

# The Columbus Dispatch

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**OHIO STATE SPRING GAME  
REALLY MATTERS, MEYER SAYS**

WEEKEND **FRIDAY THE 13TH**  
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**FRONT ROOM**  
*furnishings*

Saturday, April 14, 2018

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## US strikes at Syria

By Robert Burns, Jill Colvin and Zeke Miller  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States, France and

Britain launched military strikes in Syria early Saturday morning to punish President Bashar Assad for a suspected chemical attack against civilians and to deter him from

doing it again, President Donald Trump announced. Explosions lit up the skies over Damascus, the Syrian capital, as Trump spoke from the White House on

Friday night. The strikes, carried out with ship-based cruise missiles and manned aircraft, targeted  
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## Deceased victim's words can be heard

By John Fuddy  
The Columbus Dispatch

Video testimony from Judy Malinowski, who died nearly two years after being engulfed in flames in a Gahanna parking lot, will be shown during the death-penalty trial of her estranged boyfriend accused of setting her on fire.

A Franklin County judge ruled Friday that prosecutors can use the video at trial, denying a motion by Michael W. Slager's defense attorneys, who sought to suppress the testimony.

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## Ohio's poverty figures better; ills remain

By Bill Bush  
The Columbus Dispatch

The rising cost of child care and college and the raging opioid crisis continue to have a major impact on poverty in Ohio, a new report says.

"These problems travel through society like a cancer," said Philip Cole, executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, which publishes

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## A campus engages



Ohio State University student Nick Wagner counts suicide-prevention posters in Enarson Hall. He and others concerned about mental health on campus have been distributing the posters to every OSU parking garage in hopes of preventing any more jumps or falls. [ERIC ALBRECHT/DISPATCH]

## As OSU seeks answers, students mount their own suicide watch

By Holly Zachariah  
The Columbus Dispatch

New to Ohio State University last fall, freshman

Nick Wagner went to a National Survivors of Suicide Day vigil on campus. There, as a remembrance, he and others were encouraged

to write down the names of people they knew who had killed themselves or attempted suicide. Wagner is 18 years old.

And he ran out of room on his paper. He tries to temper the

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## HELP

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shock of that by explaining that the slip wasn't very big. Then he stops, realizing that minimizes the impact of a critical issue — the last thing he would ever want to do. Especially now.

"I would need more than one hand to just count up the number of my friends who have been hospitalized. People need help, and we have to do a better job on this campus of getting it for them," said Wagner, a sociology and philosophy major who graduated from St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati.

That sentiment is his motivation for joining a new group of more than 300 students calling themselves Buckeyes for Mental Health. It has formed just since two people — a current student and a former student — separately fell or jumped from the top of the Ohio Union South parking garage within a four-day stretch this month. The current student died; the former student was taken to the Wexner Medical Center in critical condition but is recovering, Ohio State said Wednesday.

A freshman student died when she jumped off that same parking garage last year. That case was ruled a suicide.

Now, students are asking questions about care and demanding better mental-health services. OSU President Michael V. Drake has ordered two things: a public safety review of how to make the campus garages safer, and the creation of a task force to review what OSU does and what national "best practices" in behavioral health might be implemented.

Wagner said that isn't enough.

"We are not trying to place blame at all on the people in



Notes of love and support have been left near the edges of the Ohio Union South garage in hopes of discouraging anyone contemplating suicide. [BROOKE LAVALLEY/DISPATCH]

the system," he said. "But this university has stayed silent too long on depression and suicide and mental health. We need to do a better job."

### A call to action

Sitting behind her desk on campus — a desk where the box of tissues is front and center for easy access — Professor Darcy Haag Granello said America has a suicide crisis. Everywhere. And that includes college campuses.

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among college-aged men and women in the U.S., and there have been 58 documented suicides on OSU's campus since 2000. That's an average of more than three a year.

Granello founded OSU's Suicide Prevention Program more than a decade ago and remains director. The phrase that is the linchpin of her program is "create a culture of caring." That means, she said, looking after one another and reaching out, and recognizing early warning signs and being willing to help and intervene.

"Everybody's hurting at this university," Granello said. "I think the students can be afraid. They can be afraid (that) 'If I'm in crisis, who will save me?' But if you reach out, we've gotcha."

Wagner said one criticism from members of this newly formed group is that

the university has too few counselors and that waits for counseling appointments are too long.

Dave Isaacs, spokesman for Ohio State's Office of Student Life, under which counseling services fall, said the budget for the university's counseling center has increased from \$3.97 million to \$5.34 million in two years and the center has increased its staff by a third, to 44 clinicians now. But he pointed out that urgent needs will always come first.

Those students who reach out and go through the screening process and are found to have an urgent need can be seen within a day. For others, those steered to general, one-on-one counseling sessions, the wait has been up to five weeks for an appointment.

