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Plattsmouth woman saves lives by spreading suicide prevention information

Brent Hardlin
Journal assistant editor

PLATTSMOUTH — Joyce Hicks has experienced the pain of losing close family members due to suicide.

Her work with helping others avoid that same type of anguish has earned her praise and respect across the metro area.

The Plattsmouth resident was honored for her suicide prevention work Tuesday afternoon with the Gregg Young "We Go the Extra Mile for You" award. The auto dealer presented Hicks with a plaque and \$500 in recognition of a life mission that

has helped save numerous lives in eastern Nebraska.

Hicks will use the \$500 to buy additional suicide prevention message videos and spread her outreach throughout Cass, Sarpy and Douglas counties. She said she is determined to tell as many people as possible about the effects of suicide and the value of suicide prevention information.

"Having more social awareness about suicide is really important," Hicks said. "You say the word 'suicide' and people get scared and don't want to listen. My goal is to help people listen and understand that suicide is the

result of a lack of treatment. Mental illnesses can be treated. It may be through meditation or therapy or medication, but they can be treated. Suicide can be prevented. It's really important for people to know that."

Hicks, who works at Pacific Life Insurance Company in Omaha, knows firsthand how painful suicide is for family and friends of loved ones who take their lives. Her brother, Doug, committed suicide in 2002 and another brother, Justin, committed suicide in February 2007.

"I know how my heart broke when they committed suicide," Hicks said.

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ted suicide," Hicks said. "I don't want others to have to feel the same type of pain that I did."

Hicks is the board chair of the Nebraska chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and works on many suicide prevention projects each year. She said she has become even more motivated to increase her work because of several local suicides involving teenagers. Plattsmouth High School has suffered the loss of four students due to suicide over the past two years.

Hicks contacted PHS

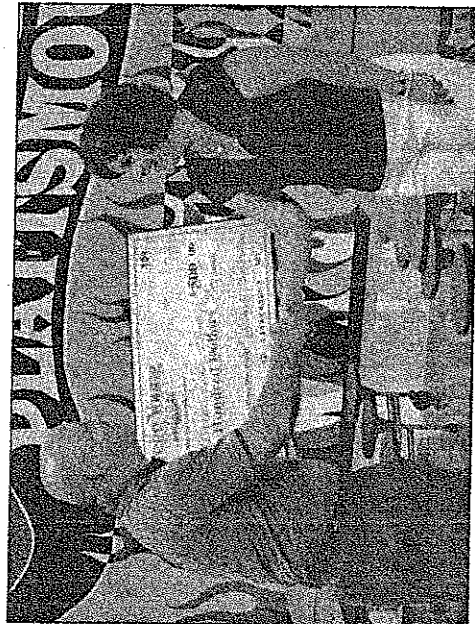


PHOTO BY BRENT HARDLIN / The Journal
Ed Zachary of Gregg Young Chevrolet presents Plattsmouth resident Joyce Hicks with the Gregg Young "We Go the Extra Mile for You" award in Plattsmouth High Schools commons area Tuesday afternoon. Hicks received the award for her work spreading information about suicide prevention.

2010 Cass County Fair begins

The Cass County Fair began Tuesday with the Fourth Annual 4-H cake auction. Despite the sweltering heat in the



At right, Jill McLaughlin models a gown in the Shopping in Style category during the fashion show Tuesday evening.

Murray driver involved in 4-fatality motorcycle accident

LITTLE SIoux, Iowa — have saved the lives of the

**Suicide Prevention Facts
from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

* More than 90 percent of people who commit suicide are suffering from one or more psychiatric disorders such as major depression, bipolar depression, alcohol abuse and dependence, drug abuse and dependence, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia.

* Core symptoms of major depression include changes in sleeping patterns, changes in appetite or weight, intense anxiety or agitation, fatigue, decreased concentration and poorer memory.

* Warning signs of suicide include talking or writing about death, engaging in risky behaviors, increasing alcohol or drug use and withdrawing from friends and family.

* Imminent signs should be taken seriously. Fifty to 75 percent of all people who commit suicide give some warning of their intentions to friends or family members. * If someone you know talks about suicide, begin by telling the person you are concerned and give him/her examples. Ask if they have a therapist and are taking medication. Do not attempt to argue someone out of suicide. Rather, let the person know you care and that he or she is not alone.

