

VERDANT HEALTH COMMISSION
 PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 2 OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON
 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 Regular Meeting
 A G E N D A
 March 22, 2017
 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
A. Call to Order	---	8:00	---
B. Approval of the Minutes			
a) February 22, 2017 Board Meeting	Action	8:03	1-5
b) March 8, 2017 Special Meeting	Action		6-8
C. Executive Committee Report	Information	8:04	---
D. Superintendent's Report	Information	8:05	---
E. Program Committee Report & Recommendations			
a) Conflicts of Interest	---	8:10	---
b) Program investment recommendations	Action	8:11	9
c) Move 60 program presentation	Action	8:25	10-11
d) Childhood Obesity Prevention RFP	Action	8:45	12-13
e) Verdant Community Wellness Center activities update	Information	8:55	14-15
F. Marketing Report	Information	9:00	16
G. Public Comments (please limit to three minutes per speaker)	---	9:05	---
H. Commissioner Comments	---	9:10	---
I. Executive Session	---	9:15	---
a) Consider the legal risks of a proposed action of the district			
J. Adjournment	---	9:30	---

PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 2 OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON
VERDANT HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

*Verdant Community Wellness Center
March 22, 2017*

Commissioners Present	Deana Knutsen, President J. Bruce Williams, M.D., Secretary Bob Knowles, Commissioner Karianna Wilson, Commissioner (via telephone)
Commissioners Excused	Fred Langer, Commissioner
Others Present	Robin Fenn, Superintendent George Kosovich, Assistant Superintendent Lisa King, Finance Director Jennifer Piplic, Marketing Director Sue Waldin, Community Wellness Program Manager Sandra Huber, Outreach Specialist Karen Goto, Executive Assistant Members of the community
Guests	Jenni McCloughan, Edmonds School District Jennie Hershey, Edmonds School District Carli Brockman, Edmonds School District Brandon Lagerquist, Edmonds School District Brad Berg, Foster Pepper
Call to Order	The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Hospital District No. 2, Snohomish County, was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by President Knutsen.
Approval of Minutes	<i>Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve</i> the minutes of the regular meeting on February 22, 2017. <i>Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve</i> the minutes of the special meeting on March 8, 2017.
Executive Committee	President Knutsen reported that the Executive Committee met on March 15, 2017 to review and approve the March 22, 2017 board meeting agenda and review the upcoming

events at Verdant as well as plan for the next month of April 2017. No action was taken.

**Superintendent
Report**

Dr. Fenn reported on several items:

1. The State Auditor's Office sent draft audit results on March 21, 2017 to Verdant. The State Auditor's Office will present their final report at the April 26, 2017 board meeting.
2. Dr. Fenn has provided the board with a summary of upcoming community events and staff activities for the month of February 2017. She will provide President Knutsen with requested information.
3. Verdant Healthier Community Conference was a success and Ms. Piplic and the staff worked very hard behind the scenes to make it happen.
4. Ms. King completed her Executive Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Washington in February 2017.
5. Information on possible venues for the December 2017 board retreat will be sent to commissioners for their input. Please reply by the due date.
6. GANTT Chart on Value Village property is completed and will be discussed at the April 2017 board meeting (E:15:17).
7. April or May 2017 regular board meeting will be held at the Edmonds Senior Center. All commissioners present had no preference for a month. Dr. Fenn will check with Commissioner Langer and send out a final decision.
8. Community Engagement Training with Ted Lord will be held at the Verdant Community Wellness Center on Monday, May 1, 2017 from 1 to 5 p.m. in collaboration with the Edmonds School District and the City of Lynnwood. Commissioners are encouraged to attend this training. Other elected officials from south county were also invited to participate.

**Program
Committee
Update**

The Program Committee met on March 9, 2017 to review four applications and follow up on RFP for Childhood Obesity (E:16:17).

No conflicts of interest were reported by any of the commissioners.

Applications Recommended for Funding:

Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS) – a renewal request for PEPS home-based newborn and toddler support groups. *Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve* fully funding the request for \$39,000 per year for two years.

Applications Not Recommended for Funding:

Edmonds Community College – Living a Tobacco-Free Life
University of Washington – Concussion Info Comic Curriculum Project

Move 60
Program
Presentation

Guests from the Edmonds School District presented the board with their goals and plans for expansion of the Move 60 program (E:17:17).

