



# NEWSLETTER

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JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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(608) 280-2435

## Remembrance Issue

### H IS FOR HONORING



*by Therese Gump*

To be able to honor a person’s memory is a great consolation when they are no longer around. How do we come to terms with honoring the memory of the person we loved who has died by suicide? We do not wish to honor the act, and yet we wish to maintain a reverence for the person’s life. To hold dear the good times and the happiness that we shared for many years is part of our healing. How do we manage to keep those moments that we cherished in a special place in our hearts while detaching them from the awfulness of the suicide? What can we do that lets us savor the sweet moments of their life and not deify the person or add a heroic flavor to the choice they made that destroyed this precious life?

It may take us a long time to focus on the positive parts of this life which was so suddenly erased from our presence. The negatives are so dramatically imprinted upon our souls. Painful images keep passing before our eyes. Our failure to find a means to stop them beats us up emotionally like waves washing up on the sand wearing us away. When we can, we need to let go of some of that pain and allow ourselves the truth in the knowledge that we did the best we could do.

I remember when my son played Santa Claus. That has become a good memory even though that first Christmas it was excruciating to see a different person in the garb of this Spirit of Christmas. It hurt so badly that I wanted to scream sometimes. Now I don’t feel that way. The memory of his wanting to help out that way at Christmas for his nieces and nephews is a warm glow inside of me. I never thought it would be a truly pleasant

memory again, but it is.

My focus is not on the pain of his death, but on the joys of his life. I can honor his strengths – and he did have strengths before this depression overcame him.

A survivor who lost a son to suicide told me in the very first weeks after his death to hold fast to the good memories. I did not fully understand what she meant, but I do now. The intensity of the pain is no longer present.

I can honor the good memories and bless him for his strengths. I can toast to his life, to his love and to the son he was to me. I honor the blessing of the time he was with us, not his act, but the joy of his life.

*Source: The Obelisk, November 1991, Vol 12, Number 16*



#### IN THIS ISSUE

- H Is For Honoring
- Remembering Our Loved Ones
- Journeys Into the Past
- Suicide Loss Survivors Bill of Rights
- A List of Promises
- Twin Rainbows
- A Sincere Thank You to Our Donors
- Online Survivor Support Group Continues for now
- Connecting with Journey Mental Health

# REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES

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Thank you to those who have shared your Remembrances for this issue. We respect the privacy and confidentiality of this information, so this section will not be included in the online version of the Newsletter. Requests can be made for a written copy of the Remembrance Issue by providing your name and complete mailing address by email to [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org) or by phone (608) 280-2435 (confidential SOS Voicemail).

## HEARTS LIKE WILDFLOWERS

*by Nikita Gill*

I hope you are blessed with a heart like a wildflower. Strong enough to rise again after being trampled upon, tough enough to weather the worst of the storms, and able to grow and flourish even in the most broken places.

“What was once enjoyed and deeply loved, we can never lose. For all that we love deeply becomes part of us.”

— *Helen Keller*

## HEALING

*by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.*

To heal in grief is to become whole again, to integrate your grief into yourself and to learn to continue your changed life with fullness and meaning. Experiencing a new and changed “wholeness” requires that you engage in the work of mourning. It doesn’t happen to you; you must stay open to that which has broken you. Healing is a holistic concept that embraces the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual realms. Note that healing is not the same as curing, which is a medical term that means “remedying” or “correcting. You cannot correct your grief, but you can heal it.

## JOURNEYS INTO THE PAST

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Our world is full of things that will take us back into the past, remind us of our loved one and what we have lost by his or her passing. Old songs. Fragrances. Seasonal changes of weather. Holidays. Birthdays. The list goes on.

Well, let them come, these reminders. Sometimes they bear with them a poignant sweetness. Sometimes we think they will break our hearts, so devastating is our sense of loss, brought into sharp focus again.

As time passes, these sieges will be more short

lived, easier to move through and come out on the other side.

