

THE CHARGER

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HOME SWEET HOME

The 2019 candidates pose Friday after the crowning of King Bryce Tharman and Queen Laurel Barber. From Left: Jackson Frank, Autymn Schreiner, Bryce Tharman, Laurel Barber, Maddy Hutley, Jacob Schutter, Alexis Hafenstine, and Dan Flach. Junior attendants: Anna Cassell and Cash Michaelis. Photo by Amy Cassell.

Yellow Ribbon founders speak about suicide prevention

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According to the founders of Yellow Ribbon, even at Wabaunsee High School, students are at risk of committing suicide.

The Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program is an international program dedicated to preventing suicide by making information accessible to anyone and removing barriers for people seeking help.

The program began in 1994 out of Westminster, Colorado, with a group of teens seeking to honor their friend Mike Emme, 17, who was found dead in the backseat of his yellow Mustang after committing suicide. When friends and family reached out to parents to offer their condolences and see if there was anything they could do to help, the Emmes' response was always the same: "Please," they would plead "if you're ever in this much pain, ask someone for help." After realizing how much those words had impacted the people in their community, the Emmes had the message printed on bright yellow paper (in honor of their son's car) to be handed out at his memorial, which launched the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program.

Wabaunsee has recently adopted its own chapter of the Yellow Ribbon Program, sponsored by Marilyn Workman and Annie Frank. With about 20 members, WHS Yellow Ribbon has lots of plans for this year, including educating junior high and high school students, being present at community events, hosting speakers, implementing a Yellow Ribbon Night at a basketball game, fundraising and ensuring that resources are available to students who may be struggling in or out of school. WHS Yellow Ribbon kicked off this school year by bringing Dar and Dale Emme to present to students and members of the community September 16-17.

Cofounders of the Yellow Ribbon Program, and parents of late Mike Emme, Dar and Dale Emme have been featured in People Magazine, Teen People, and Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul, and have appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, Good Morning America, and the Today Show. The Yellow Ribbon Program has expanded to every U.S. state, every province of Canada, and several countries in Europe, Africa, and Australia.

The Emmes came to WHS to speak about suicide prevention, and the importance of getting involved. They spoke to staff members and members of WHS Yellow Ribbon Monday morning for an intense training on how to be a link for people who are struggling. Students from Wamego and Mission Valley High School also attended. They talked about warning signs and risk factors of depression, and what steps to take if you find out that someone you know is considering taking their life. After the training, Dar and Dale helped students plan activities for the rest of the year and set goals for their individual clubs.

"I thought it went really well, and was a good learning experience... We came up with some really good ideas for the rest of the year," said Yellow Ribbon ambassador Justice Houston.

Chargers celebrate homecoming with parade, pep rally, crowning



Coach Jess Rutledge holds his son Ty after introducing the football team at the pep rally Friday. The Chargers won the football game 31-6 against the Central Heights Vikings. Photo by Lauren Schutter.



Top: Danny Davis delivers an epic poem to pump up the crowd. "Homecoming is a special time of year. The leaders say their favorite cheer. The band plays loud for everyone to hear. The Chargers are a team the Vikings need to fear. The coaches are ready to coach their best. The players on the field will do the rest. Seniors, play like it's your last play. Time to grind – The Charger Way. This town wants a win for you. To these kids you are idols, if you only knew. The theme is UP spelled U and then P. Victory tonight is what I see. Central Heights, tonight you are playing the Red and Blue. Vikings, I have just three words: You'll Float Too!"



Above: The WHS Pep Band plays downtown at last Friday's Homecoming pep rally. The band played through rain and mist at the football game to cheer the Chargers to victory. "It was fun to play with the band again," senior Falisha Willier said. "But the weather could have been better." Willier, who is not in band this year, volunteered to play with the band for the Homecoming parade and pep rally.



Above: Junior Trace Fager holds a "Can't Ketch UP" sign on the junior float during the parade. "It was good because they couldn't catch up to us," Fager said. Other class themes were "VSCO it UP," "Level UP" and "Blow it UP." Photo by Amy Cassell. Right: Senior Keaton Johnson throws flour at Daniel Flach during one of the candidates games. Johnson filled in for Jakob Schutter to play the games due to his recent surgery. "It was a great experience to step up and help out my fellow brethren," Johnson said. Photo by Mayah Mumpower.