



## FINDING MY VOICE

by Ashley Muscat



*Ashley Muscat presenting at the Centerstone Life;Story VIP reception*

When I was invited to speak at the Centerstone Life;Story VIP reception, I was a bit nervous. I had never spoken in public before, especially about something so personal. I got even more nervous closer to the date when I heard how many people would be there! In my speech, I shared about my life before coming to the Academy and how it was one of the darkest times of my life.

I was playing games online and sleeping a lot, which was not a good use of my time and only served to make me feel more isolated. I was in and out of psychiatric hospitals on a regular basis. Thanks to the continuous support from both Centerstone and the Academy, all of that has changed. This October will be one year since my last hospitalization, the longest I have gone since being diagnosed.

On the day of the event, I was very nervous. I kept looking at how many people were in the audience, I was pacing back and forth, and I kept gravitating to where my Academy friends were sitting. But when I spoke and shared my story, I was met by thunderous applause from the audience! It felt great but then I was like "what did I just do?" I got compliments from so many people and even got a police coin as a souvenir from one of the Centerstone organizers! It was a very different experience from what I'm used to but I'm glad it went well, and I was happy to represent Centerstone and the Academy.

## WARM WELCOME TO LYNN RUPE

by Lynn Rupe

Hi everyone! I'm excited to join the Academy at Glengary as the new Career Services Director.



My background is a mix of entrepreneurship, sales, and vocational rehabilitation. Through all those experiences, one thing that's remained constant is my passion for working with people and helping them discover their strengths, build confidence, and move toward their goals. Supporting others in reaching their potential is something I care deeply about, and I'm really looking forward to contributing to the mission here. I'm also a certified yoga teacher, and I bring a lot of what I've learned through that practice into how I work — staying grounded, being present, and focusing on connection.

Outside of work, I love spending time with dogs (the more the better), practicing yoga, and getting my hands in the dirt with landscaping and gardening.

I look forward to learning, contributing, and collaborating with the Academy community!



*Sherdil Abid and Lynn Rupe working at the front desk*

# A 5K OF REMEMBRANCE AND RESILIENCE

by Vanessa Tamarro



(L to R) Vanessa Alcantara, Patty Haltinner and Vanessa Tamarro

On Saturday morning I woke up at 5:00am, exhausted and stressed. I knew I was expected at Nathan Benderson Park for the Centerstone Life;Story Walk by 6:45am to help staff the table for the Academies (Glengary and Bradenton), and I was running late.

This event was close to my heart. Ten years ago, I lost my brother Patrick to suicide. This was the single most tragic thing to happen to me in my entire life. I knew I wanted to honor Patrick's memory and prevent this from happening to anyone else.

When I got to the park, I was overwhelmed with the feeling of love for Patrick's memory. There were also 700 participants as well standing up for a cause that is so important, suicide. What a beautiful morning it was for a walk/run! I thought I would just be sitting at the Academy table, but Vanessa Alcantara talked me into walking the 5K. I did it even though I struggled to finish and got blisters on both of my feet. I did it for Patrick, and I was so happy I did.



Academy members and staff participating in the Centerstone Life;Story Walk



Dr. Roxann Taormina (Top Left) leading a discussion with members and staff of the Academy at Bradenton about the new "B' FIT" Initiative

## B'FIT

As part of our "B' FIT" Initiative, we were visited by Dr. Roxann Taormina, Assistant Research Professor at University of South Florida. Dr. Taormina was instrumental in helping to shape our fit initiative in Sarasota, and now she is helping us launch a similar program at our Bradenton campus.

Dr. Taormina conducted a focus group with members to discern how aware they are of the Academy's focus on the 8-Dimensions of Wellness (Occupational, Financial, Physical, Intellectual, Environmental, Social, Emotional, Spiritual), which dimensions they prioritize, and what activities they most enjoy. This information will be vital to creating a comprehensive program that meets our members' interests and supports their wellness goals.

The official launch of "B' FIT" (the B is for Bradenton), is still to be determined, but we are well on our way to establishing a baseline for moving forward. Stay tuned for exciting updates as we continue to develop a program that fosters transformational change in all of our lives.

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## BRADENTON CAMPUS

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