

BRENDA MORI, Clerk

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BATH – Nine people died due to substance abuse overdose in Steuben County last year. Those men and women were someone's child, mom or dad, loved and loving.

Those lost lives will be remembered at 10 a.m. on March 6 throughout Steuben on Black Balloon Day – as families throughout the United States and the world remember and celebrate the lives lost to drug overdose.

The leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., Americans are more likely to die of an opioid overdose than they are from a car accident or by a gun, according to the National Institute of Health.

“We will remember those lives lost and bring awareness to the fragility of life by placing nine black balloons near the county Courthouse in Bath on March 6,” said Stacey O’Dell, Steuben Council on Addictions Prevention Educator. “We will be joined by leaders in other towns, villages and cities throughout the county who mourn the losses and look to prevent the next from ever happening.”

O’Dell said proclamations already have been issued by the county, city of Hornell and town of Addison memorializing the day, with more expected.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has isolated us,” O’Dell said. “It hasn’t prevented us from caring. It won’t stop us from doing what we can to save lives.”

Launched in 2016 in Massachusetts by Diane Hurley and her daughter, Lauren Cook, the day first noted the tragic passing of their family member Greg Tremblay. The father of four, Tremblay died of an overdose on March 6, 2015. He was 38.

Some 42,000 people joined them for the first event, which has swiftly grown and crossed international borders.

Black Balloon Day is one of two events in March organized by the Steuben Prevention Coalition Opioid Committee and its partners.

The committee also will hold its first virtual forum, “Community Support for Recovery During the Pandemic: A closer look at Steuben County, focusing on the opioid epidemic, treatment, mental health and more” is set for 7-8 p.m. March 18.

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Important dates:

* Black Balloon Day 10 am, March 6 at the Steuben County Courthouse, 3 Pulteney Square, Bath

* A Virtual Community Forum: Community Support for Recovery During the Pandemic: A closer look at Steuben County, focusing on the opioid epidemic, treatment, mental health and more
7-8 pm, March 18 (Sponsored by the Steuben Prevention Coalition Opioid Committee)

