

Today's weather
HIGH: 85
LOW: 67
Sunrise: 6:55
Sunset: 7:59

THE GAZETTE

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SATURDAY, September 2, 2023

\$2.50

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Sixth year observed in county

Madisyn Woodring
The Gazette

BRUNSWICK — The walls of the Brunswick Church of the Nazarene were covered with hundreds of photos of people who died after an overdose as a way to honor them on International Overdose Awareness Day on Thursday.

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Throughout the night, guest speak-

ers spoke about how the disease of addiction impacted their lives.

Athena Fleming told the group about her daughter, Alycia Fleming, who died in June 2021 after an over-

dose. She described her daughter as a loving and compassionate person who cared for everyone.

"She was a friend to many and helped in whatever way she could,

if only to make them smile and feel loved in the time she was with them," she said. "Many times I said, 'Please honey, focus on yourself. Concentrate on what you need to do to stay strong, and then help others.' Her response would be, 'Mom, some people have nothing and no one, and I will always be there for them.'"

See OVERDOSE, A4



MADISYN WOODRING / GAZETTE

International Overdose Awareness Day was observed in Medina County with a candlelight vigil at the Brunswick Church of the Nazarene on Thursday.

OVERDOSE

From A1

As a way to continue her legacy of support and love, the Alycia Fleming Memorial Fund was started, Athena Fleming said. The fund provides items like phones, clothing, groceries and gas cards to people who are in need. So far, about 50 people have received assistance.

"She also never gave up on trying to recover," she said. "She spent many years in treatment centers and recovery homes. I will always be proud of her for

trying over and over again until her last day."

Doug McCulley said three years ago he was given pain medication in the hospital and soon after he was battling an addiction to heroin. After he overdosed in July 2022, he engaged with local resources like Hope Recovery Community to start going on his path to recovery. For the past year, he has been sober.

"Sobriety for me is what makes me want to live another day," he said. "The level of pain that I have to deal with on a daily basis, I used to numb. I don't even

know how being sober takes away that pain."

To close the event, the group lit candles to remember those who have died after overdosing. Hope Recovery Community Center Coordinator Remi Conrad said the event is difficult but necessary.

"Today, we gather to honor the ones lost from this terrible disease of addiction," she said. "We honor those who lost their battles as we continue to fight the war."

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