

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2011

NEWSLETTER



Website: www.auburnsos.com

e-mail: support@auburnsos.com

WHAT IS S.O.S.?

S.O.S. stands for Survivors of Suicide. S.O.S. groups provide support for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. Based on guidelines established by the American Association of Suicidology, the groups are self-help and peer-led. The goal is to help deal with the loss and trauma and grief associated with that loss. Auburn S.O.S. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization as defined by the IRS.

LOVE GIFTS:

If you would like to remember your Loved One who has completed suicide in the form of a Love Gift it will be mentioned in the newsletter if we have your permission. There are no dues or fees at S.O.S. Donations are always welcome to help defray such costs as printing, postage, and the purchase of new tapes and books for our lending libraries and other costs associated with the community awareness programs we are involved in.

Donations may be mailed to the address below or made at any meeting. Please make your checks payable to Auburn, Olympia or Tacoma SOS.

Auburn Survivors of Suicide
28824 21st Ave. S.
Federal Way, WA 98003

Contact information for each group and its facilitator is on page three.

To all of you who left something in the donation boxes, thank you!

Many thanks to Marleen O'Ravez for a love gift in memory of Louis Baker and Alex Smith.

Many thanks also to Marlene Hamilton for a love gift in memory of 'Smokey' D. Hamilton.

Many thanks to Bachan Longworth for a love gift in memory of Jim Longworth.

I've been asked, "what does it mean on the Registration Sheet when I give permission to include information about my loved one"? Elsewhere you will see the page where we remember those we've lost. IF you give permission, your name and that of your loved one will be included. The relationship will be listed just as you list it on the Registration Sheet. Your loved one's name will also be listed on their birthday month.

IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE:

Please do not hesitate to pick up your phone and call another survivor from the S.O.S. group if you are having a hard time. We've all been there!

Ron Callahan	253-226-3689	Lost son	Kathy Melsness	253-446-6500	Lost daughter
Andee Nydegger	253-820-1911	Lost brother	Joan Tabrum	253-838-8947	Lost husband
Kathy Crowley	253-471-9412	Lost son	Kathy Sterling	206-244-8729	Lost grandson
Janis Fesenmaier	360-866-2509	Lost brother	Susan Johnson	253-838-8721	Lost daughter
José Martin	206-228-7413	Lost son			

Call José if you would like to speak to another survivor in Spanish.

Me gustaria ayudar a la gente que necesite hablar espanol

Thinking of You Especially:



Nov	2	Suzanne Gray	<i>Lost husband Marshall</i>
Nov	3	Kristin & Charlie Evans	<i>Lost son Scott</i>
Nov	3	Rick and Ellen Nelson	<i>Lost son Erik</i>
Nov	9	Uta Klingele	<i>Lost brother Karl</i>
Nov	11	Jenine Ellisor	<i>Lost son James</i>
Nov	11	Linda Page	<i>Lost daughter Stephanie</i>
Nov	12	Joel Richardson	<i>Lost brother William</i>
Nov	13	Lisa Lauderback	<i>Lost friend's son Bill</i>
Nov	13	Michelle Nelson	<i>Lost brother Shon</i>
Nov	14	Mimi Kennedy	<i>Lost husband Brandon</i>
Nov	16	Hayley Sterling	<i>Lost son Michael Shane</i>
Nov	16	Kieth & Kathy Sterling	<i>Lost grandson Michael Shane</i>
Nov	16	Roberta Parker	<i>Lost son Matthew</i>
Nov	19	Deloris Brodt	<i>Lost daughter Toni</i>
Nov	19	Sharon Baughman	<i>Lost daughter Rachel</i>
Nov	19	Jeff Halvorson	<i>Lost father Larry</i>
Nov	20	Gretchen Price	<i>Lost spouse Jeff</i>
Nov	22	John Aumell	<i>Lost brother Michael</i>
Nov	24	Dennis & Linda Hovland	<i>Lost son Vinnie</i>
Nov	24	Marla Hovland	<i>Lost brother Vinnie</i>
Nov	26	Leslie Phillips	<i>Lost son Robbie</i>
Nov	27	Joan Helbacka	<i>Lost brother Bill</i>
Nov	27	Jeff Halvorson	<i>Lost brother Jerry</i>
Nov	28	Naomi Frank	<i>Lost boyfriend Jimmie</i>
Nov	28	Carole Duncan	<i>Lost son Nick</i>
Nov	28	Lydia & Larry Garrett	<i>Lost son Phil</i>
Nov	29	Anna Johnson	<i>Lost son Jens Christopher</i>
Nov	30	Sandy Payne	<i>Lost son George</i>
Dec	1	Jennifer Utterback	<i>Lost boyfriend Brandon</i>
Dec	1	Jennifer Nelson	<i>Lost mother Linda</i>
Dec	1	Rusty McIntosh	<i>Lost mother Edith</i>
Dec	1	Ellen Boldhaupt	<i>Lost mother Edith</i>
Dec	2	Doug & Cathy Johnson	<i>Lost son James</i>
Dec	2	Andrew Jones	<i>Lost friend James</i>
Dec	10	Susie Aumell	<i>Lost cousin David</i>
Dec	12	Dorothy Holmes	<i>Lost daughter Marcia</i>
Dec	12	Denise Mecartea	<i>Lost friend Marcia</i>
Dec	12	Klara Lukacs	<i>Lost husband Stephen</i>
Dec	15	Lynn Nieland	<i>Lost former spouse Brian</i>
Dec	15	Shella Petterson	<i>Lost son Troy</i>
Dec	16	Emily Gould	<i>Lost friend Sean</i>
Dec	16	Jan Lumsden	<i>Lost mother</i>
Dec	18	Kausaundra Jones	<i>Lost dad Jeff</i>
Dec	22	Marjorie Silver	<i>Lost dad Mac</i>
Dec	23	Kim Dickson	<i>Lost husband John</i>
Dec	23	Jalene King	<i>Lost brother Matthew</i>
Dec	23	Betsy Vela	<i>Lost father Kim</i>
Dec	24	Stacy Mayer	<i>Lost brother Scott</i>
Dec	24	Joan Robertson	<i>Lost brother Steven</i>
Dec	31	Dolly White	<i>Lost fiancé Steve</i>
Dec	31	Gary Keizer	<i>Lost daughter Rachel</i>
Dec	31	Liz Carr	<i>Lost brother Michael</i>