It is well not to fight these images of a lost world, to let them pass through us — savoring their sweetness if it is there, bearing the pain while it lasts — knowing that in a little while we can lay claim to ourselves again.

The journeys into the past always include a way back into the present, which is where I live.

*Source: Healing After Loss – Daily Meditations for Working through Grief (May 6), Author Martha Whitmore Hickman*

## SUICIDE LOSS SURVIVORS BILL OF RIGHTS

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*by JoAnn C. Mecca*

I have the right to be free of guilt.

I have the right not to feel responsible for the suicide death.

I have the right to express my feelings and emotions, even if they do not seem acceptable, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

I have the right to have my questions answered honestly by authorities and family members.

I have the right not to be deceived because others feel they can spare me further grief.

I have the right to maintain a sense of hopefulness.

I have the right to peace and dignity.

I have the right to positive feelings about the one I lost through suicide regardless of the events prior to or at the time of the untimely death.

I have the right to retain my individuality and not be judged because of the suicide death.

I have the right to seek counseling and a support group to enable me to honestly explore my feelings to further the acceptance process.

I have the right to reach acceptance.

I have the right to a new beginning.

I have the right to be.



# A LIST OF PROMISES

by Nancy A. Mower, TCF, Honolulu, HI

I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.

I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be “brave” or “getting better” or “healing by now.”

I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can’t deal with their own feelings. I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

I will not blame myself for my child’s death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. When feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in

order to give my body strength it still needs to help me cope with my grief.

I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous — that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that “slipping backward” is also a normal grief process and these moods, too will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

Even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

*Reprinted from The Compassionate Friends.*



# TWIN RAINBOWS

by Meria Rae Martin

Yesterday, I saw a glorious sight, a true vision of nature. I saw a double rainbow. The first rainbow, closest to the earth, was very bright, colors clearly defined. The second rainbow, the one closer to heaven, was misty and loosely formed.

My dear brother, I thought of you. You represented the second rainbow. You were sent down to show me your presence to show your closeness to me. I was told in a dream that you are never far away from me.

My life has changed. I have had to redefine and challenge myself — to make strong my weakness, because you always “took up the slack” for me. You always did for me what I could not do for myself.

This past year, one of our friends finally let go of his sorrow. He was able to talk and hug me, without breaking down or weeping over the memories of us. It has been difficult for our friends and family to separate

you and me. They still say our names together. They have commented: “Where you see one, you’ll soon see the other.”

It has been hard for me to help all of these folks to heal; to let them know that they can still love me. I am the same person, but without you. At times, it has seemed an overwhelming task, but I can only try to be the friend that you taught me to be. Then, maybe, they’ll see you are still here. All that you are — your spirit, love and friendship — live through me.

*Reprinted from The Compassionate Friends, The Cape Cod and the Islands Chapters, Buzzards Bay, MA, Sept-Oct 2010*

“Every day may not be good, but there is some good in every day.”