Commissioners asked questions about these expansion plans. President Knutsen asked how they would evaluate and assess all the different pieces of the program. Mr. Lagerquist commented that the evaluations would have different components based on the goals and they will also examine the effects of Move 60 program participation rates on school attendance rates and academics.

Commissioner Wilson dropped off the telephone call to attend another meeting.

Childhood
Obesity
Prevention RFP

(E:18:17) Commissioner Knowles reported that the RFP has an expected grant pool of \$100,000 with a maximum award size of \$25,000 per award allocated over 1 to 2 years. President Knutsen encouraged Ms. Huber to help identify groups for participation.

Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the RFP.

Verdant
Community
Wellness Center
Activities
Update

Ms. Waldin presented a written update on activities in the center for March 2017 (E:19:17). Ms. Huber presented an update and photos of the Cooking Matters class and mentioned the upcoming Latino Health Fair on March 25, 2017 at Verdant.

Ms. Waldin called out the Screenager screening coming up on April 18, 2017 at Verdant.

Marketing
Report

Ms. Piplic presented the Marketing report (E:20:17) which includes photos, survey feedback and budget summary from the Verdant Healthier Community Conference on February 27, 2017, a copy of the program and an article from My Edmonds News on Kevin Breel, the lunch time speaker.

President Knutsen thanked the staff for all their work with the conference.

Public
Comments

Dr. Jim Distelhorst of Edmonds and a board member of the Edmonds Senior Center commented that he came to today's meeting to observe another Public Hospital District in action.
President Knutsen commented that she is happy to see Edmonds Senior Center board members at these meetings.

Commissioner
Comments

Commissioner Williams commented that perhaps a potential topic for next year's Verdant Healthier Community Conference could be housing and its impact on health care. President Knutsen commented that she did a home visit with ChildStrive and also attended a meeting with Verdant, the Hazel Miller Foundation, the Edmonds School District, the City of Lynnwood Police, and the City of Mountlake Terrace on the topic of homelessness in south Snohomish County. She encouraged her fellow board members to participate in upcoming events and site visits to see the good work that our community is doing.

Executive
Session

President Knutsen recessed the regular meeting at 8:50 a.m. into Executive Session to consider the legal risks of a proposed action of the district.
President Knutsen stated that the board would reconvene in 15 minutes and no action would be taken in Executive Session.

Extensions of
Executive
Session

The board extended the Executive Session for 15 minutes. The board extended the Executive Session a second time for an additional 10 minutes.


Open Session


The board reconvened into Open Session at 9:30 a.m.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

ATTEST BY:



President


Secretary

March 2017 Program Committee Summary

- Four applications for discussion
- Invited Edmonds School District for a presentation today on Move 60! application for funding
- Follow up on for proposal (RFP) tied to childhood obesity

Program Funding Requests

Applications Recommended for Funding

- **Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS):** a renewal request for PEPS home-based newborn and toddler support groups. The program seeks to reduce the risk of abuse/neglect and social isolation, and offers developmental screening through the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Funds would be used to support outreach, cover testing, and provide fee reduction/scholarships to program participants.

In 2016, the program served 145 parents/80 children, 51 children were screened with the ASQ and 94% of parents reported a decrease in isolation. **The program committee is recommending fully funding the request at \$39,000 per year for two years.**

Applications Not Recommended for Funding

- **Edmonds Community College - Living a Tobacco-Free Life:** a reworked smoking-cessation program from Edmonds Community College. The program would run over 18 months as the campus goes smoke-free. Verdant funds would be used to support education, health promotion, and events.

At a previous board meeting, our board reviewed a larger (\$200,000) request. The revised funding application is for \$42,250 that would be spent over two years on smoking cessation campaign materials, training, resource fairs, and other materials designed to reduce smoking. Only a small portion (\$2,500) would be used for nicotine replacement therapy in the revised proposal.

The program committee is not recommending the proposal for funding, for many of the same reasons as discussed at our previous board meeting. Although the committee members wholeheartedly support the smoke-free policy at the college, they did not think spending Verdant funds on trainings and events was the best use of grant funds.

- **University of Washington – Concussion Info Comic Curriculum Project:** a project that would develop and pilot an education program focused on reducing concussions in schools. The project would use infocomics and videos, with the goal of reaching 1,200 students (in 3rd and 6th grade classrooms) and 1,800 parents each year. The request is for \$155,000 over three years.