Wagner said that is too long. Isaacs, however, said it is important to note that the counseling center, where students can get up to 10 free sessions per academic year, "is not intended to take the place of a person's primary mental-health care. It is intended to supplement or enhance what they may already be getting."

Granello and Isaacs said there are other options, outside of traditional one-on-one counseling, that can be utilized. Every day there are drop-in workshops on campus aimed at dealing with specific stressors (such as anxiety over exams, relationship breakups

### How to help

Some of the warning signs that someone may be heading toward a mental-health crisis:

- Talking about wanting to die
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Isolation
- Giving away prized possessions
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Extreme mood swings, reckless behavior

### What you can do

- Take it seriously. Experts say as many as 75 percent of people who attempt suicide have told someone about their intention
- Call 911 if anyone is in immediate danger
- Offer to call a counseling center, or walk with them or drive them
- Ask directly if a person is thinking about suicide
- Listen and stay engaged

For help for yourself or someone else, call the national suicide-prevention hotline at 800-273-8255; the local hotline at 614-221-5445; text 4HOPE to 741741; or reach Ohio State's counseling center at 614-292-5766 during regular business hours, and at that number by pressing "Option 2" after hours.

SOURCES: NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE, OSU SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

or financial pressures), and multiple weekly group sessions. Granello's office runs specific programs targeted to helping the most at-risk populations on campus, such as international students, graduate and doctoral students and veterans.

Free, personal wellness sessions are offered at the recreation center as well as wellness coaching and stress-management and resiliency-training programs offered through what's known as the SMART Lab on the

fourth floor of the Physical Education and Activities Services building, where Granello's program operates.

Making sure students know about all those resources is the challenge. Maybe the current conversation will help, she said.

"In the wake of a tragedy — whatever that tragedy is — we have a moment that is a call to action," she said. "We need to remind everyone that we all have a role here today ... that we need to reach out to each other."

### 'We care'

Ronnie Wollett and six students went to the top floor of the Ohio Union South parking garage Tuesday morning carrying buckets of chalk. There, they fanned out to spread messages of hope. They marked the walls and the ledges with suicide-hotline phone numbers and encouragement. Among the messages Wollett wrote: You are not alone. You are loved. We care.

For him, this is personal. A survivor of a suicide attempt himself, the 20-year-old sophomore from Worthington came to campus in the fall and started a group called "Never Walk Alone" in January.

He said he appreciates the message the university is sending, but that isn't always enough.

"You can't just be nicer to me and make me feel better," Wollett said. "What about people like me, who have chemical imbalances and need counselors and doctors? What about them?"

His organization has advocated all semester for things such as a call system to touch base daily with students on a waiting list for counseling sessions.

"When we say you'll never walk alone," Wollett said, "we have to mean it."

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## REPORT

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the annual "State of Poverty in Ohio."

Despite that, Ohio has seen an 11 percent drop in people living below the federal poverty threshold since 2011. That's likely a result of an improved job market combined with Ohio's 2014 Medicaid expansion, in which 700,000 low-income residents gained health insurance, the report states.

In 2011, Ohio had 1.85 million residents below the poverty level. By 2016, that

had dropped by more than 200,000, to 1.65 million, or just under 15 percent of the state's population. The federal poverty level for 2017 was \$12,060 a year for a single adult, or \$24,600 for a family of four.

While the numbers got better, many people moved from below the federal poverty line to the next band, between 100 percent and 200 percent of the poverty level. "But more of them are still struggling financially," said Becky Zwickl, an assistant director with Thoughtwell, the Columbus research non-profit agency that wrote the report.

Cole credits Gov. John

Kasich's 2014 push to expand Medicaid for helping to drive down poverty. "Good health care allows people to get good jobs," Cole said. "People need to be healthy before they can work."

Even with the improvement, about 21 percent of the state's children, 31 percent of black people and 25 percent of Latinos still live below the poverty level. More than 756,000 Ohioans, 6.7 percent, live in extreme poverty, making less than 50 percent of the poverty level. Children, again, are disproportionately represented in this group — a third of those in extreme poverty are younger than 18.

But the working poor continue to struggle in Ohio's economy because of a mix of issues, including the cost of sending a child to an Ohio public college, where there is now one administrator for every 14 students, an increase of 25 percent over about a decade, the report said. The state legislature has cut financial support for public universities by more than 14 percent over roughly the same period, while student tuition is up about 28 percent.

"If the General Assembly wants to build these big bureaucracies at universities, they should pay for it, not the students," Cole said.

The opioid epidemic contributes to poverty, too, the report said, noting that Ohio's 11 overdose deaths each day can leave children without a parent, and therefore without income.

Child care continues to bankrupt poverty-level parents, who spend 73 percent of their income on center-based day care. A single parent can spend 83 percent.

"Child-care costs can be overwhelming on their own, but combined with expenses of basic needs can far exceed a family's income," the report says.

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