

By Maddy Baillie

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# Morton filmmaker invited to Community Access Changing Minds Young Filmmaker Festival in New York to show documentary for Don't Lose Hope



*Ewan Thomas speaking at the event. Photo: Community Access, Inc / Sean Sime Photography*

A 21-year-old has had his work showcased at a New York film festival.

Ewan Thomas from Morton volunteered to make a film for Bourne-based Don't Lose Hope a couple of years ago with the aim of creating an open discussion about mental health.

It tells the true story of a man from the Bourne area, Dave Manning, who had been at his lowest point but found a way to overcome his struggles by reaching out for help.

The former Bourne Grammar pupil said: "Being a topic I am very passionate about, I was happy to help.

"I met with him and immediately had ideas of how we could do it.

"We did an hour long interview which has been cut down into the film."

In the short documentary, Dave returns to the location where he had planned to take his own life 10 years before.

He speaks about what led him to be in that position and how he has gone on to live a happy life.

The film promotes the help mental health charity Don't Lose Hope offers and the importance of asking for help.

Ewan said: "I think it is not talked about enough and isn't completely understood as it is an illness you can't see.

"A lot of people are suffering yet they look totally ok.

"I found out Dave used to be my bus driver.

"To think I was just walking past him and didn't know what he was going through is a powerful thing."

He describes making a documentary on Dave's story as an 'eye opener' but he felt a lot of pressure.

Ewan, who is about to graduate from Leeds Beckett Northern Film School, often submits his work to festival organisers to 'get them out there'.

Almost two years after creating the film he was contacted by an American company called Community Access which holds an annual young filmmaker competition as part of its New York City Mental Health Film Festival.

Ewan admits that when he got the phone call inviting him he 'didn't know what was going on' and was 'shocked'.

He was flown out to New York for the festival where his film was shown at the Village East Cinema, Manhattan on May 20 and took part in a panel discussion about mental health.

Ewan, who was the only person from the UK selected, had his work chosen as 'the most outstanding film' by nine out of the 10 judges.

"I felt proud," he said.

To see the film visit: <https://youtu.be/v3MjdIYi7hg>