

# Bluebird is back: Labor Day run for Brookie B raises awareness about suicide

**Bill Bowers** Your Turn article for the Tallahassee Democrat

Published 6:00 a.m. ET Aug. 29, 2022

Live, from the JR Alford Greenway, it's the Bluebird Run and Walk for Brookie B — the annual Labor Day event for suicide awareness and prevention. The cause is serious, but the event is fun.

“Let’s talk suicide!” Yeah, probably not the first thing you want to say at a party. But for many of us, talking about suicide is vital to stopping it. More on this later. First, the fun.

You can’t buy anything at Bluebird. You can have all the hot or cold brew coffee, iced tea, sports drinks, watermelon, oranges, bananas, muffins and energy bars you want. Then be a kid. Have a sno-cone, fresh cookies, and brownies. All free.



Runners from Aucilla Christian Academy warm up before starting the 5k at Monday's Bluebird Run at the J.R. Alford Greenway. *Hali Tauxe/Democrat*

## Want a challenge?

Just try pushing a PR on our demanding 5K trail course. All wide multi-use trails cover a variety of elevations and terrains. You'll be glad to see water stations at the top of two memorable hills.

Awards go to the first male and female finishers overall, masters and grand masters. Age group awards go to the first three finishers, male and female in five-year age groups from under 15 to 70+



Dozens of men, women, and children braved a dreary Labor Day morning Monday at the first Brookie B Bluebird Run at the J.R. Alford Greenway. Parents of the late Brook Bowers, Mary and Bill, organize the event along with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to raise awareness on depression and other mental health issues. *D.A. Robin/Democrat*

## Want a nice walk?

Take the same well marked course at a leisurely pace. Enjoy views of meadows with bluebird houses and fall flowers, with woods with welcoming shade. Or take the shorter one-mile course across the scenic Lafayette Heritage Trail pedestrian bridge, almost entirely in the shade, with water provided at the turnaround.



Hundreds of runners joined in the second Bluebird Run, a charity 5K to raise awareness about suicide prevention held Sep 4, 2017, at the J.R. Alford Greenway. *Hali Tauxe/Democrat*

## Want to honor our loved ones lost to suicide?

Stop by Memory Lane to view photos and postings by survivors of suicide loss. Craft a personal message to your loved one. Share a hug with someone who understands unbearable loss.

## Want to learn?

Want to learn more about mental health and the services available in Tallahassee?

All our leading mental health providers will have tables with information and kind attendants.





Bill and Mary Bowers, daughter Gina and husband Seth at the *Bluebird Run Special To The Democrat*

## Want to join the team?

Want to join the team that makes all this possible? It takes a small village of over 70 volunteers. You can be one. No special skills required. Just a willingness to give a few hours of your time to a worthy cause.



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## Support NAMI and donate

Want to support the Tallahassee affiliate of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), but can't make it on Labor Day? Donate. Any amount. Any time. Online. Quick and easy.

Together we can prevent suicide and make life better for someone who may otherwise contemplate it.

Come Labor Day morning, a huge tent with party lights, balloons, and live music will greet you as you enter the greenway. Come with anticipation. Leave with renewed hope.

Questions? Find Resources. Register. Volunteer. Donate. [BluebirdRun.com](http://BluebirdRun.com).

## If you go

*Mary and Bill Bowers are the parents of Brook Bowers, in whose memory this event was conceived.*