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CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 2024 AS SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH IN BOSTON

WHEREAS, Each year, more than 49,000 lives are lost to suicide across the United States, representing one death every 11 minutes, leaving behind loved ones, families, and communities; *and*

WHEREAS, Suicide Prevention Month provides an opportunity for all Boston residents to increase awareness about suicide, learn the warning signs, and encourage those in need to seek help; *and*

WHEREAS, Stigma around mental illness and suicide prevents many individuals from seeking help, making it essential to promote open dialogue and support for those struggling with mental health challenges; *and*

WHEREAS, Suicide rates increased by 5.2% between 2020 and 2022, and despite a previous decline in 2019 and 2020, suicide remains a significant public health issue that affects individuals of all demographics, with certain groups such as American Indian/Alaska Native and LGBTQ+ youth experiencing disproportionately high suicide rates; *and*

WHEREAS, 79% of all people who die by suicide are male, though women are more likely to attempt suicide, and men being four times more likely to die by suicide; *and*

WHEREAS, Firearms were used in over 50% of all suicides in 2022, underscoring the importance of reducing access to lethal means for individuals at risk; *and*

WHEREAS, The annual prevalence of serious thoughts of suicide in the U.S. varies by demographic group, with 4.8% of all adults, 7.4% of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, 8.2% of Multiracial individuals, 8.5% of American Indian/Alaska Natives, 13% of young adults aged 18-25, 22% of high school students, and 41% of LGBTQ youth reporting such thoughts; *and*

WHEREAS, Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide compared to their straight peers, and transgender adults are nearly nine times more likely to attempt suicide at some point in their lives compared to the general population; *and*

WHEREAS, Suicide is the leading cause of death for individuals held in local jails, underscoring the importance of addressing mental health needs and providing support for incarcerated individuals; *and*

WHEREAS, The emotional, physical, and economic impacts of suicide, and suicide attempts, extend far beyond the individual, affecting families, friends, and communities, and leading to long-term mental health challenges for survivors and loved ones; *and*

WHEREAS, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, accessible by dialing 988 nationwide, provides 24/7, confidential support for individuals in distress, as well as resources for loved ones and professionals, available 365 days a year through phone and online at 988lifeline.org; *and*

WHEREAS, the Samaritans, a local support service dedicated to helping those struggling with suicidal thoughts, provides a 24-hour helpline at 1-877-870-4673, offering compassionate listening and support for individuals in crisis; *and*

WHEREAS, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Massachusetts offers vital resources during Suicide Prevention Month, including educational materials, advocacy, and outreach efforts to promote mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding suicide; *and*

WHEREAS, The "Talk Away the Dark" initiative fosters a growing support network aimed at bringing visibility to those struggling with suicidal ideation (SI) by offering resources, community engagement, and support to reduce the silence and isolation surrounding mental health struggles; *and*

WHEREAS, DeeDee's Cry, named after Founder and Executive Director, Toy Burton's sister, Denita Shayne Morris (DeeDee), who died by suicide at the the age of twenty-three, aims to create resources and conversations that lift the stigma of suicide and mental health within Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) communities; *and*

WHEREAS, Suicide is a complex public health issue that can affect individuals of all ages, races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds and requires creating a multigenerational and multicultural system of empathy, connection, and understanding to reduce the incidence of suicide; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council recognize September 2024 as Suicide Prevention Month, and work towards increasing awareness about suicide, learn the warning signs, and encourage those in need to seek help;

Filed on: September 9, 2024