

Concert promotes suicide prevention and awareness

BY ALLISON TYRA
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Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for Americans ages 15 to 24, largely because most people don't want to talk about it, said Kyle Ferguson, president and founding member of the Alive Campaign, a grassroots organization created to raise awareness about and prevent suicides.

As part of a documentary, Ferguson and other representatives will film a special concert dedicated to that mission at BuffaLouie's tonight.

The concert is in honor of the memory of BuffaLouie's co-owner Ed Schwartzman's son, Ben, who ended his life Oct. 15, 2007,

at 19. Before his death, Ben created a CD of his own music. Schwartzman's experience and his son's music will be featured in the documentary, said Andi Nakasone, Internal Vice President, director and Alive Campaign founding member.

"His story and his son's music will be a foundation for our film," Nakasone said, adding that the purpose of the film is to create an emotional connection between the viewer and the issue, to make it more real for the audience. "This is a problem that millions of people suffer through."

Featured artists will include guitarist Dave Campbell, jazz group the Francisco Dean Quintet and acoustic rock band Moments

of Clarity. Junior Ryan McFarland, lead singer of Moments of Clarity, said he and his bandmates have known Schwartzman since childhood and were good friends with his son.

"We both were grieving and it brought us closer together," McFarland said of Ben's death. "It's so far beyond people's comprehension ... they don't think about it as a possibility."

Ferguson and Nakasone said that when someone tries to talk about suicidal feelings with a friend, the most common reaction is that the friend will change the subject.

The campaign began as the Facebook group "Four guys, one destination, one mission: Suicide

Prevention." Nakasone, Ferguson, Nathan Lloyd, financial director of the Alive Campaign, and Justin Brown, external vice president of the Alive Campaign, were all students at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and discovered a friend was contemplating suicide. To show him the impossible was possible, they issued a challenge: If 250,000 people joined their group, they would bike from Waco to Anchorage, Alaska. They wanted to prove that humans had no limits, to give him something to live for, according to the Facebook group.

"In less than two weeks, 250,000 people had joined the group," Ferguson said. "People who didn't even know each oth-

ALIVE CAMPAIGN: FOUR GUYS, ONE GIRL ONE MISSION: SUICIDE PREVENTION

WHEN 7 p.m. tonight
WHERE BuffaLouie's at the Gables
114 S. Indiana Ave

er were helping each other. People told us what they needed was just to get the word out there."

Joined by fellow students Alyson Erikson, administrative director of the Alive Campaign, and Brown, the riders left Waco on May 15, 2008. A long 74 days and 4,500 miles later, they arrived in Anchorage on July 27, documenting with video and blogs along the way.

"We want to tell the stories of people who are lost to suicide, and, in conjunction with that, using our trip to show what you can do to prevent suicide," Nakasone said of the documentary, which is expected to come out by early 2010.

More detailed information can be found on the campaign's MySpace and Facebook pages or the official Web site, www.alivecampaign.org.

Schwartzman said he believes it is so prevalent that it's almost impossible not to be affected by suicide.

"If you can save a life, you can save the world," he said, quoting the Jewish holy book, the Talmud.

LIKE TRAINS & TAXIS



PHOTOS BY ALEX FARRIS | IDS

Like Trains & Taxis sped through Bloomington's Cinemat on Tuesday evening, offering up a blend of music they describe as "one part soul, one part pop, one part jazz and a dash of rock 'n' roll tossed in for good measure."

The New Jersey-based keyboard trio played alongside local Bloomington band Jip Jop as part of a tour celebrating the release of its new EP.

Like Trains & Taxis has been playing shows since they left New Jersey. Somewhere along the line, they found the Cinemat.

In Wilmington, N.C., they played at a combination laundromat and venue called the Soapbox Laundro-Lounge.

In Richmond, Va., they played at a clothing boutique which also functioned as a venue.

On their way through Syracuse, N.Y., they performed at a waffle and tea shop which also had a stage.

To read a full account of the Trains & Taxis concert, log onto www.idsnews.com.



