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Making CARE available to ALL

Trek For Life to aid those who can't afford mental health treatment

Chris Rourke
Times Staff Writer

Out of tragedy, a passion for helping others often is born.

Such is the case for the suicide prevention efforts of Crested Butte part-time resident Paul Uhl. Uhl lost his son, Kyle, to suicide less than a year ago. Kyle took his life in October 2018. He was only 27 years old.

But out of his pain, Uhl took action. He began to raise awareness of the problem in

resort communities — and assist with fundraising — which helped lead to the opening of a mental health clinic in Crested Butte.

“People ask me, how can you find the strength after such a tragedy?” said Uhl. “I don’t know that I have the answer. It started with being curious about why people commit suicide. I began to learn about various risk factors. ... It energized me. This didn’t have to happen.”

But soon afterward, Uhl realized tackling suicide and implementing prevention strategies involved more than just opening a clinic. He wanted to make sure that those who are struggling the most have access to services.

Recognizing financial limitations of many community members, Uhl set out to continue the fundraising effort. This coming Saturday, Sept. 14, his idea to help others

will take the next step — literally.

Uhl has planned and launched two events — Trek for Life and the Center for Mental Health fundraiser which follows.

A memorial hike will be held Saturday for those lost to suicide from the Maroon-Snowmass trailhead at Maroon Lake to the Schofield Park trailhead north of Crested Butte. The 10-mile hike will begin at 6:30 a.m., and once hikers reach Schofield, they can either bike, hike or drive the remaining 11.5 miles to the Elevation Hotel and Spa at the base of Mt. Crested Butte.

Elevate Bike Rentals will provide bikes at the trailhead.

Then, a Celebration of Life fundraiser will be held Saturday evening at the Elevation.

A buffet dinner will be served, along with live music by Crawford-based band Clifton Hanger and a live auction featuring Helly Hanson products and other items donated by area merchants.

Kimberly Behounek, Center for Mental

Health’s regional director for Gunnison and Hinsdale counties, said her organization is humbled by Uhl’s efforts.

“The need for dollars to pay for treatment is real,” said Behounek. “We experience daily community members saying they want services but can not afford them. We are extremely grateful that Paul has identified the Center for Mental Health Crested Butte clinic as the recipient.”

Uhl said he’s not satisfied with just launching the inaugural event. He plans to make adjustments in the future as the fund-

raiser continues — and elevate education and outreach to prevent further suicides.

“Addressing risk factors to reduce suicides — that’s my motivation,” said Uhl. “Knowing the risk factors, we can prevent this. We’re already brainstorming about how to engage the community and have broader appeal. Let’s throw the 900-pound gorilla out on Elk Avenue.”

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, Sept. 13

12:30 p.m. — Shuttle leaves from Elevation Hotel and Spa/ Crested Butte to Snowmass (discounted hotel rooms at the Westin/Wildwood in Snowmass).

6 p.m. — Dinner and a presentation on the West Maroon Pass hike, backcountry preparedness and safety.

Saturday, Sept. 14

5:30 a.m. — Shuttle people from Wildwood/Snowmass to the Maroon-Snowmass trailhead.

6 a.m. — Check-in and start the hike.

6:30 a.m. — Shuttle departs and takes trekkers’ gear and non-hikers back to Elevation Hotel and Spa at Mt. Crested Butte and/or Schofield Park.

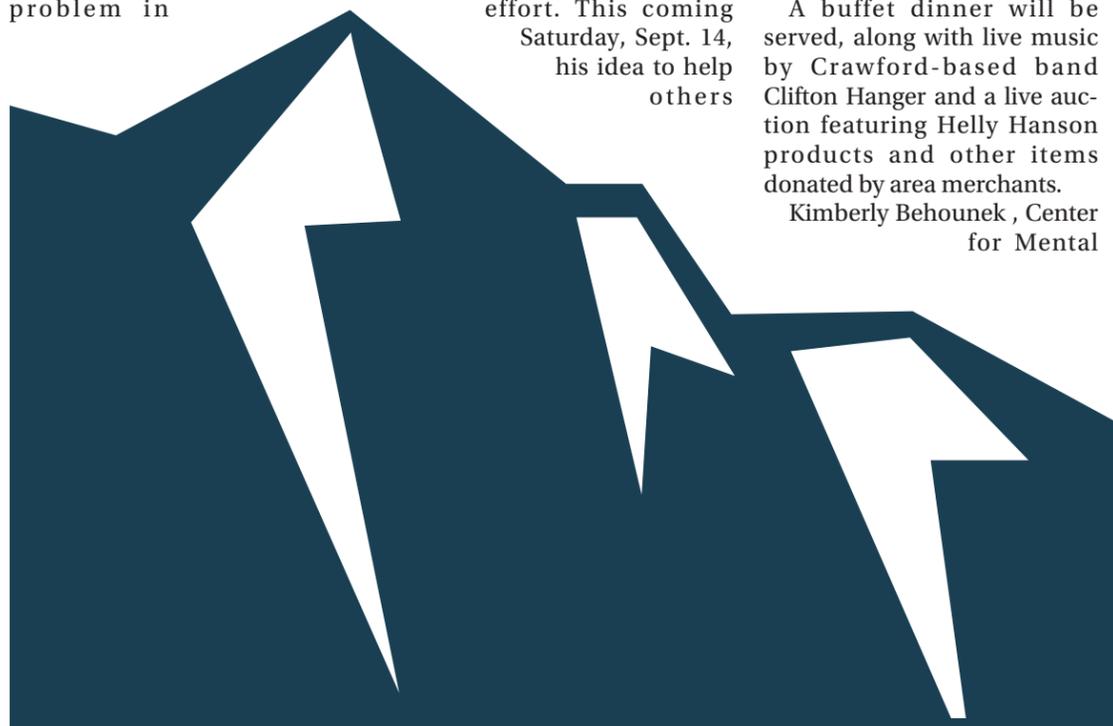
10-11 a.m. and 1-2 p.m. — Yoga Workshop at Crested Butte CORE (100 percent of proceeds go to Center for Mental Health).

2-5 p.m. — Check-off trekker arrivals at the Schofield Park trailhead. Bike or ride from Schofield and arrive at Elevation Hotel and Spa, Mt. Crested Butte.

6-8 p.m. — Buffet dinner at Elevation Hotel and Spa. Tickets: \$35.

8-11:30 p.m. — Fundraiser.

To register and for more information, visit trekforlife.net.



TREK

FOR



SEPT. 14, 2019

LIFE