

# News

## Suicide and Prevention

Ellen Cleary, Staff Writer & Laura Douglass, Layout Editor



via appstate.edu

With all the dangers in today's society, suicide still makes up a major portion of the death rate in America. According to The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 41,149 people committed suicide in 2013, making it the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. There are many resources available for people who feel that suicide is their only option.

Veterans commit suicide at a higher rate than the civilian population in America. According to Time magazine, 22 veterans commit suicide each day. That's more than double the rate of the typical population.

Sen. Johnny Isakson R-GA told Stars and Stripes, "When you have 8,000 veterans a year committing suicide—which is more than have died in all of Iraq and all of Afghanistan

since we've been fighting—then you have a serious problem and this is emergency legislation that we need to pass to help our veterans."

And pass they did. This month, the United States Senate passed the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This law will create a network for veterans to reach out to one another. It also contains initiatives for psychiatric doctors to work with veterans and more over watch of the VA to help improve quality of care.

While veteran suicide has gained attention recently, suicide on college campuses hits even closer to home. There has been a rising number of suicides on North Carolina's own Appalachian State University campus. Since the beginning of this school year, four out of nine student deaths are or (based on certain police statements) appear to be suicides.

While the deaths have all occurred close together time wise, they do not appear to be connected, according to the ASU Police Chief. According to High County Press, Dr. Dan Jones, ASU's counseling center director, has stated that "a number of universities have lost students in a short span of time" and "we are no exception." Dr. Allen O'Barr, director of counseling and psychology at UNC Chapel Hill, has commented that their campus went

through a similar issue a decade ago, and NYU experienced it in 2003. He also said that UNC went through a policy review and didn't find anything wrong with their policies themselves, referencing the fact that ASU is probably going through a similar thing. Blaming the problem on Appalachian and its policies is not truly justified.

Following the recent events, Erin Griffith, an App State student, commented: "As a student, I feel like I am a part of a tight-knit family at App. I feel safe on this campus and firmly believe that Appalachian has sufficient resources for myself and other students." When asked how she feels that the campus has handled the tragedies, Griffith responded, "Students have come together across campus to create and attend events regarding positivity and suicide awareness. A lot of emails have been sent out by our chancellor and extra hours are being offered at the counseling center."

Suicide remains a problem, and it's important to know that you are not alone and that someone cares about you. The national suicide prevention lifeline is 1 (800) 273-8255. Meredith offers counseling services on campus. The counseling center can be found at 208 Carroll Hall or reached at (919) 760-8427.

## Ukrainian Crisis Reaches New Ceasefire Agreement

Monique Kreisman, News Editor

The conflict between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian separatists has lasted several years and has cost many lives. The ceasefire agreement signed last week comes after a long struggle for peace.

Since 2013, Ukrainians have protested then-President Yanukovich's attempts to ally the country closer to Russia. In February of 2014, the protests became very violent, and more than 80 people were killed in Kiev. A few days later, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to remove President Yanukovich and hold new elections. In March of 2014, Crimea was absorbed into the Russian Federation, and President Obama asked Russia to move back its troops. In May, Petro Poroshenko was elected President of Ukraine, and President Obama support-

ed him. The next month, the EU signed an association agreement with Ukraine, also showing its support. On July 30, a Malaysia Airlines flight from Amsterdam was shot down over land controlled by pro-Russian rebels. The incident was widely covered in the media internationally, and the U.S. soon announced sanctions against Russia. In September, a truce between Ukraine and the separatists was signed, and over the next two months, Russian troops were withdrawn.

However, in November, Russian troops re-entered Ukraine. Fighting particularly centered around Donetsk's airport and the port city of Mariupol, which is strategically important geographically. In Jan. 2015, peace talks were scheduled, but fighting continued. The U.S. loaned money



via Getty Images

to Ukraine, and several countries considered supplying Ukraine with weapons.

On Feb. 12, 2015, a new ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk, Belarus, by Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and France. The agreement includes, among other provisions, amnesty and release of hostages, international humanitarian aid, and a deadline for Ukrainian

constitutional reform. Also on Feb. 12, the International Monetary Fund offered a \$40 billion bailout package for Ukraine, with the contingencies that the country reduce government spending and corruption. Although previous ceasefire agreements have failed, there is hope that this one will succeed in reinstating peace in Ukraine.

## Angels Moving Forward

Kristen Lawhorne, Staff Writer

Every year, one out of three students experience some sort of loss in their life. Many students suffering from grief feel alone, helpless, and overall unsupported. It is for that reason campuses nationwide have created a club called AMF, otherwise known as Actively Moving Forward. These clubs were created by students to help support students.

At Meredith College, there is a club called Angels Moving Forward. The overall goal of the club is to help comfort students by offering love, support, understanding, and acceptance. I myself am a member of the club. My dad has congestive heart failure. Without support, students cannot successfully get over grief.

Ms. Beth Meier, director of the counseling center, is the club advisor. For Ms. Meier, the purpose of the club is to "bring everyone together and give support to those that need it." Club President Tociana Watley says that the club will meet every other week beginning on February 25.

Club members manage their grief by serving others. Last year the club volunteered at the Ronald McDonald house and made breakfast for families living with terminally ill children. This activity helped bring the group together emotionally. The club itself is not meant to always be a solemn occasion. The group participates in fun and light-hearted conversations to help the healing process.

The club president is willing to have one-on-one sessions with anyone who needs support. As a member of the group I have learned that grieving is a natural process. You are not alone. There are many that have or are currently experiencing the same pain. The club does not require commitment so feel free to come when you just want to talk.

Email Ms. Beth Meier at this address: meierb@meredith.edu

The counseling center in Carroll has a 10am walk in time and 1pm crisis hours. For more information got to this address:

<http://www.studentsofamf.org/about/>