

Published on Monday, Apr 06, 2009

Bridge project will save lives

We, as co-facilitators of the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition, want to express our appreciation to Mayor Donald Plusquellic and Deputy Mayor David Lieberth for securing the dollars that will make fencing of the All-America Bridge a reality. They have patiently, but with determination, worked toward this plan as a way of making the city a safer place for its residents.

Finally, the funding has been secured. People who are feeling suicidal, mental-health workers in the area, families of depressed individuals, safety forces who are called to the bridge and those who live and work near the bridge will all benefit from the fence. Studies in other areas where bridges are factors in people's deaths show that when the bridge is no longer an option, most people do not go on to choose other means of death.

Of course, it is the coalition's hope that anyone who knows someone who is feeling suicidal will reach out for help. In Akron, they can find that help by calling Portage Path's SUPPORT Hotline at 330-434-9144. Or, from anywhere in the country, people can call Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255), and their call will be routed to a local hotline.

Of course, if someone is actively suicidal, 911 is a resource as in any other emergency. For anyone who would like more information about suicide prevention, contact the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition at preventsuidcide@admboard.org.

The mayor's office has taken a major step in suicide prevention but all of us as citizens of the area need to learn how to recognize when someone might be suicidal and be able to direct them toward getting help.

Barbara Medlock, RN
Manager, the SUPPORT Hotline

Andrea Denton
Client rights coordinator
Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health
Services Board
Akron