

Out of Darkness, a Resounding Success

by: Megan Hession

We were all bundled up and still rubbing the sleep from our eyes as we exited the J.U.M.P. bus and walked out onto an open grassy area in Baldwin Park. While it was cold and early, we were all excited to be there for a special cause. On Saturday morning, a group of students as well as faculty joined several hundred other people to participate in the 5K Out of the Darkness Walk. This community walk was to promote suicide prevention, research, and support for those who lost loved ones to suicide. This was also the very first Out of the Darkness Walk that took place here in Central Florida. One of our own faculty members, Vicki Long (administrative assistant in the Psychology Department) helped plan and execute this successful and very touching event.

This event raised about \$30,000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and also provided support for those who lost someone to suicide. The opening ceremony was very insightful and touching and walking with people who supported this cause was empowering. I got the opportunity to talk with other people, learn about them, their experiences, and gain strength from them. As someone who lost a close friend to suicide, this walk provided me with courage and strength. This walk and the experiences that I gained from it will stay with me for quite some time. I look forward to participating in it again next year!