

Riverside CARE Awards

Artie Crocker *Friend of Riverside*



Just over five years ago, Artie Crocker received the worst news that a parent can ever hear. His vibrant and funny 27-year-old daughter Christine had died by suicide. Christine was an Air Force veteran dedicated to serving her country and had been selected to start Special Forces training at the Pentagon. And she had struggled for years with depression.

Over the years her parents had helped her find therapy and inpatient psychiatric services, but they often felt at a loss trying to navigate a confusing system, the stigma around mental health issues, and a child trying to diminish what was wrong. In truth, suicide rates have soared in young people for the last two decades, and Artie came to recognize the profound need for open, honest conversation, and that the more problems are hidden, the more people feel alone.

He decided to channel his grief into bringing people together around something that he and Christine loved — music and comedy — for a night to raise funds for Riverside Community Care and awareness. Artie has noted that, “We have to normalize the conversation around mental health issues. Because the more we talk about depression and suicide, the more we can help.” So he called the evening *Notes for Hope* and envisioned it not as a sad event, but as a chance to raise awareness, raise funds, and raise hope for people struggling with depression and thoughts of suicide.

It was phenomenally successful. *Notes for Hope* was presented on June 20, 2019 at the Needham VFW Hall to a standing-room-only crowd, and raised over \$30,000 to support Riverside’s suicide prevention programs and therapeutic services helping teens, adults, military personnel and veterans.

The fundraiser made hundreds more people aware of the services Riverside provides and helped to chip away at the stigma that has surrounded mental health issues and suicide. We are touched by Artie’s enduring love for his daughter and are pleased to recognize him for channeling his grief into action and helping to educate and empower so many.