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Today's Events

Songs for Survivors

Program Board Holds Suicide Day Concert
Asst. Style Editor Nicole Ocran

"Every 16 minutes someone in the U.S. dies from suicide. Every 17 minutes someone is left to make sense of it." That was the slogan for the Songs for Survivors concert that took place last Saturday evening in the Johnson Center atrium.

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The slogan is from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, who sponsors National Survivors of Suicide Day, on Nov. 17.

The concert, sponsored by Program Board, was meant to raise awareness for suicide survivors. "Suicide is a big issue, obviously because it hurts a lot of other people, and I suppose this concert is focusing on those who are left to make sense of it," said communication major Trey Cunningham.

The common misconception about "suicide survivors" implies that the term only refers to those who have attempted suicide and survived. However, it also refers to anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide.

"[The event] can show support for the cause. It can show other people that suicide awareness is something to take seriously. When people come together and they see other people being there, they will know that George Mason is strongly committed to taking all necessary steps to prevent suicide." Cunningham said.

The concert got off to a slow start due to the basketball game ending shortly after the concert was supposed to start. Shapiro, sounding like a blend of Something Corporate and Arcade Fire, were very enthusiastic.

The crowd was responsive as the band, who hails from Harrisonburg, VA, fed off one another, which made for an enjoyable show. "We're performing for people who have had some hard times in their lives. We're there with you," said lead singer Jeremy Teter.

This was the band's first performance at Mason, though they already have a fairly large fan base. Teter jumped off the stage during their last song to drum in the middle of the eager audience.

"I loved it. This is my third time seeing them. I love them because they have so much energy and they really seem to enjoy what they're doing. [They] play a lot of benefits. I saw them at Locks for Love," said sophomore communication major Jess Moore.

After Shapiro brought the house down, much of the crowd that had gathered to see the

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band left. A handful of students stayed and a few others trickled in shortly after the next performers, another local band called Future, finished warming up. The reggae/hip-hop band provided those present with a good mix of mellow and upbeat jams.

The crowd favorite was an experimental piece of Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech set to music with vocals by guitarist Gordon Sterling. Vocalist Charlz Bucket included the crowd with jokes and shared wise words about how we are at war with ourselves and that "[TV's] not for the soul, y'know? Music's for the soul."

The concert was the first collaboration between WGMU and Program Board. "This is the start of a new age in student organizations. WGMU has the aspiration to eventually form a bond with all of the student organizations at Mason," said promotions director Sam Turner.

The Program Board kiosk had several flyers promoting upcoming shows and events and a single handout from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention with warning signs for depression.

WGMU also had a kiosk with a student survey on students' awareness of and about the radio station.

Although the concert had good music and a surprising turnout, there was much to be desired in terms of just how much awareness was raised about suicide. For more information suicide prevention and what you can do to help, visit www.afsp.org.

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