MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, suicide is a national and statewide public mental health problem which occurs among all age groups and across all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, and the 2nd leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 to 34 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021) (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2012); and

WHEREAS, more than half of Americans know someone who has thought about suicide (Harris Insights & Analytics LLC, 2020); and

WHEREAS, on average, there are nationally 130 suicides per day (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); and

WHEREAS, more than 8 million adults report having serious thoughts of suicide, 2.5 million report making a suicide plan, and 1.1 million report a suicide attempt (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2012); and

WHEREAS, suicide most often occurs when stressors exceed the current coping abilities of someone living with a mental health condition; and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness and suicidality works against suicide prevention by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking life-saving help and further traumatizes survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS, many people who died by suicide did not receive effective behavioral health services due to the difficulties associated with accessing services by healthcare providers trained in best practices to reduce suicide risk, prejudices and discrimination surrounding the use of behavioral health treatment, and the stigma of losing a loved one to suicide; and

WHEREAS, public awareness of the warning signs and the networks available for at-risk individuals are essential to continue lowering the rates of suicide; and

WHEREAS, while there is no single cause of suicide and no single suicide prevention program or effort that will be appropriate for all populations or communities, initiatives based on the goals detailed in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2012) and the Washington State Suicide Prevention Plan (Washington State Dept. of Health, 2016) to increase access to quality mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services will help prevent suicide; and
WHEREAS, suicide is preventable, and it is appropriate to bring awareness about suicide.

NOW, THEREFORE, DO I, Seth Fleetwood, Mayor of the City of Bellingham, proclaim Saturday, October 16, 2021 to be

OUT OF THE DARKNESS SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

in the City of Bellingham, Washington, as a way to address the mental health needs in Bellingham of seniors, adults, youth, children, and families is fundamental to having a healthy community.

Signed this 12th of October, 2021

Seth Fleetwood, Mayor
City of Bellingham