, says the national goal should be to halve the suicide rate over the next 10 years, and is calling on the Federal Government to further its commitment to the programs.

“It is a significant amount of money ... and that’s why we’re asking the Government to just roll over for one more year while we formulate a strategy working with governments, with the Mental Health Commission, so we can have a better effort in terms of preventing suicide,” he said.

There are currently 49 programs across Australia funded under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-02/suicide-prevention-funding/5361102>

# World News

## Should mental health disorders be treated with medications?



Australia - I did not realize it but there is a population of people out there who do not believe mental disorders are illnesses. They don't believe in the "disease model" for mental health issues and believe people should not be treated with medications.

Source: [amygamble.wordpress.com](http://amygamble.wordpress.com)

When I heard this I wondered what makes a disorder worthy of an illness label? And why wouldn't there be something wrong with the brain if you had a psychotic episode?

Some people actually believe a psychotic episode is a "normal" response to certain life events. They also believe most people would do better without anti-psychotics than with them on board.

And then there is the evil empire pharmaceutical industry theory, which says pharma pays big bucks for drugs to be developed and approved so they can make profits, as if the sole purpose for all the scientific work is some preconceived conspiracy. Pharmaceutical companies did not create schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Sorry but I'm not buying this theory. They research compounds that make a difference and when they are successful they make lots of money. This is the American way. Without the profits there would probably be few life saving medications.

When I heard this view point I was a little shocked. It seems we have come so far with people understanding mental illness as an actual "illness" instead of just a state of mind and something you can control without any intervention. I suppose it really makes a difference as to what mental disorder you are talking about—but who gets to decide what is a serious mental illness that needs medication and what is a disorder that can be controlled with a behavioral modification program. Explain this to a person having a full-blown psychotic episode.

I am all for differing opinions and debates. It's healthy discourse and keeps everyone in a position to back up what they say. But I'm really confused about why psychiatry continues to have so much controversy in utilizing treatments. I agree that not everyone who is prescribed an anti-depressant or anti-psychotic needs one, but that's just how it is with every therapeutic class of drugs. There is always over-utilization and under-utilization of different medications.

I have suffered with bipolar disorder most of my adult life and have finally gotten to a point where the medication regimen seems to have stabilized me. I'd hate to go back off all my medication only to find myself very sick again. It's hard enough to fight depression while trying different medications let alone stopping all medication all together. And I can't afford to leave mania untreated because it almost always results in a psychotic episode. As far as I'm concerned psychosis is a dangerous state of mind and I don't want to experience that again.

Just because we can't see the broken "brain" on x-ray doesn't mean it's not broken. There are many diseases that we do not understand the cause. We can't always know conclusively how a medication really works. Sometimes you have to use common sense and be okay with the unknown. Sometimes you just have to take a leap of faith and trust that people studying mental illness treatments are doing so with ethics and integrity.

<http://amygamble.wordpress.com/>

# World News

## Flaws in SA youth mental service: coroner



Australia - An inquest into the suicide of a 15-year-old schoolboy has exposed “shortcomings” in South Australia’s mental health service for young people, a coroner has found.

Deputy State Coroner Anthony Schapel on Tuesday delivered his findings into the death of Jason William Hugo-Horsman at his Mount Barker home in October 2010.

Jason attended the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in Mount Barker where he saw a social worker from February 2010 to August that year.

The coroner said the social worker was Jason’s sole therapist “for an unduly extended period of time” and a psychiatrist should have been called in to help the teenager.

“The CAMHS structure has been shown to be bottom heavy in that it is unduly reliant on the efforts and skills of social workers,” he said.

“This case has demonstrated that the psychiatrist needs to be brought into and retain close oversight of the management of a patient at an earlier time, especially when risk of self-harm or suicide has been identified as it was here on two separate occasions.”

Mr Schapel also found that CAMHS showed a lack of awareness of the current understanding of the risks and benefits associated with prescribing anti-depressant medication to adolescents.

He said CAMHS should have told Jason’s parents that he had experienced low moods to the point of crying and cutting himself on Saturday evenings when they were absent.

His father told the inquest he had believed it was of benefit for Jason to have time to himself and he had not appreciated there was any risk of him being left alone on Saturday evenings.

“Jason’s death may have been prevented on 9 October 2010 had that particular scenario been avoided, Mr Schapel said.

“However, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty that Jason’s suicide may have been prevented altogether.”

The coroner made a number of recommendations including that it be mandatory for a client to be referred immediately to a CAMHS psychiatrist in the event of any suicidal ideation and/or self-harm. He also said new clients should be assessed in person, rather than through a telephone referral.

Photo: Deputy State Coroner Anthony Schapel  
Photo credits: abc.net.au

# Hope



We are one of the fortunate and the unfortunate. Unfortunate, because we lost a dearly loved son through suicide at the age of 28; fortunate because we found the White Wreath Assoc. where members have all suffered loss through suicide and therefore are the only ones who truly appreciate the devastation that suicide wreaks.

Having read all the articles and letters sent to the newsletter and having an affinity with each and every one in some part I will not add my particular experience. Instead I want to offer HOPE. Yes, HOPE. You will laugh again. When we first went to an organisation, there were all these survivors of suicide – laughing. I was angry – how dared they laugh when we are suffering so badly, don't they know. But of course they did know because they had all been through the despair we were suffering on that day.

I can't tell you when you will join the world again. It took me years – too many years and I am sure this withdrawing from the world took its toll on other members of my family as well. But, as you would know, I just couldn't help it. I was one of the lucky ones with a husband who tried his utmost during the period of my depression. The chances are we are also dealing with other issues prior to the suicide of our loved one, difficult family members, work worries, 'time of life', financial problems. It is like a volcano and the suicide sets all the other 'rubbish' off into a catalyst explosion. We are then faced with dealing with everything at once – no wonder it takes time to recover.

