



## **ViewFest 2026 Fact Sheet**

ROYAL OAK, Mich. — At a time when the United States continues to grapple with rising rates of loneliness, anxiety, depression, substance misuse, and social disconnection, one Michigan based initiative is offering a different approach.

On July 12, 2026, more than 7,000 people are expected to gather at the Detroit Zoo for ViewFest 2026: Bloom Forward, now recognized as the world's largest mental health and prevention festival.

What began in 2021 as a small grassroots effort has evolved into a large scale community movement focused on a simple but often overlooked idea: prevention works best when people feel connected.

Unlike traditional conferences, awareness campaigns, or clinical settings, ViewFest brings together healthcare systems, public agencies, nonprofits, schools, advocacy organizations, community groups, families, and individuals in a free, highly interactive environment designed to reduce stigma and make support visible and accessible.

"Mental health is often discussed after a crisis occurs," said Glen Schwartz, President of Words of Hope 4 Life and creator of ViewFest. "ViewFest was built around a different question: What if we invested more energy in connection, belonging, prevention, and community before people reached a breaking point?"

The event addresses mental health through the lens of social determinants of health, recognizing that emotional well-being is influenced by factors such as housing stability, food security, education, employment, transportation, access to healthcare, social support networks, and community safety.

Organizers believe the overwhelming public response reflects a growing national demand for spaces that foster human connection in an increasingly isolated world.

Registration for the 2026 event has surpassed 5,500 attendees more than six weeks before the festival, significantly exceeding previous years and placing the event on track for record attendance. The festival's growth comes amid continued national conversations surrounding mental health access, youth well-being, loneliness, and the need for innovative prevention strategies.

ViewFest has previously set two world records through its Hug Buddy Postcard Project and the largest single-day Narcan training initiative. Today, it serves as a living example of what community-centered prevention can look like when resources, relationships, and public engagement intersect.

The 2026 theme, Bloom Forward, reflects growth, resilience, hope, and the belief that communities become stronger when people have opportunities to connect with one another and access support before crisis occurs.

### **Event Details**

ViewFest 2026: Bloom Forward - July 12, 2026

Detroit Zoo - Royal Oak, Michigan

8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. - Admission is free.

### **About Words of Hope 4 Life**

Words of Hope 4 Life is a Michigan-based nonprofit organization focused on prevention, resilience, community connection, and mental wellness through innovative community engagement initiatives. Founded in 2021, the organization develops programs designed to reduce stigma, strengthen belonging, and improve access to support and resources.

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