

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Vera French Celebrates Mental Health Month

DAVENPORT, IA – Vera French Foundation is excited to announce its plans to celebrate May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Our organization has broken the month down into themed weeks to promote awareness and stigma reduction surrounding mental illness. The weeks and activities are as follows:

May 1-5, 2017: “Going Green” for Mental Health – Green is the color associated with mental illness. During this week, we will include a “green themed” kickoff event outside the Vera French Center, located at 1441 West Central Park Avenue in Davenport and decorate our facilities with anything and everything green.

May 8-12, 2017: Knowing the Numbers – To truly understand the impact of mental illness, it is important to understand the affects it has on our world. This week will focus on educating the community about the statistics surrounding mental illness and why it is so important to our community through sidewalk chalk and social media.

May 15-19, 2017: Reducing the Stigma - This week will focus on ways in which we can all work together, in this community, to reduce the stigma that is associated with mental health. Join us as we tackle one area, suicide, at our Through My Eyes event hosted at the Figge Art Museum on Tuesday, May 16 at 5 p.m.

May 20-26, 2017: Advocating through Hope and Determination- Our last themed week will focus on ways in which we can advocate for change to our government and area leaders on mental health policy and initiatives. We will also be partnering with Genesis Health System as we *Stand Together for Mental Health* at Modern Woodmen Ballpark. More information to come.

During May, Vera French will be a part of two major events promoting awareness and hope in the Quad Cities. The first will be Through My Eyes – a new way to look at mental illness, an event sponsored by Genesis Health System. This event will concentrate on suicide awareness and prevention. It will take place on Tuesday, May 16 from 5:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Figge Art Museum. From 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., Dr. Jess Fiedorowicz, an Associate Professor at the University of Iowa, will speak about Suicide Risk with Mixed States of Bipolar Disorder. This presentation will offer continuing education credits and is free to the public. The event program and dinner will occur from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Our featured speaker during the program will be George Smith, founder of AdamFest. Additionally, there will be a viewing of portions of “If You Only Knew: The Journey Through Teen Depression and Suicide” produced by Mike Mickle. To register for this event, please go to <http://www.TME17.eventbrite.com>

At Vera French, we are enthusiastic about celebrating mental health in a way that raises awareness in our community. Our CEO, Dr. Richard Whitaker, sees Mental Health Month as a great opportunity for the whole country to come together around mental health. He stated, “Research is demonstrating more convincingly than ever that mental health and emotional wellness are vital to every aspect of healthcare and key drivers of physical health outcomes. Vera French celebrates Mental Health Month with Hope and Determination. Because of advances in the treatment of mental illness, there is so much hope for recovery and we are determined to shatter the stigma surrounding mental illness.”

About Vera French Community Mental Health Center:

Vera French Community Mental Health Center provides quality, accessible and comprehensive mental health services for all in the Quad Cities community. Through the Center's clinical and community outreach services, our staff assists in providing the highest quality services to improve the lives of persons affected by mental illness.

A variety of services are provided including an outpatient clinic with prescriber and nursing services as well as individual and group therapy sessions, a School Based Therapy program within all four Scott County school districts, residential care in multiple facility and community based settings, an Integrated Health Home program, a program providing opportunities for socialization at the Carol Center, a Homeless Outreach program, a Peer Services program, and Rick's House of Hope offering individual and group services for grieving and traumatized youth. Education, support and individual and group supported community living services are also provided. For more information, please visit <http://www.verafrenchmhc.org>.