The program committee is not recommending funding the proposal at this time. Although the topic of reducing the impact of concussions resonated with the committee, members had some questions about how effective teaching children would be in ultimately changing behaviors. The committee members also did not see a role in Verdant's funding the development of brand new curriculum and videos for use in a program like this.

Program Presentation: Edmonds School District Move 60!

The program committee reviewed a revised request from the Edmonds School District for Move 60! After discussion at our last board meeting, school district staff were asked to come back with a proposal that would serve significantly more participants, and that included ideas about how physical activity could be worked into the school day.

The program committee reviewed the revised request and felt like the proposal was consistent with their interest in expanding the program. Given the size of the request, the committee wanted the full Verdant board to hear from the applicant and discuss the request.

Program Components:

- **Move 60! Plus:** an expansion of the current elementary *Move 60!* program. This expansion opportunity would be for schools who have a demonstrated need to offer an additional *Move 60!* session at the school.
- **Move 60! Miles:** add a 5th day to the existing *Move 60!* weekly schedule. This 5th day would be a *Move 60!* Running Club and would be available to any student who can participate, regardless if she or he were in *Move 60!* (an "all-comers" format). Supervisors would use an electronic tracking system to count laps and mileage.
- **Move 60! Minutes:** an activity grant program that would be available for all elementary and middle schools in our school district. Individual schools could apply for funding to create and implement activity opportunities for students during the school day.
- **Move 60! Academy:** a Pre-K class that incorporates activity and movement based learning with academics and social emotional learning.

Summary by New Component

	Move 60 Plus	Move 60 Miles	Move 60 Minutes	Move 60 Academy
Description	Additional Move 60! sections before or after school	5 th day running club	Activity during school day	Pre-k program
Assessment	Fitnessgram	Laps & mileage tracked	Fitnessgram in fall and spring	Focus on movement-based & social emotional learning
Estimated students served 2017-2018	100	1,380	3,000	30
Estimated students served 2019-2020	200	2,300	5,000	120

Move 60 2017 Grant Proposal:			
Budget	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Elementary Move 60:			
Salary	\$500,061.00	\$520,063.00	\$540,865.00
Move 60 Coordinators 2.0 FTE			
Move 60 Lead Instructors - 23 schools			
Move 60 Assistant Instructors - 22 schools			
Nurses - Health Screening			
Substitutes			
Professional Development Training	\$10,000.00	\$10,500.00	\$11,000.00
Instructor Trainings			
Printing	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Registration forms, student surveys, flyers			
Transportation	\$38,000.00	\$39,520.00	\$41,100.00
Bus for 10 schools			
Supplies	\$20,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00
Equipment, Fitness Finders, Jump Rope cards			
Translation services	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Top 5 languages			
Milage/Travel	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Milage for travel to schools, workshops, and trainings			
AM/PM Move 60	\$22,000.00	\$44,000.00	\$44,000.00
Instructors and materials - \$11,000 per school			
Move 60 Academy (Pre-K)	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$16,000.00
Instructors, equipment, materials, training			
Move 60 Miles	\$51,000.00	\$51,000.00	\$51,000.00
Staffing and materials			
Move 60 Minutes Activity Grant (K-8)	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00
School Champion, activities and training			
TOTAL:	\$721,561.00	\$764,583.00	\$790,465.00

Current Annual Funding Level

\$532,286

Served

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
2015-16			
1617 (unduplicated)	5,764 total	8,714 total	12,334 total

Follow up on for proposal (RFP) tied to childhood obesity

Recommendation for Potential Verdant RFP

- Seeking programs or projects that address or prevent childhood obesity in South Snohomish County in one of the following areas:
 1. Promote Policies that Increase Access to Affordable, Healthy Foods
 2. Support Healthy Food and Beverage Choices
 3. Encourage Breastfeeding
 4. Encourage Physical Activity and Limit Sedentary Behavior
 5. Create Safe Communities that Support Physical Activity
 6. Encourage Communities to Organize for Change
- Consider applications from individual schools, daycare centers, or other sites for innovative ideas. Would consider more than one application from organizations.
- Eligible organizations would include non-profit and government organizations.
- Programs must serve children and families in Verdant's service area.