But as I said there is HOPE. Time will not necessarily take away your pain. After 12 years we just yearn to have our son back with us. Of course, this is not going to happen. What follows is 'Acceptance'. We have to accept that Mark is not coming back. We remember his laugh, he loved company, he was an extrovert, and he would talk to us about anything and everything he was doing. He was married to a lovely girl who embraced us as her family. You ask, Why, and the answer is we don't know. We just get a phone call at 4.00 am to tell us our son has died, hit by a train – the rest as they say is history.

We have joined the world again; we laugh again and have fun, go on holidays and outings, meet friends. Sometimes on outings we will say "Mark would like this" or "Do you remember when Mark did that". We don't exclude him; he was part of us for 28 years and will never be forgotten. That is often a fear. That our loved son/daughter will be forgotten – they won't be. Don't give up HOPE that one-day you will feel better than you do right now.

# A friend 4 me - my story

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Kelly's Journal continued.

I have a morning shift at work. I finish at 3pm. I phone David when I get home. It's going to be good to spend the night as a family for Good Friday dinner. David tells me he has made other plans. He and the kids are going to Joanne's for dinner. I say to him what about me. David does not care. He is having a family night with Joanne and our kids. I'm home alone for the night.

I have no one once again. I'm so upset. I have some sleeping pills the doctor has given me. I only have a small amount. I had never taken the drug before but I know it's not enough to kill me. I drive around to different shops. I buy 12 boxes of aspirin. I'm thinking the sleeping pills will put me to sleep while the aspirin kills me.

I phone David to let him know his behaviour has killed me. My sister Melissa phone's back and tells me if I don't return home she will call the TV station and get me put on TV as missing. I tell her I'm heading home and will be there in about an hour. I don't drive home instead I drive to Nelson Bay lookout. I turn my phone off and walk into the bush so I can't be found.

I take the sleeping pills first. They put me on a high. I'm now off my face. I turn my phone back on and start to talk to people. I'm swallowing the aspirin between phone calls. The next thing I do I will never forgive myself for. I phone Jo. I can't remember what I said. The sleeping pills have got me so high for a short while. My memory had died here for a while but a had spent the last 2 suicide attempts making sure she would be ok and this time I had thrown that back in her face. I never asked her what I'd said but I do remember her saying you do realize the police are tracking your phone call. I said to her well I had better go then and hung up.

I never forgave myself that night. If I had of died how would she of took it. I don't know what I had said. All I had wanted to do was protect her and this one night I fucked all that up.

It's now dark I get back on my phone and talk to David. I can hear someone coming. I tell David to shut up, be quite. I can see two men in light blue overalls walking over to me. Then I look down and see the German shepherd dog. The second I see that dog I know I'm gone. I look at the man and say "you have come to lock me up" and he says "do you need locking up" and I say "yes" he says "Why?" and I say "cause I'm killing myself tonight". He asks "How?" and I show him the empty aspirin boxes. I had swallowed half of them.

I can't walk out of that bush. The police have to assist me. I learn that day the police can really track you with your mobile phone, just like the movies. The first thing I do is phone Jo back and tell her that I'm okay.

To be continued.

# Correspondence



Hi,  
I have a 21-year old girl staying with me whose brother committed suicide in September. From what I understand she found his body.

Her relationship with her fiancé has just broken down. S has returned to... but has little in the way of social and emotional support. S does not get on with her mother, who has 5 younger children living at home and her father has leukemia so she is unwilling to cause him further stress.

I live in... What would be the closest White Wreath Association contact? Could you supply me with any other organisations which might be of assistance? S has a history of self harming and suicide attempts so I am concerned about her physical and emotional well being.

Any support would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks

.....

Hi I'm D and I am 18. I suffered from Major depression all my life, attempted suicide twice. I am getting better slowly, but still waiting to see a psychologist for a while. Just asking if you could help in anyway? Thanks

# Coming events

## Sock it to Suicide

21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October

### Contact

E: [white.wreath@bigpond.com](mailto:white.wreath@bigpond.com)

Ph: 1300 766 177

M: 0410 526 562

Download and print this flyer at

[http://www.whitewreath.com/SOCK\\_IT\\_TO\\_SUICIDE2.pdf](http://www.whitewreath.com/SOCK_IT_TO_SUICIDE2.pdf)



# You can help

You can do your part to help White Wreath Association.



## YOU CAN BE A VOLUNTEER

We need volunteers from any part of Australia.

## YOU CAN GIVE IN KIND

- Petrol Gift Cards
- Stamps

## OR DONATE BY SELECTING ANY OF THESE OPTIONS

1. Via credit card then follow the instructions.
2. Directly/Direct Transfer into any Westpac Bank  
Account Name:  
White Wreath Association Ltd  
BSB No 034-109 Account No 210509
3. Cheque/Money Order to:  
White Wreath Association Ltd  
PO Box 1078 Browns Plains QLD 4118

*Donations are tax deductible.*

## Humour



### Why did I get divorced?

Well, last week was my birthday. My wife didn't wish me a happy birthday. My parents forgot and so did my kids. I went to work and even my

colleagues didn't wish me a happy birthday.

As I entered my office, my secretary said, "Happy birthday, boss!" I felt so special. She asked me out for lunch. After lunch, she invited me to her apartment. We went there and she said, "Do you mind if I go into the bedroom for a minute?" "Okay," I said. She came out 5 minutes later with a birthday cake, my wife, my parents, my kids, my friends, & my colleagues all yelling, "SURPRISE!!!" while I was waiting on the sofa... naked.