

*People's Forum
The Truth
July 1, 2008*

“Summertime and the livin’ is easy.” This line from an old song says what we like to believe – that summer is a time for fun and relaxation, certainly not a time for depression and suicide. Many of us believe that the extra sunshine and spending more time outdoors will protect us from depression. Unfortunately, problems don’t go away just because it is summer. In fact, during 2007, one-third of the suicides in Elkhart County (8 of 24) occurred during June, July, and August. So, what can we do? For ourselves, we can recognize our own symptoms of depression and seek professional help to cope with depression. For others, we can be aware and offer assistance, such as expressing our concern and taking time to listen. Often people who are contemplating suicide feel alone and without hope for the future. By reaching out, you can show a depressed person that s/he is not alone and you can offer hope for the future by referring the person to a professional trained in treating depression.

Some common symptoms of depression include persistent sad or “empty” feelings; feeling hopeless; lack of energy; lack of interest in hobbies or other activities that were once enjoyable; difficulty concentrating; sleep disturbances; changes in appetite; feeling worthless; irritability. For a more complete list of symptoms and available resources, go to www.elkhartcountysuicideprevention.com.

Please join the Elkhart County Suicide Prevention Coalition in raising awareness of suicide and prevention at our annual walk on Saturday, September 6, 2008, beginning at Mental Health America, 303 N. Main St., Elkhart. Registration begins at 9:45 am.

Sincerely,

*Cathy Blum, LCSW, MAC, NCGC II
Member of Elkhart County Suicide Prevention Coalition*