— Alice Morse Earle

# A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



**Darlene Abrahamson**

in memory of her son  
Casey

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

in memory of loved ones

**Donna Bichanich**

in memory of husband  
Craig Bichanich

**John Carrier**

in memory of son  
Rick Robert Carrier

**Lorie & Trav Hardy**

in memory of  
Casey Abrahamson

**Ed & Mary Drinkwine**

in memory of  
Daisy Koss, Paul Brusky,  
MaryAnne Marquart

**Todd Harrop**

in memory of William, Donald  
and Marcus Harrop

**Julia Heusinger**

in memory of her son  
Steven Joseph Heusinger

**Kimby Hughes**

**Karen Ihm**  
in memory of her sons  
Gary Ihm and Scott Ihm

**Helen Kahl**

in memory of her son  
Dan Kahl

**Judy Killian**

in memory of her son  
Anthony (Tony) Killian

**Kathy Koenig**

in memory of her son  
Zachary Koenig

**Mary Agnes Kuehmichel  
(Abromovich)**

in memory of her brothers  
William, Edward & Paul  
Abromovich

**Marlin & Sharon Lehmann**

in memory of nephews  
Gary & Scott Ihm

**Dawn Ivan & Ted McCutchin**

in memory of their son  
Case T. McCutchin

**Shawn & Katie Miller**

in memory of her brother  
Brian Paul Brunner

**Mary Moldenhauer**

in memory of  
David Moldenhauer

**Lynn Prochaska**

in memory of son  
Jason Friske

**Jeffrey Rudolph**

in memory of  
Joshua Love Rudolph

**Marc Schnipper**

in memory of his brother  
Steven Schnipper

**Amy Schulz & Dave Welo**

in memory of Amy's brother  
Rob Schulz

**Kathy Saunders**

**Marcia Solkoff Eskin**

In memory of her son  
Jonah Solkoff Eskin

**Benita Walker**

in memory of  
Jim Terrance

**Kathleen Witt**

in memory of son  
Steven Larson

**Darlene Woldt**

in memory of son  
Derek Walsvick

To make a tax deductible donation online by credit card, visit [www.journeymhc.org/donate](http://www.journeymhc.org/donate) and designate "Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Support Group" in the pull-down menu option.

To make a tax deductible donation by check, make it payable to Journey Mental Health Center with SOS in the memo line. Mail to:

Survivors of Suicide Support Group  
c/o Journey Mental Health Center  
25 Kessel Court, Suite 105, Madison, WI 53711

Please Consider —

\* A donation in memory or honor of someone.

\* A donation towards our Quarterly Newsletter so that we might continue to bring it to you and others.

\* A donation toward resources that are provided to new survivors.

## ONLINE (ZOOM) SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP CONTINUES FOR NOW

With no definite date set as to when in-person meetings might resume, we continue to offer **online group support**. We offer this option to survivors who would have normally desired to attend our in-person groups.

The following criteria are needed for participation.

- Be a survivor of a suicide loss and wish to interact with other survivors.
- Be over 18 years of age.
- Have technology available to use ZOOM either through computer, phone or another device.
- Be willing to register and speak with a Journey Mental health provider to be assured that a group experience would be appropriate and then receive an online invitation (Group entry codes).
- Be able to provide your email and phone contact information.

- Be aware that this is a discussion, support group and is **not** a “therapy” group.
- Be able to provide a quiet space, without interruptions when participating, insuring confidentiality of the group.
- Be available at the group starting time.
- Do not invite or include others who have not been specifically invited to the session.

All group discussions are led by a trained volunteer fellow survivor and supported by a Journey Mental Health professional.

Meetings, for now will be held on our regular meeting nights, the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The length of the meeting (usually 1½ hours) will be determined by the facilitator.

To request participation please email [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org) or call and leave a message for call back at SOS Confidential Voicemail (608) 280-2435.

### SOS SUPPORT GROUP PURPOSE

*To share experiences for living and coping beyond suicide loss*

## SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT ZOOM MEETING SCHEDULE

*A self-help group for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one by suicide.*

**2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**

For extra support please use Crisis Intervention 24/7 phone line at 608-280-2600 or leave a message at SOS voicemail 608-280-2435.

APRIL							MAY							JUNE							JULY						
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		12														14							12				
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		26														28							26				

## CONNECTING WITH JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH

**SOS Confidential Email:** [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org)

**SOS Confidential Voicemail:** (608) 280-2435

**24/7 Year 'Round Mental Health Crisis Line:** (608) 280-2600

**Journey Mental Health Center Website:** [www.journeymhc.org](http://www.journeymhc.org)

Select Programs & Services, Community-Based Services, Survivors of Suicide

### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Along with survivor support from Journey Mental Health many other resources are listed in our “Help After Suicide” brochure which is posted on our website, [journeymhc.org](http://journeymhc.org).

General groups along with specific loss groups for Moms, Spouse & Partner are available through online registration.



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