

RIGHT: Melissa Johnson (Grubb), Bethany Lawson's mother and founder of Bethany's Hope, thanks those in attendance for showing out for the 8th Bethany's Hope Suicide Awareness and Prevention Walk. **BELOW:** Participants in the walk wore t-shirts that read on the back "Suicide Crisis Line #988." | PHOTOS BY MACEE SWAFFORD



The youth group from Melissa Johnson's (Grubb) church sang a gospel tune before the start of the walk. | PHOTO BY MACEE SWAFFORD



Attendees begin their walk through downtown Williamsburg in honor of Bethany Lawson. | PHOTO BY MACEE SWAFFORD

HOPE

Continued from page A1

the inside, you know, and everyone struggles.”

Johnson said Bethany’s death changed her understanding of suicide and the importance of being present for others who may be struggling.

“You don’t have to

understand what that person’s going through. You don’t have to be able to fix it. You just have to be present,” she said.

The event — which coincides with Suicide Prevention Awareness Month — included music, prayer, fellowship and the annual suicide prevention walk. Jay Hamblin, along with members of the youth

group at Johnson’s local church, performed several gospel and Christian songs before participants began the walk.

Attendees were also invited to line the sidewalk outside The Green Space with colorful artwork and inspirational messages intended to encourage and uplift those passing by.

Johnson said the support of the community remains an important part of the event and her journey following Bethany’s passing.

“God places people in your life to help you get through things,” Johnson said. “And you need to be that person, as well as the person on the receiving end.”

For those experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis, the 988

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available by calling or texting 988.

CRASH

Continued from page A1

Sheriff’s Office, the crash occurred at 11:07 p.m. last Saturday when a 2021 silver Mercedes traveling eastbound on KY 1956 entered a sharp right-hand curve, left the roadway and overturned.

On Tuesday, Laurel County Sheriff’s Office accident reconstruction-

ists returned to the scene during daylight hours to conduct a more extensive examination of the crash.

The sheriff’s office said the scene had been documented and marked during the initial investigation Saturday night, allowing investigators to return with specialized equipment. Detective Brad Mink, Captain Chris Edwards and Capt. Richard Dalrymple used a GNSS satellite

mapping instrument and an unmanned aerial drone to document and analyze the crash scene.

Other Laurel County personnel involved included Shift Sgt. Travis Napier, Det. Gary Jordan, Deputy Jay Smallwood, Dep. Joey Smith, Dep. Justin Lewis and Dep. Gilbert Acciardo. Several London City Police officers also assisted, according to the sheriff’s office.

The reconstruction was part of the continuing investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crash. The sheriff’s office has not announced any additional findings regarding what caused the Mercedes to leave the roadway.

The crash remains under investigation by the Laurel County Sheriff’s Office and London City Police.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT SOLICITATION OF FUEL VENDORS

KCEOC Community Action Partnership announces the Coal, Wood, Propane, Fuel Oil and Kerosene Vendors are being solicited to provide home heating fuel in the SUBSIDY and CRISIS Components of the 2026-2027 Home Energy Assistance Program in Knox County.

Interested Vendors may pick up a Vendor Packet at KCEOC main office on US 25E from 8:00 to 5:00 starting 9/28/26 through 10/9/26.

Packets must be completed and returned to Angie May, KCEOC PO Box 490 Barbourville, KY 40906; 606-546-3152, by 10/9/26 at 5:00.

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Now Hear This

HEARING AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS LINKED TO ELEVATED DEMENTIA RISK

Older adults with both hearing and visual impairments - or dual sensory impairment - had a significantly higher risk for dementia in a recent study published in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring*.

In the study of 2,051 older adults (22.8% with hearing or visual impairment and 5.1% with both impairments) who were followed over eight years, dual sensory impairment was associated with an 86% higher risk for dementia compared with having no sensory impairments. During follow-up, dementia developed in 14.3% in those with no sensory impairments, 16.9% in those with one sensory impairment, and 28.8% in those with dual sensory impairment.

Participants with dual sensory impairment were also twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease (the most common form of dementia) than those without sensory impairments.

"Evaluation of vision and hearing in older adults may predict who will develop dementia and Alzheimer's. This has important implications on identifying potential participants in prevention trials for Alzheimer's disease, as well as whether treatments for vision and hearing loss can modify risk for dementia," said lead author Phillip H. Hwang, of the University of Washington.

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