



The Digest

Packed House Gathers for Kevin Hines

Worldwide speaker comes to Dixon to tell his story

In the moment after he jumped from the Golden Gate Bridge his first thought was regret. **Kevin Hines** attempted to take his own life September 25, 2000. He miraculously survived that jump and today travels the world sharing his story of hope, healing, and recovery.

Hines came to the Dixon area on September 17, 2019, to tell his story to a packed Mathis Theatre at Sauk Valley Community College. He was hosted by Sinnissippi Centers with funding from an Illinois State Targeted Response Grant.

“We were very pleased to be able to bring Kevin Hines to our area,” says **Stacie Kemp**, Sinnissippi Centers’ Vice President/Chief Clinical Officer. “The message that Hines brings is a powerful one of hope and recovery. Since his jump and survival, he has devoted his life to spreading his message in order to provide the same hope to others,” adds Kemp.

Hines says he went to the bridge that day to take his life, but he was hoping someone, anyone, would have said, “something kind to me to keep me here.” He desperately wanted to hear someone say, “Is something wrong? Can I help you?” But Hines said no one did. So when Hines got to the Golden Gate Bridge, he took that 245 foot leap down to the cold bay waters, a jump only a handful of people have ever survived.

Between 1937 and 2012 approximately 1,400 individuals have died by suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge. It’s estimated that 35 have survived the jump. Hines is one of those few who did. Nationwide suicide ranks as the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. for all ages. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, in 2017, 47,173 Americans died by suicide, but there were an estimated 1.4 million suicide attempts.

Untreated depression, anxiety, or other mental health disorders, and substance use disorders are major risk factors for suicide. Even when under appropriate treatment an individual can still experience suicidal ideation; thinking about or planning suicide. Those thoughts can range from a detailed plan to a fleeting consideration.

Hines talked about his ongoing struggles. He is still in physical and emotional pain every day. He also still has to deal with the symptoms of his mental illness. He still has suicidal thoughts, but he says that getting to speak to audiences and help others is what gives him purpose and keeps him going.

Hines says, “My thoughts do not have



Hines Speaks - continued on page 2

Latest News

- The community turned out to see speaker Kevin Hines p. 1-2.
- A story of recovery that inspires p. 1-2.
- Youth Garden 2019 challenges p. 3.
- Kemp is named President of CBHA of Illinois. p. 3.

In The Community

- Sinnissippi’s Rochelle office participated in the city’s 4th annual Hay Day in October. See the page 2 side panel for a photo of their hay bale.
- Sinnissippi Centers’ staff participated in several events during the summer and fall including the Petunia Festival Parade and the parade at Oregon’s Autumn on Parade event.

A Whole New Perspective - Recovery

The following was written by a Sinnissippi Center’s client

Life is amazing today for many different reasons. Today I’m using my past to shape my future. My past is full of unhealthy choices I’ve made and consequences that affect me today in my everyday decisions. A life that was full of opportunity as a kid was quickly changed into a life of fear, pain, regret, criminal behavior, broken relationships, and time spent that I’ll never be able to get back. For over two decades I continued to live a lifestyle that was brought on by no other reason except for I liked getting high and was going to continue to do so despite the consequences. I ruined every good thing in my life, every opportunity, every relationship, and spent over 8 years in jails and prisons in the last 22 years. Today I have 16 months clean from all drugs and alcohol. Thanks to a society that has evolved to include more opportunities for help for addicts and alcoholics I’ve got a whole new perspective on life today and have a sense



New Perspective - continued on page 2

What's New?

Making Hay

Sinnissippi Centers' Rochelle office staff participated in Rochelle's 4th annual Hay Day in October. Over 50 bales were decorated by area businesses and organizations as part of Rochelle's fall festival.

Pictured here is Sinnissippi's entry, a play on words and design of a delicious warm latte beverage.



The Rochelle office's hay bale had a slight caffeine theme

Recovery Celebration

Sinnissippi Centers held our annual Recovery Celebration in September. Rainy weather, a common occurrence this past summer, forced the festivities indoors, but that didn't dampen the crowd. We had a little over 100 come to enjoy a picnic meal and several speakers.



Sinnissippi Centers' board member Kay Fisher speaking at the Recovery Celebration

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sinnissippi Centers' **Cris Mugrage** and **Katie Hazek** for their recent promotions.

Cris Mugrage previously served as an Associate Director of Adult Mental Health and is now Director of Quality Assurance and Corporate Compliance. Katie Hazek previously served as a Behavioral Health Manager and is now Associate Director of Adult Services.