Award Size and Timing

- Solicit proposals with a deadline of May 5, 2017
- Expected grant pool of \$100,000 with a maximum award size of \$25,000 per award. Grants could be allocated to be spent over 1-2 years.

Criteria Used to Evaluate projects:

1. Ability to demonstrate and measure specific results from of the project. Strong preference for projects that can demonstrate improvements in health or wellness, rather than just raw activity numbers;
2. Programs tied to evidence-based practices;
3. Budget appropriateness and leverage other funding sources;
4. Sustainability;
5. Innovate practice or idea.

E:19:17
3.22.2017

Verdant Community Wellness Center Summary March 2017

Completed Programs

1. General Community and Provider Events	Attendance
1. Early Achievers Childcare Provider Training (2/18 and 3/18)	44
2. Girls on the Run Coach Training Workshop (2/25)	25
3. Monthly Hero's Café for Veterans – launch event (2/28)	75
4. Korean Women's Association: Everyday Prevention Program (3/2)*	40
5. ARC Mothers of Children with Disabilities Monthly Support Network (3/4)	20
6. SHIBA Monthly Training with OIC (3/7)	25
7. Resource Connector Meeting (March 3/7)	32
8. Long-term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Certification Training (3/7, 13, 16)	48
9. Evergreen Home Health (3/8, 14)	50
10. Parkinson's Education Workshop (3/9)	13
11. WABS Natural Leaders Parent Trainings (3/13)	45
12. Alzheimer's Association Planning Meeting (3/14)	50
13. United Way Collaboration Meeting (3/15)	16
14. Understanding Medicare Monthly Workshops (3/17)	20
15. Spanish Language Safety Planning for Families (3/18)	68
16. Ongoing – Community Support for Prescription Assistance (weekly)*	varies
2. Nutrition and Healthy Behaviors	Attendance
1. Mediterranean for Life: Health Coaching Program (1/18 – 3/22)*	23
2. Spanish Language Cooking Matters for Diabetes (2/11 – 3/18)*	16
3. Yoga 101: 8 Week Class Series (2/14 – 4/4)*	13
4. Road Back to Life Kidney Support Group (2/28)	12
5. Puget Sound Kidney Center Cooking Class (3/1)	20
6. Plant Proteins Cooking Demo (3/14, 16)*	42
7. Surviving & Thriving with Chronic Kidney Disease (3/15 – 4/19)*	10
8. Lifestyle Change Check-Ins (drop – in 1 st and 3 rd Tuesdays)*	6-12
9. Getting to Goal Program (Weight Management/Activity Consultations)*	15 clients
3. Behavioral Health & Substance Use	Attendance
1. YWCA Intro to Mindfulness (1/23 – 3/13)*	8
2. YWCA Grief and Loss (1/24 – 3/14)*	8
3. THS Spanish Language Parent Coaching Group (3/2 – 4/27)*	3-6
4. National Alliance on Mental Illness "Connections" Group (2/23; 3/9, 23)	varies
5. Brain Health and Wellness Classes (2/23, 27; 3/2, 3, 9, 10, 13, 16)*	varies
6. Snohomish County Caregiver Support Group (3/2, 16)	6-10
7. YWCA Women's Art Therapy Group (3/7 – 5/2)*	8-10
8. Evergreen Bereavement Informational Workshop (3/8)	varies
9. Info Session: What is Mindfulness? (3/13)*	25
10. Adult Children of Alcoholics Weekly Support Group (weekly)	10-14
11. Veterans Drop-In Support (weekly - City of Lynnwood & monthly - County)	varies
4. Other Programs	Attendance
1. Play and Learn Group, Wonderland Development Center (weekly)*	25-30

Verdant Community Wellness Center Summary March 2017

Upcoming Programs

A. General Community and Provider Events

1. Sea Mar Weekly Health Insurance Basic Food Enrollment (March 20, 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24)
2. Paper Tigers Movie for Child Care Providers (March 23)
3. Spanish Language Health Fair (March 25)
4. Monthly Hero's Café for Veterans – launch event (March 28; April 25)
5. Snomentia in My Neighborhood (March 29)
6. ARC Mothers of Children with Disabilities Monthly Support Network (April 1)
7. SHIBA Monthly Training with OIC (April 4)
8. Korean Women's Association: Everyday Prevention Program (April 6)*
9. PEPS: Baby Peppers Weekly Support Group (April 6 – June 22)*
10. Evergreen Home Health (April 12, 18)
11. Screenager – Growing up in the Digital Age (April 18)*
12. Understanding Medicare Monthly Workshops (April 21)
13. Aging Mastery Program (April 24-May 22)
14. Talking to Children about Race – workshop for Foster Parents (April 29)

