


Today's weather

HIGH: 86
LOW: 65
Sunrise: 6:55
Sunset: 7:58

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Raising overdose awareness



MADISYN WOODRING / GAZETTE

Executive Director of Hope Recovery Community Stefanie Robinson leads a candlelight vigil Wednesday in Brunswick.

Medina County take part in international event for fifth year

Madisyn Woodring
 The Gazette

BRUNSWICK — Members of the public gathered in the Brunswick Church of the Nazarene to hear guest speakers talk about their loved ones who died after overdosing and take part in a candlelight vigil to remember them on Wednesday.

This is the fifth year that this event has been held. Organizations such as the Medina County Health Department, the Medina County ADAMH Board and more participated in the event and provided educational material to residents after the service. State Reps. Darrell Kick and Sharon Ray and Medina County Commissioner Steve Hambley were also in attendance.

"We are lucky in Medina County to have so many dedicated and determined beacons of hope, working to help lead others to recovery," Ray said.

"I'm glad we're here today because there's too many lives being cut short. Too many people. Too young. They're missing out on too much."

Hope Recovery Community's Executive Director Stefanie Robinson

The walls of the church were covered with 295 photos of people who died after an overdose to represent the number of people who die per day from overdosing. Hope Recovery Community's Executive Director Stefanie Robinson said it is overwhelming to be surrounded by the photos. "I'm glad we're here today because there's too many lives being cut short," she said. "Too many people. Too young. They're missing out on too much."

Bob and Jeannie Brandt spoke about the

death of their grandson, Robby Brandt, in October 2011. Bob Brandt said during a car ride to work, they talked about Robby Brandt's future and said they loved each other. Robby Brandt never came home again.

Bob Brandt said he wonders what his life would have been like if he were still here. Robby would be 31 years old this year.

"The dagger does come out over time," he said. "The scar doesn't go away."

See AWARENESS, A4

AWARENESS

From A1

Robby Brandt's family was inspired to start Robby's Voice, an organization that helps people struggling with addiction, in memory of him after they learned more about addiction. Robinson said Robby's Voice helped get the conversation around addiction started in Medina County.

"When we do Robby's Voice at schools, he's there," Bob Brandt said. "When we do our family support on Monday night, he's got a front-row seat."

High school senior Dylan Hoff later talked about his father, David Griffiths. Hoff said he was a kind and caring person who would help anyone in any way he could. He loved the Cavs, the Steelers and country music.

Griffiths died at age 32 from an accidental overdose in February 2011 when his son was 7 years old. Hoff noted there are a lot of life events that his dad will miss out on.

"This year, I'm graduating. I'm a senior," he said. "My dad's not going to be in those stands this

year. When I walk across that stage, he's not going to be there."

Hoff said his dream is that one day, no one will know what it feels like to lose someone from addiction.

"We all have one common enemy, and that is addiction," he said. "Everyone here, we all live different lives, but that is the one thing that took all of them from us. That is the one thing we have to beat because we can't let it keep taking from us."

Medina County ADAMH Board Director Phillip Titterington said there is not just one path to recovery, and that there are resources for people seeking help in Medina County, such as medication-assisted treatment, a 24-hour call line for people to talk to someone who understands, and more.

"How do you treat an addiction?" he said. "You provide opportunity, resources, support, treat them as a human being, treat them with dignity (and) treat them with respect."

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