Hines Speaks

continued from page 1

to become my actions. We never have to die by our own hands. I live with chronic thoughts of ending my life, but I'll never die that way. Every time I am suicidal today, which happens often enough, I will turn to the people in front of me and I will say four simple words, 'I need help now!' If I asked you that, what would you do? You would help."

Anyone CAN

help. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of someone at risk for suicide is one way. Some of those signs include someone talking about feeling hopeless or helpless, having no reason to live, being a burden to others, having unbearable pain, or feeling trapped. You may notice a change in their behavior like withdrawal from activities or isolation from family and friends, giving away prized possessions, changes in sleep patterns, or increased substance use. Another way is to take a training for the public like Mental Health First Aid. Still another way is to become as informed as you can about suicide.

Hines says one of things that we need to work on as a society is seeing someone in such emotional pain and instead of offering help, we fear them. "If we are nothing else on this planet we are supposed to be one thing together, we are supposed to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers. No matter what we look like, who we love, where we come from, our ethnic makeup, our religious or political beliefs, we are one race, the human race," says Hines.

"Part of Hines' message is that small things can make a difference for someone

struggling with thoughts of suicide," says Kemp. "The time he spent with each individual person who, in turn, wanted to share his or her own story, was admirable and touching. As part of our trauma informed care efforts at Sinnissippi,

we are currently discussing ways that we can use some of the first-hand knowledge we gained from Hines to continue to make a difference in the lives of individuals that we serve on a daily basis."

"As Hines said, all it would have taken was one person to demonstrate concern about what he was going through," says **Patrick Phelan**, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO. "Sinnissippi offers Mental Health First Aid classes to teach people from all walks of life to identify this type of distress in others and intervene to prevent tragedies. No one should be afraid to ask their loved one tough questions about what they are feeling," says Phelan. "Asking if someone is thinking about harming themselves doesn't give them that idea, it brings out the truth and allows us to get them help. Ask those tough questions, and if the answer is 'yes' help them to call Sinnissippi or another provider to arrange an appointment or emergency evaluation if needed," adds Phelan. "Even if they don't thank you at that moment, in the long term they will be grateful that you helped to save their life."

If you would like more information on suicide prevention, visit Sinnissippi Centers' links page on our website at www.sinnissippi.org. Sinnissippi Centers also maintains a 24-hour crisis hotline at 800-242-7642.



New Perspective

continued from page 1

of accomplishment. I've achieved so much in such a short amount of time because of the help from many different parts of the recovery community. I have learned so much and have changed so much - thanks to different programs, meetings, and groups. It's unbelievable how much my mind has expanded and how I have changed my thoughts and actions today. I'm happy today with myself and my life and without the use of drugs. I never thought that would be possible and today I can truly say that it is possible and I'm truly grateful for the opportunities I've been given to better myself and be an example of what the recovery community can do for somebody that truly wants and needs it.

A Challenging Year for the Garden

For over 10 years the Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden has been a summer tradition providing youth an opportunity to learn many skills as they plan and grow a garden. Youth acquire job readiness skills like getting a work permit, opening a checking account, and managing a paycheck. All the tie-dye t-shirts sold at the Gardenstock Art & Music Festival, a local event, were created by garden youth.

The summer of 2019 provided staff and youth several challenges to surmount: Rain, mud, bugs, snakes, heat and vigorous weeds. There were fewer youth referred by community programs, and some youth decided they didn't enjoy working outdoors after a couple weeks.

Although planting was delayed until mid-June there was still a bountiful



crop of carrots, tomatoes, zucchini, herbs, and especially peppers. The pumpkin patch located in the middle of the garden did not fare as well, and only one pumpkin was harvested.

Youth who stayed involved all summer with the garden had a great time, made friends, and experienced a true sense of accomplishment.

They toiled in the mud, fought the weeds, tie-dyed over 200 t-shirts, and shared produce with local food pantries.

An activity they especially enjoyed was preparing different recipes from the bounty of the garden and sharing meals together.

As the photos here show, despite the many challenges, it was still a very successful year for the garden.



the many challenges, it was still a very successful year for the garden.

Sinnissippi's Kemp is President

The Community Behavioral Healthcare Association (CBHA) of Illinois announced **Stacie Kemp** as their new Board President at their December annual conference. Kemp is Sinnissippi Centers' Vice President/Chief Clinical Officer and will serve the statewide organization as Board President for a one year term.

Kemp joined Sinnissippi Centers, actually for the second time, in the June 2015, as Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer. Prior to that she had worked in human services in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for a number of years following her work as a clinician in Sinnissippi's Mt. Carroll office.

Kemp has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Knox College and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis.



