

## Joint Military Suicide Prevention Symposium – June 12, 2013



FCBHA participated in a first of its kind, Joint Military Suicide Prevention Symposium on June 12, 2013 at the Keystone Conference Center in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Initiated through the efforts of the Service Members, Veterans, and Family Members Military Policy Academy, and made possible through a grant awarded to the Pennsylvania Adult/Older Adult Suicide Prevention Coalition, it was intended to be a collaboration project designed to determine and plan for the mental health and suicide prevention needs of members of all branches of the military, past, present and future.

The audience consisted of current and former service members, family members, military staff working in the area of suicide prevention, professionals in the field of Mental Health and others interested in preventing suicide among veterans. Among the many distinguished guests was keynote speaker Major General Mark A. Graham who retired from the U.S. Army with almost 35 years of service and an inventory of awards too numerous to mention. Major General Graham poignantly shared his story of losing two sons, Kevin, a Senior Army ROTC cadet studying to be a Doctor at the University of Kentucky who died by suicide and Jeff, a 2nd Lieutenant who was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq shortly after.

He spoke of how the death of one son was, although a parent's worst nightmare, an element of honor, but that the death of his younger son to suicide was so much more complicated by "the things they did not know". He admits the stigma associated with depression discourages some from seeking help and influences the way the people around them provide support. Both Major Graham and his wife Carol are now determined to use their story to create awareness and educate everyone of what they can do if someone they love is depressed or suicidal. (Click [here](#) to read their story).

Bethany and Robyn were honored to participate in the planning and execution of this very dynamic and thought-provoking symposium. For more information about this symposium, the C.A.L.L. (Community Awareness of Life and Loss) support group, or other mental health initiatives in Fayette County, please call 724-430-1371 or see the Mental Health Page of our website, [www.FCBHA.org](http://www.FCBHA.org).