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Campus’ mental health walk finds national success

In only its second year, Sacramento State’s recent Out of the Darkness Campus Walk placed fifth among campuses across the nation in raising money for suicide prevention among college students.

The walk was held Thursday, April 4, with 893 walkers from 56 campus teams raising $24,553. That put Sacramento State fifth among 62 participating colleges. In 2012, Sac State’s Walk totaled $2,900 from 15 campus teams comprising 193 walkers.

Active Minds Peer Health Educators (Sac State’s student organization to foster awareness of mental health issues), the University’s Student Health & Counseling Services, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention teamed up to organize the walk.

Funds will support campus programs such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and aid efforts to prevent suicide and assist those affected by mental illness or the loss of a loved one to suicide.

The Walk’s impressive results aren’t the only achievements made by Active Minds in the last 12 months.

Active Minds trained 14 peer health educators in suicide intervention skills and mental health first aid, says Joy Stewart-James, executive director of Student Health and Counseling Services.

The organization also has achieved a Five Star Chapter Status from the national Active Minds group, and received an Outstanding Program/Event award from Student Organizations and Leadership, which also gave the chapter’s advisor, Health Educator Kalyn Coppedge, the Advisor of the Year award.

“We have a great group of engaged students who have been instrumental doing outreach,” Stewart-James says. “It’s all part of our effort to reduce stigma and to increase awareness of our mental health resources.”

She notes that Student Health and Counseling set an outreach goal of 9,000 students, and ended up reaching out to 12,000.
For more information on the Active Minds program, email Coppedge at coppedge@csus.edu. For media assistance, call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Craig Koscho
ckoscho@csus.edu

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