

## Suicide Awareness Walk Raises \$15,000

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Flag-bearer Ron Miller of Flower Mound leads the 140-plus participants on the 5K walk.

More than \$15,000 was collected for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention as a result of Saturday's fundraising 5K walk in Flower Mound.

Approximately 140 walkers and a dozen volunteers participated in the event.

Saturday's walk was the first of its kind for Denton County. According to Sue Endsley, walk coordinator, most of the money will go to the Foundation, a national organization, but a portion will remain in the Denton area to help Touched by Suicide, a Flower Mound support group, educate the public about depression and suicide.

Heather Hays, anchorwoman with Channel 4 FOX News, spoke at the event, which began and concluded at Parker Square. Hays is the author of *Surviving Suicide: Help to Heal Your Heart—Life Stories from Those Left Behind*. A memory board allowed participants to post a photo of their loved one or leave a personal message. Many walkers

formed teams in memory of their loved ones, and some wore T-shirts printed with that person's name and photo.

"I'm walking for Josh Harbour and my sister, Hayley," said Jason Murphy, 17, of Flower Mound, who was one of several young people wearing black T-shirts featuring Josh's picture.

"All the outpouring of support and love – that's what this means to me," said Kathy Kettenbeil of Double Oak, who, with her husband, Peter, formed a team to walk in memory of their son, Erik.

"I just want the awareness out there," said Paula Pafford of Grapevine, whose team of family members and friends walked on behalf of her daughter, Chesleigh.

"This was better than I expected for the first year," Endsley said of the walk. "Passersby stopped and asked for information so they could participate next year."

Touched by Suicide meets from 7 to 9 p.m. on the second Thursday and fourth Tuesday of each month at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 5500 Morriss Road in Flower Mound. Members include parents, spouses, adult children, relatives and close friends of people who have died as a result of suicide. Anyone who has been touched by suicide is invited to attend. There is no charge.