

John Fielder wants to stop others from losing their children

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DENVER - Famed Colorado photographer John Fielder is speaking out about his only son's suicide and sharing a special photograph to help prevent others from experiencing his grief.

J.T. Fielder was 26 years old on March 21, 2006 when went on a backcountry skiing trip to 13,000 feet before taking his own life at Butler Gulch, which is near Empire, off Highway 40.

Fielder and many other professional photographers and painters who have experienced a mental health crisis are donating their work to a display called "Mirrors and Metaphors," which will be on display at the Access Gallery in Denver from Feb. 8 to March 7.

The picture Fielder put in the show was captured at sunrise at Butler Gulch, exactly one year after the suicide. All proceeds from the display will benefit suicide prevention programs in Colorado. 9NEWS is a media sponsor for the event.

"We skied up in the dark on backcountry skis and got there well before sunrise," Fielder said in a recent interview. "(It's) a beautiful photograph with the sun rising, lighting up the snow pack with glorious clouds, the light being filtered yellow and decorating the snow. Glorious shadows in yellow and blue."

Mental health advocates have fought the stigmas attached to suicide and other mental health issues and hope that through art and expression, people can view individual journeys toward coping, recovery and hope.

"Maybe we're just afraid of it," he said. "We don't feel there's a solution to it. We don't understand the origins of it. Therefore, it's easy for us to ignore it sometimes and maybe we call it a

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J.T. Fielder

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stigma because we don't understand it."

"Expression through art, through revealing to others what you feel inside of you rather than keeping it invisible might be one of the solutions to mental illness," said Fielder.

Access Gallery is located at 909 Santa Fe Drive in Denver. Reservations for the opening night of the display can be made at www.blacktie-colorado.com/rsvp. The Event Code is: CJSart08.

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