

News release (with images)

MUMS' WALKING CHALLENGE TO PREVENT YOUNG SUICIDE

19 September 2023

Three mothers who lost young sons to suicide hope a walking challenge will help to spare other families from the agony of losing a child.

The 265-mile walk in memory of their sons will raise awareness of suicide prevention and promote the professional help and support which is available to children and young people who are struggling with life.

Liz Hurlstone from Staffordshire, Kim McCarthy from Northamptonshire and Michelle Dore from Kent have three different stories to tell, each has the same tragic ending.

Their trek as *Just 3 Mums Walking* will begin on Friday 22 September in support of the national charity POPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide.

"Suicide is the biggest killer of young people under the age of 35 in the UK. We only learned this terrifying fact because each of us has lost a son to suicide within the last four years.

"By raising awareness, we hope to prevent other families from suffering such indescribable pain and bring something positive out of the utter devastation of losing a child to suicide," said Liz whose 17-year-old son Seb took his own life in 2022.

From Liz's home in Staffordshire the three mums will head south to Kim McCarthy's home in Northamptonshire. Kim lost her 21-year-old son Hayden to suicide in 2019.

"I discovered the charity POPYRUS after losing Hayden and from that moment on I just wanted to do whatever I could to help raise awareness of suicide prevention.

"Many children and young people are really struggling and they see no way out other than to end their own precious lives

"This walking challenge will give us, as mums, the chance to make a difference, to show that there is help and support out there and that many young suicides can be prevented," said Kim.

The mums will then continue south through London, where Hayden had been living at the time of his death and head towards Kent and the home of Michelle who lost her 17-year-old son Maxi to suicide in 2022.

"We hope that by linking our three homes and telling our three different stories that we will put a spotlight on the devastating effects of suicide.

"No child or young person should have to suffer alone with thoughts of suicide.

"We need to smash the stigma around suicide, encourage families to have open and honest conversations, guide our young people out of the darkness and get them the help they need and deserve," said Michelle.

On route the mums have been invited to visit a number of schools where they will share their stories and promote suicide awareness.

The *Just 3 Mums Walking* aim to complete their challenge in 17 days, finishing their journey on Sunday 8 October at Sir Roger Manwood's School in Sandwich, where Maxi studied.

Every step of the way they will be remembering their sons and supporting the work of PAPYRUS.

Ged Flynn, the charity's chief executive, says their walk will be a life-saver.

"Liz, Kim and Michelle have been brought together by the tragedy and trauma of suicide which has shattered their lives and the lives of those around them.

"As *Just 3 Mums Walking* they will be able to channel their energy and focus on what they can do to help save young lives.

"These proud mothers, who are each trying to deal with their own grief in their own way, have found a positive path forward together."

Their website <https://www.justthreemums.org.uk/> contains moving tributes to their sons, details of the route, a list of generous supporters and how to donate via their JustGiving page.

The website will also allow supporters to track their walk live.

For practical, confidential suicide prevention help and advice please contact PAPYRUS HOPELINE247 on 0800 068 4141, text 07860 039967 or email pat@papyrus-uk.org

Ends

Note to editors.

Just Three Mums Walking have been inspired by the *3 Dads Walking*, three fathers who each lost a daughter to suicide who then went on to raise more than £1million for PAPYRUS.

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people in the UK.

PAPYRUS aims to reduce the number of young people who take their own lives by breaking down the stigma around suicide and equipping people with the skills to recognise and respond to suicidal behaviour.

HOPELINE247 is the charity's confidential helpline service providing practical advice and support to young people with thoughts of suicide and anyone concerned about a young person who may have thoughts of suicide.

HOPELINE247 is staffed by trained professionals, offering a telephone, text and email service.

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