

Writer creates legacy for friend

By Erin Borla
Correspondent

Josh Erskine of Sisters is a freshman at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts. The 18-year-old recently made a significant cash contribution to the Deschutes County Mental Health program focusing on suicide prevention.

Funds were raised through the sale of a book he penned and self-published in honor of his friend who took her own life just a few years ago.

Both Josh and his friend Taye Nakamura-Koyama were students at Cascades Academy. Josh really got to know Taye through her art.

"She posted online that she was looking for a writer for a web-comic that she wanted to write" he said.

Josh submitted a few ideas and they started working together.

"She was not afraid to speak her opinion — ever," said Erskine of his friend. "She was an incredible artist. I remember looking over her shoulder once and she was drawing with two pencils, one in each hand."

On August 12, 2014 Taye took her own life. She was just 16.

Josh was grieving. His dad, the Chaplain at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, had heard the night it happened. The school had a meeting — in the middle of summer — to help students and their families understand the sudden loss and help cope.

"In the midst of grieving, I remembered the idea that we had and what would happen to it," said Josh. "I decided, instead of a comic, I would try to write it up as a book and self-publish it. I wanted to do this as a legacy for her."

At Cascades Academy, students are required to do a mastery project where they intern for a year. Josh was

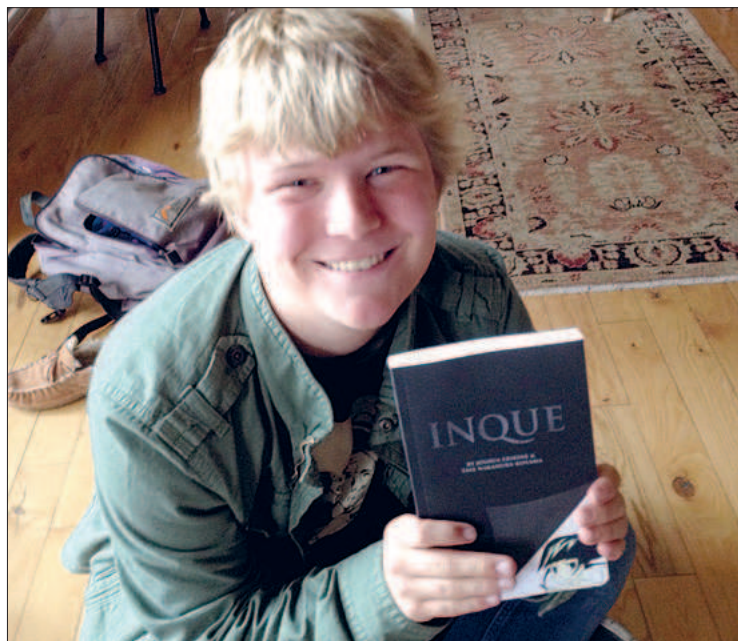


PHOTO BY ERIN BORLA

Josh Erskine contributed \$1,636 to suicide prevention efforts.

allowed by his teachers to work on his book and learn about self-publishing for his project. He worked diligently throughout the year but was continually met with questions of his own.

"I wondered constantly, 'am I really doing her justice,'" he said. "Is this what she would have wanted? How would the story be different if she were still here."

He knew it was important. "I felt like I was meant to be doing this," he said. "It was important to her and very necessary to the community to tell her story."

"Inque" released on May 20, 2015 on amazon.com and retails for \$12.99. The book is about Claire, a young writer. When a small black book enters Claire's life everything changes — "she is thrust into a world of magic and fantasy and becomes the one person who can save its inhabitants."

Erskine received help from family members who had self-published in the past and from friends with the editing. In the end he even received special permission from Taye's parents to have her listed as the co-author.

"This was important to her — she was an incredible artist and had amazing ideas," he said. "I wanted to do this as a legacy for her."

With sales from the book, Erskine created the Inque Fund within the Deschutes County Mental Health office. The fund is used for suicide prevention services.

"It's a big thing in my family that we take 10 percent of what we make and do something that will improve the world," he said. "After I paid everyone back who helped me through the process I am taking 10 percent of the book sales and donating to suicide prevention in Deschutes County."

Prior to Erskine leaving for college he delivered his first check in the amount of \$1,636.

"Oftentimes people my age allow their age to limit them," he said. "They say 'I'll do this when I'm older or have more experience,' I want them to know, no matter how old you are, you are not insignificant. Trying things can lead you to great things and if they don't, you can learn from it and try again."

A big boost...



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Bank of the Cascades donated \$2,000 for scholarships for pay-to-play fees for the Outlaws.

FURRY FRIENDS FOUNDATION
501(c)(3)

FurryFriendsFoundation.org

Furry Friends Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Sisters FRESH HOP FESTIVAL

HOSTED BY: **THREE CREEKS BREWING CO.**

RELAY FOR LIFE
American Cancer Society

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1
VILLAGE GREEN CITY PARK • SISTERS, OREGON

\$5/PINT GLASS • \$1/4oz. POUR
NOON - 8 P.M.

OVER 20 NW BREWERIES
FEATURING FRESH HOP BEERS

LIVE MUSIC: BIGFOOT MOJO & RYE SMILES
FEATURING PETE KARTSOUNES

PRESENTING SPONSORS



SISTERSFRESHHOPFEST.COM | FRESHHOP@THREECREEKSBEWING.COM

CORK CELLARS
SHOP AT CORK FOR THE BEST WINE PRICES IN SISTERS!
FRIDAY & SATURDAY SPECIAL:
MEATLOAF LIVE MUSIC
SAT., 10/1, 7-9 PM
KATIE & DOUG CAVANAUGH

Tues-Sat 12-8 p.m.
391 W. Cascade Ave.
541-549-2675

SISTERS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Thrift Store

Just a reminder, we will be closed Oct. 2 for Halloween changeover.

541-549-1740
141 W. Main Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, 12-4 p.m.
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ReStore

50% OFF
Anything in the store that has an ORANGE price tag!

Orange is my favorite color!

541-549-1621
254 W. Adams Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Closed Sundays
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.