



Creation of The Twisten Foundation to support young teenagers facing mental health

Prague 4.12.2023

- The creation of The Twisten Foundation has today been announced to pay tribute to Karel “Twisten” Ašenbrener, the talented Czech esports player who took his own life this June after battling depression.
- The Twisten Foundation aims at helping and supporting teenagers facing mental health issues, using modern forms of communication including special projects within the esports industry.
- The Foundation is organising an event on December 15th to raise funds to combat an alarming documented deterioration in the mental health of young people based in the Czech Republic.

Insufficient help for the alarming growing number of young people affected

A survey by the National Institute of Mental Health highlights significant concerns around the mental state of young people in the Czech Republic. One in three ninth-graders show signs that indicate moderate to severe anxiety. In addition, forty percent show signs of moderate to severe depression. According to the Czech Statistical Office, 1,302 people took their own lives in the Czech Republic in 2022. This statistic is rising fastest among young people. Suicide now accounts for a quarter of all deaths in the 15 to 24 age group. Psychological care is often expensive, and there is a long-term shortage of child psychologists.

Faced with this alarming situation, the Foundation was established in November 2023 by the family of Karel Ašenbrener: mother Ivana, father Karel and two brothers. The family has contributed a capital of CZK 250,000 to the fund. The French esports organisation Team Vitality, in which Twisten had a successful career, will also contribute. Sazka will offer significant financial support by organising a charity esports tournament on December 15th 2023 to mark the Foundation's creation.

Karel Ašenbrener, known as Twisten in the esports community, who would have celebrated his 20th birthday today, sadly lost his battle with depression earlier this year. *"Karel's passing is still very painful for the whole family. But because of him, we decided to turn the pain into something meaningful. This is a Foundation whose aim will be to help young people with mental health problems. I'm sure my son would agree and support it,"* says **Twisten's mother, Ivana Ašenbrener**, also on behalf of her husband and two other sons.

Three urgent support initiatives to help teenagers and families in need



The objective of the Foundation is to reduce the number of adolescents suffering from psychological problems, and thus, reduce the number of suicides among teenagers. Through various actions, the idea is to promote counselling services for teenagers and parents. Indeed, parents very often have no idea what is going on with their child, or do not know how to talk to them or deal with them. For parents, too, struggling with their children's psychological problems is a big burden. The Foundation wants to help those who find themselves in similar situations as Karel Ašenbrener. *"I consider increasing mental literacy to be crucial, but at the same time it is necessary to work on destigmatizing mental problems, because young boys in particular do not talk about their emotions or problems and do not want to talk about them,"* explains Ivana Ašenbrener.

The Foundation has identified three key levers for action in its advocacy work:

1/ To PROVIDE FUNDS for the services of private professionals for teenagers from socially disadvantaged families. And for selected organisations and charitable projects.

2/ To RAISE AWARENESS through the creation of preventive education events, especially in secondary schools. And charity projects, events and educational prevention workshops health.

3/ To SUPPORT the families and young people in need through educational content to promote mental health and suicide prevention (film podcasts, interviews and videos, dedicated website with relevant articles or blogs by mental health professionals). This communication will involve voices of experts, influencers and streamers with whom young people can more easily identify. This specific support is for young people to get enough information and knowledge to help themselves and others.

The global esports community mobilises for The Twisten Foundation

The gaming and esports community, in which Karel Ašenbrener has excelled and built up millions of fans worldwide, is one in which more and more young people are becoming involved. It's important to support special projects focused on esports, as other top athletes can also suffer from depression due to the pressure of performance and the need for achievement.

In close collaboration with the Twisten Foundation, French organisation Team Vitality, in which Karel Ašenbrener played as a VALORANT professional player, launches simultaneously [a special project called KARE](#) (a combination of Karel's name and the English word care). KARE aims at fostering the dialogue on mental health within the gaming community, supporting the Twisten's Foundation and promoting positive actions from fans, teams, publishers and the whole esports ecosystem.



"When we lost Twisten, our beloved VALORANT player, we were all deeply affected. Not a day goes by when we don't think of him. He was an extraordinary person, a pure soul and the greatest of showmen. His death has created a need for action within the club. At our humble level, we are launching Project KARE to encourage dialogue on the difficult and complex subject of mental health within our industry. We want to support the efforts of the Twisten Foundation, which will implement concrete actions to help young people and families in Twisten's situation." **explains Fabien "Neo" Devide, President of Team Vitality.**

In addition, one of the companies that decided to support the Twisten Foundation is the Czech lottery leader Sazka. The company has been involved in esports for a long time and on December 15th is organising a charity esports tournament called *Sazka No Rivals*, the proceeds of which will be donated to the newly established fund.

"Although mental health is a society-wide issue, it has long been an underestimated topic in the esports industry with discussions around it still in their infancy. It is therefore one of the topics we want to systematically address in our work in esports. The creation of the Twisten Foundation can bring about a fundamental and much-needed change. We have great respect that the Ašenbrener family has decided to launch this project and we are extremely happy to support it," comments **Petr Jonák, Director of External Relations and Sustainability at Sazka**, adding: *"During the Sazka No Rivals tournament, a charity fundraiser will be announced. Sazka will double the proceeds after the tournament. We are ready to send up to one million crowns to the Twisten Foundation."*

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