

# The Sophie Fund

Newsletter 2/2017



***“Supporting mental health initiatives aiding young people in the greater Ithaca, New York community”***

## A Call to Action: The Watershed Declaration

Community mental health stakeholders from 18 organizations declared suicide a “serious public health concern” and pledged to intensify suicide prevention efforts in Ithaca and Tompkins County.

The call to action, known as The Watershed Declaration, was adopted by acclamation on April 17 at the close of a meeting of leaders from Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, non-profit organizations, and the campuses of Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. The meeting was organized by The Sophie Fund.

### The Watershed Declaration

April 17, 2017

“We the assembled mental health stakeholders of the greater Ithaca community and Tompkins County recognize suicide as a serious public health concern. Today we renew our commitment to suicide prevention and pledge to intensify efforts toward saving lives and bringing hope to those struggling with suicide thoughts or affected by suicide loss.”

Lee-Ellen Marvin, executive director of the Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service in Ithaca, praised the call to action. “There is indeed a public health crisis, and the way to prevent suicide is with awareness, vigilance, and the willingness of all parts of society to commit to this effort,” she said. Agreed Garra Lloyd-Lester, associate director of the Suicide Prevention

Center New York: “Seeing the folks here today it is really reflective of this idea that suicide is everybody’s business.”



*Mayor Svante Myrick, Scott MacLeod of The Sophie Fund, Lee-Ellen Marvin of the Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service*

At the June 7 meeting of the Ithaca Common Council, Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick issued a city proclamation in support of The Watershed Declaration.

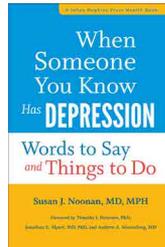
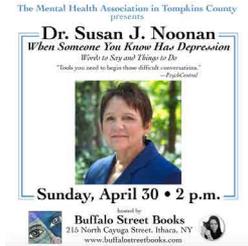
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Go to: [www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org)

Email: [thesophiefund2016@gmail.com](mailto:thesophiefund2016@gmail.com)

# The Sophie Fund Author Series

Dr. Susan J. Noonan, author of *When Someone You Know Has Depression: Words to Say and Things to Do*, was the inaugural speaker on April 20, 2017 in the “Readings on Mental Health” series made possible by a grant from The Sophie Fund.



The series is sponsored by the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County and hosted by Buffalo Street Books. The series features additional authors on September 24 and November 19.

Noonan’s latest book is a concise and practical guide to caring for someone who has depression or bipolar disorder, offering specific suggestions for what to say or do to cope with impaired thinking and fluctuating moods. It draws on evidence-based medical information as well as her own first-hand experience of living with a mood disorder. As a physician she has treated, supported, and educated those living with and those caring for a person who has a mood disorder.

Jacob Parker Carver, community educator at the Mental Health Association, said that The Sophie Fund Author Series is an important step in his organization’s mission of raising awareness and promoting understanding of mental health issues in Tompkins County. “I hope that these events will spark conversations that inspire us to be more patient, compassionate, and supportive of each other's struggles,” he said.



*Jacob Parker Carver (MHA), Susan Noonan, Ashley Dickson (BSB)*

The Mental Health Association in Tompkins County presents

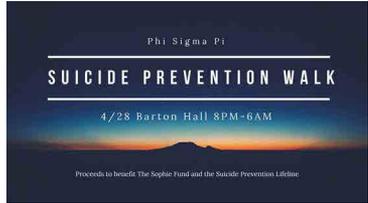


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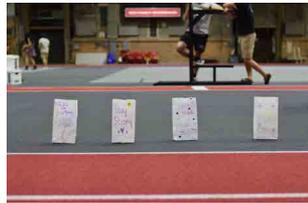
# Cornell Students Walk for Suicide Prevention

Cornell University's Phi Sigma Pi (PSP) national honor fraternity sponsored a suicide prevention walk on April 28 to benefit The Sophie Fund of Ithaca and the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

"Phi Sigma Pi organized this walk because we wanted to increase campus conversation about mental health," said PSP brother Elizabeth Cavic. "We believe that people not engaging in these critical conversations about mental health perpetuates the stigma surrounding poor mental health, which contributes to further stigmatization."



*Barton Hall track*



*Memorials*



*Phi Sigma Pi*

## The Sophie Fund in the news...



*Donor Advisor Scott MacLeod met on May 15 with Rosanna Herrera and the rest of the counseling team at Cairo American College, Sophie's high school alma mater in Egypt*



*The Active Minds chapter at Ithaca College invited The Sophie Fund to attend its general body meeting on February 2*

## Community Advisory Group

The Sophie Fund announced on February 24 the formation of its Community Advisory Group:

**David Evelyn, MD**, is vice president for Medical Affairs at Cayuga Medical Center in Ithaca.

**Aliana Heffernan** is a marketing associate for Condeco Software, and a board member of NYC Cornellians.

**James (“Jim”) Johnston** served for 40 years as president and chief executive officer of Family & Children’s Service of Ithaca.

**Nicole LaFave** is the program coordinator for Community Service and Leadership Development at the Cornell University Public Service Center, and a member of the Ithaca Board of Education and the Ithaca City Community Police Review Board.

## Strategic Plan 2017

The Community Advisory Group on April 9 adopted a strategic plan to guide The Sophie Fund’s work:

*To support mental health initiatives with tangible impact aiding young people in the Greater Ithaca community;*

*To raise awareness and end the stigma around mental illness and treatment;*

*To advance a zero suicide ethos in the community; and*

*To serve as a community advocate for young people struggling with mental illness.*

The Sophie Fund was established in memory of Sophie Hack MacLeod, a 23-year-old Cornell University fine arts student who lost her battle with depression in March 2016.



[www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org)