* If a friend or loved one is talking about or making plans for suicide, these are signs of an acute crisis. Do not leave the person alone and remove any firearms, drugs or sharp objects from the vicinity. Take the person to an emergency room or walk-in clinic. If the above options are unavailable, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

* Suicidal individuals are often hesitant to seek help and may need your continuing support to pursue treatment after an initial contact.

Prevention: Hicks provides message to local schools

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principal Jeff Wiles in February and asked to provide outreach to the PHS community. She showed the entire student body a video entitled "More Than Sad" in March and used the video in a community awareness program that same week. The video talks about the signs of depression and anxiety in children and shows how friends and family can help prevent suicides from taking place. "More Than Sad" is now part of the high school's life skills program for freshmen and seniors.

Hicks said the school outreach program has already saved lives. After she showed the video to one class, two teenagers approached her and told her they were suffering from depression. One teen told Hicks he had been thinking about suicide. Hicks was able to help the students seek treatment for their depression and was able to provide information to their families. "Those students found the courage to come forward and tell someone about what they were feeling, and they were able to get the help they needed because of that video,"

Hicks said, "At least two lives were saved that day. If we can get the entire community involved and help everyone understand how suicide can be prevented, then I think we can make some pretty big strides in terms of reducing suicides in the area." Hicks also hosts a support group for family and friends of people who have committed suicide. The support group takes place at 6 p.m. on the first Monday of every month in the Senior Center wing of Plattsmouth Community Center. Contact Hicks at 402-490-5759 for more information.

Avoca man injured in accident in Plattsmouth

Brent Hardin
Journal assistant editor

PLATTSMOUTH — One of Plattsmouth's busiest intersections was closed for more than 90 minutes Sunday night following a motorcycle-car accident that left an Avoca man seriously injured.

Cass County Sheriff's Office deputies, Plattsmouth Fire and Rescue volunteers and Plattsmouth police officers all responded to the intersection of Highway 75 and Highway 66 at 7:28 p.m. for the two-vehicle accident. Avoca resident Troy L. Williams, 46, was injured when his motorcycle collided with a truck driven by 21-year-old Plattsmouth resident Jeremy R. Needham. CCSO deputies reported that Needham and a pas-

senger were southbound on Highway 75 and turned east onto West 8th Avenue toward the roundabout. Needham's 2005 Dodge Ram truck turned in front of Williams, who was driving his motorcycle northbound on Highway 75. Williams' motorcycle collided into the passenger side of Needham's pickup. Williams, who was wearing a helmet, was ejected from the motorcycle. Plattsmouth Volunteer Fire Department members set up a landing zone on Highway 66 just west of the accident site to allow LifeNet medical helicopter to access the area. LifeNet transported Williams to Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha in serious condition. His status had improved to fair condition late Monday morning.

Neither Needham nor Williams will be issued citation for possession of marijuana. Needham will be issued a citation for failing to yield right of way.

Local emergency officials helped detour traffic around the intersection while an accident reconstruction team conducted an investigation. CCSO deputies were on scene until 10:32 p.m. to assist in the initial investigation.

More than 20 volunteer from Plattsmouth Fire and Rescue were on scene within 12 minutes of the initial call to dispatcher. A total of 30 local emergency personnel responded to the accident.

FAIR: Activities ongoing through Saturday

From page A-1

second place and Jonah Bolin, third.

Looking like fashion plates, 4-Hers showed their modeling, shopping and sewing skills in the

4-H Fashion Show following the cake auction. Jill McLaughlin modeled a gown she purchased for \$29.99 as an entry in the Shopping in Style Category.

McLaughlin earned the senior modeling, top modeling and Shopping in Style first place. She will represent the county in these categories at the state fair.

Rep. Fortenberry shares immigration ideas

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — Rep. Jeff Fortenberry says he favors repealing the constitutional provision that grants automatic citizenship to children born in this country even when

immigration reform during a town hall meeting Wednesday in Fremont, where voters have approved a local anti-illegal-immigration ordinance.

legal resident and a crackdown on unscrupulous employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. He says that "if we put a few C.F.O.s in jail, this (thir-