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Emily Norton Ashinhurst

April 2022

Dear Friend,

Greetings from the Irish Diaspora Center in Philadelphia.

Over the past decade, more than 400,000 people in the United States alone have been lost to suicide. That is enough people to fill Lincoln Financial Field at least six times. The number of people impacted by these losses is tremendous.

The Lights in the Darkness project, sponsored by our Center, is designed to raise awareness, spark the conversation, and reduce the stigma of mental health issues that lead to suicidality.

Lights in the Darkness responds to those needs in highly visible and significant ways. The goals of this program are to:

- bring a voice to the epidemic of suicide and reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues including depression, addiction, grief, and suicidality
- offer a therapeutic art project and community of support to those impacted by suicide through sculpture build and display of the community of lantern figures
- raise funds for mental health programs in the community

Lights in the Darkness consists of a month-long community build project with six workshops taking place throughout the five-county Greater Philadelphia area. Each workshop will welcome families, friends, and community organizations that have been impacted by loss caused by suicide. Participants will work with Co. Mayo-based artist Tom Meskell to create life-size, wire sculptures covered in paper and varnish and lit from within. The sculptures will then be installed for a ceremony and reception scheduled for Thursday, September 22, 2022 to coincide with Suicide Awareness Month. The exhibit will take place at Dilworth Park at City Hall in Philadelphia. This poignant display of more than 100 life-size lanterns will light the night and create a highly impactful exhibition.

Your partnership will help create and amplify a program that is set to impact more than 200 individuals directly, roughly 500 through the exhibition ceremony, and immeasurable numbers who will see the sculptures on display into the future. Please take a look at the sponsor sheet included on the next page to see how you can partner with the IDC to bring this program to fruition.

We look forward to hearing from you with any questions about the program or the work we do.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Norton Ashinhurst'.

Emily Norton Ashinhurst and the CHAT Committee of the IDC

The Irish Diaspora Center - with the support of the Irish government and the local community - is a professional organization strengthening our heritage and providing the Irish Diaspora in the Greater Philadelphia area with consular, immigration, and community-building social services.

LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

September 22, 2022

Dilworth Park, City Hall, Philadelphia

A therapeutic art project for communities and families impacted by suicide and mental health issues through sculpture building and exhibition of lantern figures; Workshops to be held throughout the region beginning the first week in September.

Over the past decade, we have lost more than 400,000 people per year to suicide. That is enough people, each year, to fill Citizens Bank Park six times! The Irish Diaspora Center (IDC) is committed to raising awareness, sparking the conversation, and reducing the stigma of mental health issues that lead to suicidality, including depression, anxiety, and addiction.

Join us and Straight Out of Ireland artist Tom Meskell for Lights In the Darkness - a public display of life-size figures crafted with love by those impacted by suicide and other mental health issues.



By aligning your company's voice with the Lights in the Darkness project, you are demonstrating your commitment to this important issue. We welcome corporate teams to the workshops to build a sculpture in honor of those employees and clients who have been impacted by the mental health crisis.

Workshop participants will work with Co. Mayo-based artist Tom Meskell over two days to create life-size, wire sculptures covered in paper and varnish and lit from within. Each workshop will have counselors present to support those who may be triggered by the project. On September 22, 2022, workshop participants, together with community members, will gather at City Hall's Dilworth Park to light the sculptures. The visibility of the sculptures and the gathering of individuals committed to raising awareness will help bring real conversations to the frontlines of mental health.

For more information on Lights in the Darkness, to sponsor this program, or to participate in a workshop, please contact:

Emily Norton Ashinhurst, Executive Director
610.789.6355 | emily@idcphila.org

Platinum Sponsor \$15,000

- Recognition as platinum level partner
- Name in all press releases and paid advertising
- Topline logo on all event material
- Speaking opportunity at the event
- Corporate presence at the exhibition
- Social media recognition
- Logo and link on IDC and event website

Gold Sponsor \$10,000

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- Name in all press releases and paid advertising
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Silver Sponsor \$5,000

- Recognition as silver level partner
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Bronze Sponsor \$2,500

- Recognition as bronze level partner
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Over the past decade, more than 400,000 people in the United States alone have been lost to suicide. That is enough people to fill Lincoln Financial Field at least six times. The number of people impacted by these losses is tremendous.

In August 2018, my husband Kyle lost his battle with depression. His life ended, tragically and all too soon, leaving our six-year-old daughter, Maggie, and me to pick up the pieces of our lives.

Grief support for both of us was fraught. Most people in our support groups were dealing with loss due to illness or accident. They were often shocked by their own loss but the anger they exhibited was typically directed toward a God who would take their loved ones so soon.

For us, the anger was clearly directed at Kyle. That anger, partnered with shame and guilt that comes with the topic of mental health, made for a perfect trifecta of emotional turmoil. We had no one else in our lives with whom we could share this specific pain, despite being part of a staggering statistic.

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With much gratitude,

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Emily Norton Ashinhurst

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