Kemp with her gavel at the CBHA Annual Meeting

More News

Former Sinnissippi Foundation Board Members Recognized

Former Sinnissippi Foundation Board members were recently recognized for their service at a luncheon. Members are pictured with President/CEO **Patrick Phelan** in the photos down the right side of the column. From top to bottom: **Jon Berens, Frank Nelsen, Ann Prindaville, Terry Loring, Carol Nieman** and **Peter Shaw**.



The Holiday Appeal

The Sinnissippi Foundation conducted its annual Holiday Appeal during November and December. The campaign benefits all programs of the Sinnissippi Foundation. It's not too late to participate. If you didn't receive a letter or email solicitation and would like to support the Foundation through this campaign you can mail your donation to The Sinnissippi Foundation, 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021, or you can donate online at www.sinnissippi.org/foundation-donate.

Recent Donations on back page

The Digest Newsletter Winter 2020

Editor: Andrew Jackson
 Writers: Andrew Jackson, Gloria Martin
 Contributors: Phyllis Berge, Stacie Kemp, Gloria Martin, Patrick Phelan, DeAnne White



Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

Administrative office
325 Illinois Route 2
Dixon, IL 61021

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 57
Rock Island, IL

24-hour Emergency Phone Number

800-242-7642

www.sinnissippi.org

Office Locations

- Dixon
 - Illinois Route 2
 - Town Square Centre
- Mt. Carroll
- Oregon
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Apartment Sites

- Dixon
- Mt. Carroll
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Recovery Home

- Dixon



United Way of Lee County
Community Partner

Sinnissippi Centers is funded, in part, by the Illinois Department of Human Services and is a United Way of Lee County Partner.

Sinnissippi Centers is accredited by The Joint Commission and recipient of the Gold Seal of Approval.



The Digest is a publication of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc., and the Sinnissippi Foundation



Donations

Donations can be mailed to The Sinnissippi Foundation, 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021.

You can also donate online, visit:
www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation

You can specify if you would like to give your donation in honor or in memory of a family member or loved one.

Dean & Tracy Ahlers
Anonymous (multiple)
Kim & Mark Becker
Greg Beitel
Jeff & Phyllis Berge
John Berge
David Bingaman
Molly Bishop
William & Connie Bontz
BorgWarner Emissions Systems
Boss Carpet One Floor & Home
Roy & Jill Bridgeman
Dean & Darlene Butterbaugh
David Cain
Chapter CC PEO Sisterhood
John & Beth Chase
Larry & Connie Clayton

Clinical Education Partners
Alan Cooper
Terrence & Dolores Derdzinski
Carol Deibert
Distinctive Gardens
Lee & Kay Fisher
Edythe Geiger
Gary & Christyne Gehlbach
Edythe Geiger
Linda Giesen & Henry Dixon
Teresa Good
Green River Riders Association
James & Sharon Grot
Randy & Donna Hayes
Hutchison Family Charitable Fund
Stacie & Joshua Kemp
Charlene Knudten
Randy & Sandi Law
Ann & Doug Lee
Susan Linder
Dr. William & Annette Long
Donald Lovett
Judith Magdich
Kevin Marx
Joanne Mayes
Dirk & Jennifer Meminger
Mt. Carroll United Methodist Women
Moeller, Myers & Associates
Ellen & Carl Mumford
Audrey Nesbitt

Olson Insurance & Financial Services
Terry & Karen O'Malley
Bill & Renie Palen
Richard & Karen Palmer
John & Nona Parks
Leo & Linda Patterson
Joyce & Randall Peterson
Georgia & Donald Petty Family Fund
Jim & Cathy Phelan
Patrick & Tricia Phelan
Larry & Ann Prindaville
William Reigle
Rachel Richmond
Rochelle Veterinary Hospital
Jim & Inger Sarver
Edward Saunders
Mark Scholl
Sue Schroeder
Tom & Tammy Shaw
Lloyd & Jane Sidwell
Michelle & Bob Spinden
Elizabeth Sullivan
Steve & Stephanie Terranova
The Law Offices of Robert J. Thompson
Wahl Clipper Corporation
Kristin Wermers
Bud Wiener
William and Beverly Burkardt Family Foundation NFP

In Honor of
...Jeff Lovett & Joan Tripp
Samantha Lovett

In Memory of
....Ronnelle Allen
Carolyn Fitzgerald Sweeney

...Larry Dunphy
Jim & Inger Sarver

..Glen Hacker
Jeff & Phyllis Berge
Jim & Inger Sarver
DeAnne & Jeff White

...Robert Kinn
Leon & Dolly Kinn

...Robert Kustom
Dolores Kustom

...Marilyn Parks
Harold & Mary Scuffham

...Paul Potts
Elizabeth Potts

...Tim Stewart
Tammy Stewart

To sign up for the electronic version of The Digest visit sinnissippi.org/newsletter