

# Former NBA All-Star Publishes Book in Celebration of May Being Mental Health Awareness Month

*James Donaldson, a Former NBA All-Star, pens book about being on the Verge of Suicide to working his way back to now being a Candidate for Mayor of Seattle*

SEATTLE, WA, USA, May 18, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As a professional athlete, you'd think James Donaldson, an All-Star player with the Dallas Mavericks in 1988, would have it all.

And he did. Until he didn't.

James lost it all: his health, life savings, marriage, business, mother, and home all within a year's time. It almost became too much to bear. He declared bankruptcy, lost his home to foreclosure, had to close his long-running business, which forced him to live on a very limited income, and had four major surgeries in five years.

He seriously contemplated suicide.

"I fought long and hard to stay here on earth," he said. "I emerged from that darkness realizing that I had a reason to still be here, which was to be a voice and advocate for suicide prevention, and mental health awareness. And to let people know how I made it through, and tips that I utilize to get through all that darkness."

He shares his story in his new book, "[Celebrating Your Gift of Life: From the Verge of Suicide to a Life of Purpose and Joy](#)."

"Before the pandemic, I'd be in front of an assembly of 500 kids, and maybe five or six students would pull me aside and tell me they're suicidal right now. And they don't know how they're going to make it through tonight. It's the saddest thing," he said. "This motivates me to help these young people. Kids aren't the same as when you and I were kids. Smartphones are their



James Donaldson

best friends. They don't have any real, true real people as friends like we did. And that smartphone isn't going to help you when you can't sleep at night."

Men of all ages and races are known for not reaching out for help.

"Being a big, strong former professional athlete, myself a person of color, we are the category that will not speak up. But I'm speaking up about it. I talk about it. I cry about it. I share my story over and over, and I try to get other men to do likewise," he said.

Donaldson also created the [Your Gift of Life Foundation](#), a platform for him provide speaking opportunities to students. The board of directors includes several mental health professionals who will help evaluate the best resources for people.

The foundation will raise money through contributions, his speaking appearances and book sales with the ultimate goal of the foundation is to raise funds to provide scholarship opportunities for students of color going into and graduating in the mental health fields. There are so few mental health professionals of color, and there is a huge need for more to help to destigmatize mental health issues in communities of color.

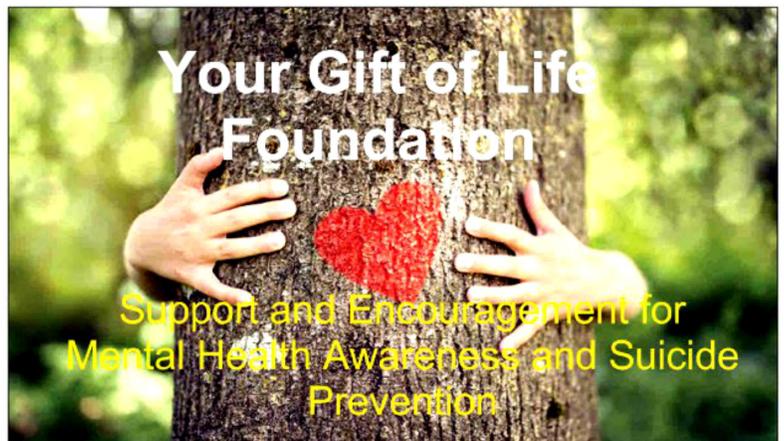
"Currently, 1% of all mental health professionals are of color, which is a big reason communities of color still have a huge stigma and a taboo about mental health," he said. "Mental health issues are going to be the next pandemic," he said.

He will start a podcast to interview men who will tell their stories of how they are going through difficult times.

About the Book



James Donaldson talking about his mental health journey with Coach Lenny Wilkens



Your Gift of Life Foundation

“Celebrating Your Gift of Life: From the Verge of Suicide to a Life of Purpose and Joy” tells his story of a harrowing, heartbreaking journey of working his way through darkness and depression back to a promising and productive life.

But James never gave up all hope and realized that God saw him through.

At the end of each chapter, readers will find exercises to write their thoughts to help them through a difficult time.

“There is a bright side somewhere. The key is to keep hanging in there until you find it, and you will,” he said.

#### About James Donaldson

James Donaldson is a former NBA All-Star, business owner, and community fixture in Seattle for 40 years. And now a candidate for the office of Mayor in Seattle.

After an outstanding basketball career with Washington State University (graduate 1979), he went on to play professional basketball in the NBA with the Seattle Supersonics, San Diego/L.A. Clippers, Dallas Mavericks, New York Knicks, and Utah Jazz. In 2006, James was inducted into the Pac-10 Sports Hall of Fame and the Washington State University Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2010, James was elected as a board member for the NBA Retired Players Association.

In 2009, James finished a strong fourth in a crowded field of eight for mayor's office for Seattle.

In 2010, James received the NBA Legends of Basketball ABC Award for outstanding contributions in Athletics–Business–Community.

James is a long-time resident of Seattle. He believes in being a role model for success and professionalism to young people, to whom he devotes so much of his time. He serves on several boards and committees.

To request James Donaldson to speak at your event, contact him at:

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