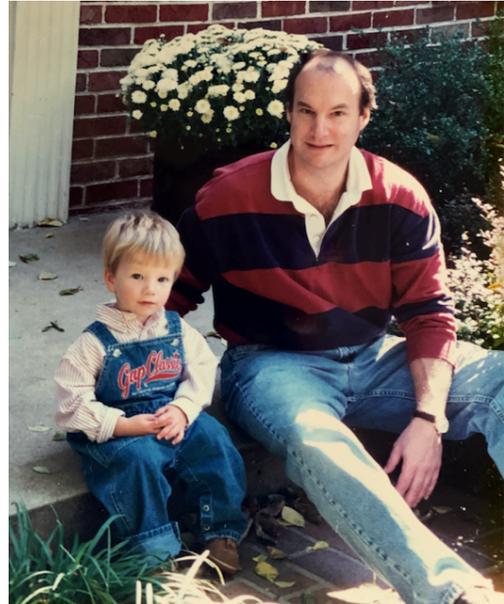


## What Does Depression/Anxiety and Addiction Look Like?

by Collyer A. Smith, Past President- Rotary Club of Ann Arbor 2016-2017; Past Assistant Governor- Rotary District 6380



Here is a picture of our son, Cam when he was 2 years old. We were having a father/son bonding moment, when one of my good friends and neighbor yelled, “Picture Time”! Hence, our expressions.

I have this picture on my dresser. As Cam was progressing through the Ann Arbor, Michigan public schools, from time to time, I would look at this picture, and reflect: *I wonder what Cam will be when he grows up? I wonder what his likes, interests, and passions, will end up becoming? And, I wonder, as a Dad, how I will be able to support and guide him through adolescence, and young adulthood.* So, you can only imagine, when Cam became a senior at Pioneer High School, he ended up looking like this:



The mental health challenges our youth faces, don't necessarily show up in a picture, do they? So what can we do?

A small group of us Rotarians started a mental health education awareness- Destigmatization of Mental Health, started by Past District Governor 6380 Barry Fraser at his District Conference. At first, we shared information and education. Then we started developing community involvement- beginning with a Mental Health panel discussion- with participants having engaged voices in their communities:

- A young woman Rotarian who lost her sister to a drug overdose- and started a nonprofit for a women's sober living facility in Livingston County (there were no facilities for women in Livingston County).
- A divorce attorney Rotarian who has seen the ugliness of divorces, and how it affects the well being of the children. He has started a Mental Health Committee (comprising of doctors, therapists, social workers, and others in the community) within his Rotary Club.
- And finally, a Rotarian from Chatham/Kent, Ontario, Canada. Their club engaged in a mental health initiative 10 years ago within their community. The initiative expanded to all of Canada- from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Vancouver, British Columbia.

This past summer, our District 6380 Mental Health Committee coordinated with 20 mental health organizations, ranging from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Families Against Narcotics -- to expand mental health awareness in our communities. Through Epic Races, we will hold the Ann Arbor Marathon- all to raise awareness and donations to our mental health causes. Our previous two years' virtual races (due to the pandemic) engaged 1,100 participations, with three different countries and 25 states joining in! Senator Debbie Stabenow, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget McCormack- all shared personal videos on what they are doing to e-race the stigma on mental health.

**THREE AMAZING WOMEN FROM MICHIGAN WILL TELL YOU HOW AND WHY!**



I will never forget one Mom who came up to me, as I was handing out t-shirts for the race: *My kids have been doing online classes all day- I told them this is a good cause for us to get out and get some exercise!!* Another Mom told me she lost her 15-year-old son, who took his life- and she was so appreciative for this campaign.

What can we do?



## **E-RACE THE STINGMA ON MENTAL HEALTH**

*The event will begin on Sunday, October 24th:*

For more information, go to: [www.eracethestigma.com](http://www.eracethestigma.com)

Why are we doing this?

So that the ones we love, and would do anything for, their voices will continue to be heard.

