

Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce 9th Annual Colors of the Kingdom Festival Saturday, September 15, 2018

MENTALLY HEALTHY COLLABORATIVE ACTION NETWORK REPORT



From L to R: Ruth Marquette and Terri Lavelly from NKHS and Julia John from NCHC)

With a donation of \$500 from each organization, NKHS and NCHC were two of four top-billed event sponsors for the Colors of the Kingdom event in St. Johnsbury where we had a booth to highlight the work of the Mentally Healthy Collaborative Action Network of NEK Prosper!, specifically suicide prevention efforts.

The Chamber sent us a thank you letter Sept. 18th stating they calculated more than 5,000 guests attended the event. Our logos as sponsors were included in the Caledonian Record coverage and the festival brochure. Our sponsorships helped the Chamber to provide discounted and free events, including the train rides, so families could afford to attend.

The Mentally Healthy CAN booth tracked **160 unique visitors** who stopped to engage in conversations, while over **250 guests total** made contact.

Objectives and outcomes

- The MH CAN was hoping to **collect information** via survey to **help develop and refine target strategies around resilience** in our communities. **35 surveys were completed** with the winner drawn at the MH CAN meeting on 9/24. Betsy is collating the survey data for analysis by the group.
- Though no one signed up to **join the Mentally Health Collaborative Action Network** at the festival, **three new members** did join the following week.
- The group's main objective was to **promote suicide awareness and prevention**, and to that end we did give away 5 teen suicide prevention booklets, 3 Umatter Wallet cards, 2 ACEs brochures, 3 Community Resource Coordinator brochures, 1 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Lifesaver Manual, 50 AFSP Out of Darkness bracelets, and 250 NKHS-branded stress balls.

Anecdotally, it seems like people **were excited to see us there and happy to come chat** and receive support and a friendly, listening ear. One story Terri shared was about two visitors, talking separately to Terri and Betsy about how suicide affected them, and then when hearing what the other was talking about, **started to share their stories** with each other. These individuals had not met each other before, yet they had stories in common. Terri said many visitors' stories were very emotional, empowering, and helpful to share them.

Lessons learned: Put your brand on "things" to give away -visitors wanted stuff (stress balls and bracelets) instead of brochures.

We feel we met our objectives and then some and look forward to digging in on the responses to the surveys!