B. Nutrition and Healthy Behaviors

1. Mediterranean for Life: Health Coaching Program – 23 Clients (January 18 – March 22)*
2. Yoga 101: 8 Week Class Series (February 14 – April 4)*
3. Fitness Demo: Using Cardio for Calorie Burning and Weight Loss (April 13)*
4. Nutrition for a Healthy Brain Cooking Demo (April 14)*
5. Surviving & Thriving with Chronic Kidney Disease (March 15 – April 19)*
6. Adult Hands-on Cooking Classes: Beginning Knife Skills (March 20); Beginning Baking Skills (April 17)*
7. Taste & Texture: Learn About Infant Feeding with a Doc and a Dietitian (March 27)*
8. Road Back to Life Kidney Support Group (March 28; April 25)
9. Teens in the Kitchen: International Cuisines from Italy & France (April 4 and 6)*
10. Community Health Center Diabetes Cooking Class (April 21)*

C. Behavioral Health & Substance Use Focus

1. THS – Spanish Language Parent Group (March 2 – April 6)*
2. YWCA Women's Art Therapy Group (March 7 – May 2)*
3. Brain Health and Wellness Classes (March 20, 23, 24; April 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27)*
4. Korean Language Guiding Good Choices Parenting Seminar (March 23 - April 27)
5. National Alliance on Mental Illness "Connections" Support Group (March 23; April 13, 27)
6. NAMI Presents: Family Dynamics and Setting Boundaries (April 6)*
7. Snohomish County Caregiver Support Group (April 6, 20)
8. YWCA Intro to Mindfulness (April 11 – May 30)*
9. Yoga: Mind, Movement and Meditation Workshop (April 12, 19, 26)*
10. Evergreen Bereavement Informational Workshop (April 12)
11. YWCA Managing Difficult Emotions (April 19 – June 7)*
12. Screenager – Technology Overuse and Addiction Training for Providers (April 18)*
13. Adult Children of Alcoholics Weekly Support Group (weekly)
14. Veterans Drop-In Support (weekly - City of Lynnwood & monthly - County)

* = Grant/Program Funded Partner

March 2017 Marketing Report

Verdant Healthier Community Conference

Attendees: 275

Survey Responses: 62

Survey Feedback Summary

Topic/Presentation	Average Rating (Scale of 1-5, 1=poor, 5=excellent)
Morning Keynote by Dr. Tony Iton	4.82
Lunch Keynote by Kevin Breele	4.7
Closing Presentation: Verdant update, awards	4.16
Breakout Sessions	4.12
Registration, check-in process, location, food	4.8

How did you first hear about this conference?	
Verdant e-Newsletter	47.5%
Employer	21%
Friend/Colleague/Word of Mouth	16%
Verdant website	11.5%
Other	3%

Budget

Revenue	
Sponsorships	20,000.00
Registrations	11,639.00
Total Revenue	31,639.00
Expenses	
Lynnwood Convention Center	25,484.40
Keynote/Breakout Speaker Fee	15,649.84
Advertising/Printing	4,679.73
Consulting	4,797.85
Other	2,573.31
Total Expense	52,403.88
NET EXPENSE	21,546.13

Coming Events

- **Latino Health Fair:** Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Verdant Community Wellness Center
- **Health & Fitness Expo:** Saturday, May 20, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Edmonds School District Stadium

Have the 'uncomfortable conversation' about depression, speaker tells health conference

February 27, 2017



Speaker Kevin Breel: "If you say you're struggling with depression, it feels like the whole world may run the other way."

Six years ago, Kevin Breel almost committed suicide.

"I was just a 17-year-old kid sitting in my room scared and alone on my bed with a bottle of pills," the public speaker, stand-up comedian, author and mental health activist told those gathered to hear him speak Monday at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

After years of battling depression following the death of his 13-year-old best friend, Breel believed he had nowhere to turn. "I just had this sense of hopelessness, feeling alone and scared, overwhelmed, and couldn't see through the rest of the day," said the Victoria, B.C. native known for his TedX talk "Confessions of a Depressed Comic" and his Random House-published book "Boy Meets Depression."

