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## Families of fallen addicts hope to save other lives

By Maureen Boyle

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EASTON - David A. Semenza Jr. stayed sober for 30 weeks before heroin drove him to rob a Mansfield bank — and to his death.

Blane Goodreau stayed heroin-free for nearly six months — then died of an overdose after relapsing.

Now, their grieving families are hoping to help others struggling with heroin addiction by starting funds — in the memory of the two men — to pay for treatment and drug education in the region.

“If this can benefit another child, if it can save a life, that is what I want,” Semenza’s mother, Jacqueline Shea, said.

Semenza’s family started a memorial fund at Citizen’s Bank in Easton in his memory. Goodreau’s family established a fund in his memory at the North Easton bank in Easton. Money for both funds will be used to help in the battle against drug addiction, the families said.

“We want to help someone,” said Goodreau’s sister, Rachel Nichols of Easton.

For the families, it is a step they hope will heal their own hearts broken by a drug-related death.

“We need to educate people and make them aware this is a major problem in the area,” Shea said. “It can happen in any community. It does happen in any community. It doesn’t know any socioeconomic barriers.”

Shea’s 20-year-old son was shot to death April 24 by police after officers stopped the Ford Explorer believed to be the getaway vehicle in a bank robbery minutes earlier in Mansfield. Officers opened fire after Semenza made “furtive motions” and was seen “reaching for something” authorities said at the time. No weapon was found and no weapon was used in the robbery.

The driver of the SUV, George F. Moore, 21, faces bank robbery charges.

Goodreau, 44, died of an overdose in Gilroy, Calif., after struggling with drug addiction for decades.

“He would be clean for good periods of time,” his sister said. “Some were longer than others.”

She believes her brother — drug free for months — used again after a back injury. “You hear it over and over: They relapse then use again and it’s too much,” Nichols said.

The Enterprise, in the series, “Wasted Youth” published last year, found that at least 144 people in the area have died within 3 1/2 years from overdoses of opiates, such as heroin, as well as oxycodone, the chief ingredient in the powerful painkiller OxyContin.

The overdose numbers were uncovered after The Enterprise reviewed death certificates filed in 28 cities and towns in the greater Brockton-Taunton area.

Shea, a member of Learn to Cope, a support group for families of opiate-addicted children, said more treatment is needed — and more people need to realize heroin is in every community.

She said she wants her son to be remembered for the boy he was before heroin stole his soul.

“He was a very loving son,” she said. “He had a heart bigger than himself. He did for people what he couldn’t do for himself.”

Now, she said, she hopes the memorial fund will accomplish what her son couldn’t in life: Keep an addict drug-free.

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