TOP: The Cinemat stage stands ready for the band Like Trains and Taxis, a three-man keyboard-centered group from New Brunswick, N.J. **TOP RIGHT:** Keyboardist Chris Harris tests equipment before his band, Like Trains and Taxis, plays Tuesday evening at the Cinemat. The band pulled its band name from a Belgian travel guide. **ABOVE:** Bass guitarist Owen Susman plays a set with the group Tuesday evening at the Cinemat. Like Trains and Taxis is on tour to promote its debut self-titled EP. **BOTTOM:** Like Trains and Taxis plays a set. The band centers around the keyboard, with Harris at the keys, Susman on bass and Mike Del Priore on drums.

Free art-focused seminars offered to creative community

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The first in a series of "webinars" administered by Americans for the Arts will be held at 2 p.m. today in City Hall. The webinars, part of Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District's initiative to offer entrepreneurial and educational opportunities to the creative community, are free and open to the public.

"This is part of what BEAD is about, to strengthen the arts and cultural community," said Miah Michaelson, the city's assistant economic development director for the arts. "We heard, 'We need additional learning opportunities,'" she said, adding that this is a good opportunity to provide this service.

Webinars are "90-minute on-line seminars on a current topic, issue or trend," according to the

Americans for the Arts Web site. "This new media platform enables a high level of interaction with the presenter, other attendees and the content."

The seminars feature field experts who showcase the best practices and illustrate innovative models.

Susan Sandberg, program coordinator for arts administration at the School of Public Environmental Affairs and member of the city council, attended a webinar on the arts.

"The information was great, and I'm always happy to chat with anyone who's facing the same dilemmas we all are," Sandberg said. "It's a good substitute for anyone interested in learning more about what other arts professionals and arts administrators around the country are doing."

The webinars offered this year touch on a variety of topics, including "Arts & Civic Engage-

ment: Policies and Actions for Strengthening the 21st Century Community," "Organizational Planning for Local Arts Agencies," "Arts Marketing through Web," "Basics of Budgeting in Local Arts Organizations" and "Fundraising for Local Arts Agencies."

"This is another great resource for anyone interested in the arts," Sandberg said.

The webinars are applicable to a variety of people, Michaelson said. Because they are held locally and don't require travel, the "bite-sized information" sessions are easy to work into a busy schedule.

For more information on the webinars, go to www.bloomington.in.gov/bead

"We'll have people on the panel from all over the country," Michaelson said. "It's an opportunity for us to provide access to cutting-edge education."

BAAC celebrates 35 years

BY BAILEY LOOSEMORE
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In celebration of the Bloomington Area Arts Council's 35th birthday, the council has planned 35 "unbirthday" parties between January and September, said Steve Pierson, office manager for the council.

The next party, "A Leprechaun's Birthday," will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the John Waldron Art Center.

The idea for the unbirthday parties came from the animated movie "Alice in Wonderland," said Rob Hanrahan, development director for the Arts Council.

The first unbirthday party in January involved the release of 3,500 balloons down the art center's main staircase, Hanrahan said. The balloons rushed down the staircase to the bottom where people could play in them.

Besides parties open to the

general public once a month, special luncheons are also considered unbirthday celebrations, Hanrahan said.

With St. Patrick's Day approaching, "A Leprechaun's Birthday" was the perfect choice, Hanrahan said.

"Who would ever think a leprechaun had a birthday?" he said.

After working for Disney, Hanrahan said he always looks for the unexpected. Instead of predictably choosing to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, Hanrahan said he wanted to put on a celebration that would catch the community's attention.

A fire truck and a bagpipe musician will greet guests at the entrance of the celebration, Hanrahan said.

Inside the art center, refreshments and music will be provided, Pierson said, as well as an appearance by the guest of honor.

Whoever catches a leprechaun will receive a pot of gold,

Hanrahan said, but attendees of the event are asked not to capture the leprechaun.

"Because it's the leprechaun's birthday, we promised no one would chase him," Hanrahan said.

Every unbirthday party has a cake, Pierson said, and the leprechaun's cake will be shaped like a pot of gold. At the official birthday party in September, the goal is to have a 35-tiered cake, Hanrahan said.

"I believe 39 feet, four inches is the Guinness World Record," he said. "We're shooting to go over that."

The unbirthday parties are a way to unite people and celebrate all the Arts Council has done for the community, Hanrahan said. He also said he thinks the celebrations will grow with each party. More than 50 guests have already confirmed their attendance to the leprechaun's birthday, he said. The art center does not require party-goers to register or R.S.V.P. to attend.