Now 23 and living in Toronto, Breel was in Lynnwood to speak during the Healthier Community conference, sponsored by the Verdant Health Commission. The second annual conference was aimed at anyone interested in living a healthier life, and drew a range of attendees — from individual citizens to government officials to health care professionals. One of the three session tracks, titled "Healthier Mind," focused on topics ranging from anxiety and depression to substance abuse to race and ethnicity mental health issues.

Attendees listened intently as Breel described that night in 2011 when he took out a piece of paper and wrote his suicide note. After rereading the note "at least 100 times," Breel realized that he had kept everything written on that paper a secret. He had a heart-to-heart conversation with his mother, who was encouraging and supportive and insisted that he see a counselor, whom he still visits regularly.

Pointing to the audience gathered in the banquet room during his lunch-time address, Breel praised those who work on community mental health issues. "I'm still alive because of people like you," he said, "because of people who actually care."

Breel said his father struggled with mental health problems including alcoholism, but Breel learned at a young age not to talk about his dad's situation with anyone. Instead, he spent as much time as possible in "a safe space" — the home of his best friend. When that friend died in a car crash at age 13, Breel recalled being left with "unbelievable pain" and struggled with waves of depression that he couldn't talk about for fear of being labeled "weird and crazy."

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to have this thought in my head that maybe mental health is something that really matters," Breel said. "Maybe this societal image that we created, where we go 'this is physical health' and 'this is mental health' and this one really matters and this one doesn't, is completely backward.

"Because if you break your arm, it feels like everyone is ready to go over and sign your cast," he continued. "We have this built-in empathetic response to physical injuries, to things we can see. But when it comes to our interior life, our emotional life, our spiritual life, it's not as clear. If you say you're struggling with depression, it feels like the whole world may run the other way."

Breel had a chance to reach a wider audience when he was invited to tape a TedX talk on the topic, "Confessions of a Depressed Comic," which was later shared on YouTube and now stands as one of the most-watched TedX talks of all time. At first, Breel was embarrassed by the attention the video garnered, but then he began hearing from people who watched it. In fact, he received more than 10,000 letters and emails — from teens struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts and from parents who had lost children to suicide or whose kids were struggling with self-harm issues.

One of those he heard from via email was a 17-year-old girl named Amber, who for five years struggled with addiction and depression. She took a razor blade to school each day, and at end of day, if she felt scared or hopeless, she would put another cut on her arm, Breel recalled. Amber relayed that she would always wear long sleeves — no matter how hot it was in the summer — because she didn't want anyone to see the scars on her arms.

"And I thought that was the most perfect metaphor for how some of us go through our lives," Breel said. "We are trying to pull our sleeves down, we're trying to hide our pain, we're trying to put these walls up and not let people see who we really are in hopes that it will somehow make it better. And it only makes it worse."

Amber had given herself a deadline of a year to see if her life would get better. On the day that the year was up, she planned to commit suicide but had received a text message from a long-time friend who had shared a link to Breel's TedTalk. She told Breel that after watching the video, she chose not to kill herself for a one reason: "For the first time in my life, I know I'm not the only teenager that may have struggled with depression."

She also attached to the email her suicide note, because, she said, she didn't need it anymore.

The real hero in the story, Breel said, is Amber's best friend — "the person who keeps caring. The person who keeps showing up and says, 'I'll listen.'"

In today's society, people live "in a culture of perfectionism and idealism and editing the best parts of your life to show people, but that's not really what we're wired for," Breel said. "We're wired for connection and for truth and for honesty. One million people each year commit suicide worldwide, we just see that as a number, as a statistic — but it's real people, it's real families, communities and cultures being ripped apart by this."

He encouraged those in the audience to have the "uncomfortable conversation" about depression, not only at home but in the workplace and in their personal lives.

"The one hope I can leave you with is this idea that your story matters and you can make an enormous difference, clearly a difference between life and death, by listening, by caring, by showing up," he said. "We don't have to keep waking up in this world where there are one million suicides a year."

— *Story and photo by Teresa Wippel*