

# BRAINERD DISPATCH

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“ We can’t control mental illness, but we can control how we treat one another. ”

## Smiles for Jake movement moves forward: Set to launch Thursday

By Jennifer Kraus  
Staff Writer

“ We can’t control mental illness, but we can control how we treat one another. ”

Those words, spoken by Pastor Hans Anderson of Trinity Lutheran Church in Brainerd Sunday, Feb. 17, at Brainerd High School, helped launch the nonprofit organization for Smiles for Jake, a suicide prevention movement through spreading positivity through life-affirming actions, with a short-term goal of reducing the suicide rate.

The Smiles for Jake mission is everyone should have hope – hope through spreading proactive positivity while lending a helping hand, a listening ear, or an open heart so no one has to live in despair and hopelessness.

“Every person is loved, valued and is important,” Mike Bjerkness said to a crowd in the BHS gymnasium. “The values for Smiles for

Jake will be hopeful, positive, passionate, honest and kind.”

The Smiles for Jake movement came about after a death by suicide by 16-year-old Jake Haapajoki, a Brainerd High School sophomore. Through conversations between family and friends and Jake Haapajoki’s father, Eryk Haapajoki, organizers and supporters wanted to do something not only to address the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues, but what can be done to address the issues.

“I can’t believe it’s almost been a year,” since Jake passed away Feb. 21, 2018, Eryk Haapajoki said. “We sat here a year ago (Jake’s funeral was at BHS) and we heard the lyrics, ‘it’s been a long day without you my friend and I’ll tell you all about it when will I see you again.’ Someday we all will be able to see Jake or our other loved ones but it won’t be anytime soon, but we need to

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Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch

Eryk Haapajoki (left) hugs Alex Haapajoki Sunday, Feb. 17, at Brainerd High School as part of the making of a promotional video for Smiles for Jake, a suicide prevention organization inspired by the suicide death of 16-year-old Jake Haapajoki, Eryk’s son. The community was invited to take part by giving each other hugs, smiles and high fives.

Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch  
The community was invited to take part by giving each other hugs, smiles and high fives Sunday, Feb. 17, at Brainerd High School as part of the making of a promotional video for Smiles for Jake, a suicide prevention organization inspired by the suicide death of 16-year-old Jake Haapajoki.

## Look for fresh flakes Feb. 20

For those busy pulling snow off rooftops, the news that more is coming may not be the best news of the day.

For skiers, snowmobilers and snow-angel makers, it’s the winter to dream about as another round of snow appears to be on the way adding to February’s largess. Snow accumulation of 2-5 inches is possible with this latest snowfall arriving Wednesday, Feb. 20. The National Weather Service reported the fresh flakes are

expected to impact the morning and afternoon commutes.

“This is likely to make a slippery commute on Wednesday, but stay tuned as forecast snowfall totals are likely to change,” the National Weather Service in Duluth reported.

Much of Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Wadena and Todd counties were in line for 2-3 inches, according to the most recent weather service update Monday and the same one where they noted those num-

bers are likely to be updated. Morrison and Mille Lacs counties may receive more snow with 3-4 inches, or higher in the southern end of Mille Lacs County. It all depends on where the storm tracks. The most recent forecast noted up to 6 inches of snow could fall Wednesday along the North Shore and maybe 8 inches of snow in southern Minnesota.

And it may not be the last

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## How Minnesota spends your money, and the hurdles facing a new budget deal

By Christopher Magan  
St. Paul Pioneer Press



Don Davis / Forum News Service

“The Progress of the State” statue, better known as the Quadriga, stands at the base of the Minnesota Capitol dome in this file photo.

ST. PAUL — It’s the thing Minnesota Republicans and Democrats have to agree on — eventually.

Crafting a new, two-year state budget is lawmakers’ top priority this legislative session. The current, \$45.5 billion biennial spending plan runs out June 30 and without a new one, state government will shut down.

Gov. Tim Walz, House Speaker Melissa Hortman and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka have vowed not to let that happen.

With the nation’s only divided Legislature, they say they want to prove government can still get things done in a bipartisan way.

Negotiations are likely to be intense over the next few months. Luckily, the state has a \$1.5

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## Tribal leaders mark historic moment, painful past at ‘Sovereignty Day’

For the first time tribal leaders were asked to speak with Minnesota lawmakers about their history, top concerns

By Dana Ferguson  
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Representatives from each of the 11 American Indian tribes in Minnesota on Monday, Feb. 18, gave state legislators a refresher course on the history of Indigenous people in the state and asked that they keep them in mind when writing laws.

SOVEREIGNTY: Page A3



Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service

Members of a drum group play and flag bearers enter the Minnesota House of Representatives Monday as part of Sovereignty Day.

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### Athletics B1

GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF ‘GALLY’



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