We also remember our loved ones whose birthdays are in the following months:

November birthdays: Robin, Dean, Marnie, Sandi, Marcus, Ron, Dwaine, Mac, Tom, Edith, John, Jennifer, Jonathan, Stephen, Douglas, Mark, Robby, Danielle, Kolby and Eric.

December birthdays: Victrina, Michael, Rick, Donnie, Robert, Matthew, Paul, Wayne, John, Jimmie, Robbie, Jack, Jens Christopher, Chris, Jerry, and Jennifer.

We strive for accuracy. If we are missing the name of your loved one or if the information is incorrect please let us know so we can correct it! Send an e-mail to newsletter@auburnsos.com

MEETINGS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER:

The Auburn Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. Meetings are held at the Auburn Fire Station located at 1101 D Street in Auburn from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you have any questions or need directions please call Andee at 253-820-1911.

The Olympia Group meets on the third Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Westwood Baptist Church in room E-10, located at 333 Kaiser Road in Olympia from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. For more information or directions please call Janis at 360-866-2509.

The Tacoma Group meets on the first and third Monday of each month. Meetings are held at the Life Center at 1717 S. Union St. from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Call Kathy at 253-446-6500 for directions or information.

The Burien Group meets on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held in the St. Francis School at the St. Francis of Assisi Church, 15226 21st Ave. S. in Burien from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.. Please park in the lower parking lot and call Kathy S. at 206-244-8729 for directions or more information.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a change – the group now meets in the school instead of the Parish Hall.

There is no fee to attend any of these groups. For more information send an e-mail to support@auburnsos.com



LIBRARY: A lending library is available to survivors. Information pertaining to suicide and grief may be checked out for a period of 30 days. Please return any books or publications you have checked out so that others may use them. Thank you! Is there a book that you have found particularly helpful? Let us know and we will pass that on to others!



SOS Holiday Gatherings



The holiday season is fast approaching. Please join us for a special holiday meeting of Auburn SOS on Tuesday, December 13th. We will meet starting at 6:00 p.m. Bring finger food to share and a picture of your loved one. We will have our quilt on display along with the recently completed second quilt. We will also have directions and fabric available if you are interested in making a quilt square of your loved one. We will end the meeting with a candle-lighting ceremony. Please call Andee at 253-820-1911 for more information.

Our hosts, the Auburn Fire Department participates in the Toys for Tots program; we invite you to bring a new toy to donate. This is a way many survivors commemorate the one they lost to suicide – by giving to someone else.

The Tacoma Group will hold a special holiday meeting at their 3rd Monday meeting ~ Dec. 19th. We will be decorating ornaments for our loved ones. Please bring finger food to share with the rest of the group. Kathy will bring the beverage. Call Kathy at 253-446-6500 for details.

The Olympia Group will hold a special holiday meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 20th Call Janis at 360-866-2509 for details. They will end the meeting with a candle-lighting ceremony.

The Burien Group will be joining the Auburn Group meeting on December 13th. Folks will be carpooling from the Burien/SeaTac area, call Kathy at 206-244-8729 if you would like to join the carpool.

Getting Through the Holidays: Advice From the Bereaved

- **GRIEF AND LOSS**

The signs of the holiday season are ubiquitous: holiday decorations in the stores, piped in Christmas carols, holiday displays at the malls, TV programs focusing on selecting the perfect gift, holiday parties and gift exchanges at work. In many cases, this bustle of activity contrasts markedly with the emptiness and despair of grief. As one grieving person expressed it, "I wanted to crawl into a hole and come out after the holidays had passed." Drawing primarily from my conversations with the bereaved, I describe commonly experienced difficulties and ideas that may be useful in dealing with them.

Dilemmas Associated with the Holiday Season

1. **The Requirement of Cheerfulness.** There is an expectation during the holidays that people should be cheerful. One mourner explained that she hated going to holiday gatherings. "I could not be cheerful and I did not want to bring other people down by being sad. Going to such gatherings is like having to eat liver and pretending you like it," she said.
2. **The Mine Field of Social Exchanges.** On many occasions, the innocent remarks of others may put a knife through the mourner's heart. Shortly after the death of their son, the parents attended a holiday dinner hosted by the boy's grandparents. The host began the meal with a blessing, "Thank you for bringing the whole family together." The father was so distressed by this remark that he left the table. "Then I felt even worse," he said, "because I had disrupted the gathering for everyone else." Mourners can be thrown off guard by the remarks of complete strangers—for example, being admonished by a store clerk, "I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday." As one bereaved husband indicated, "You think of many responses, but you keep them to yourself."
3. **The Complexity of Decisions.** Bereaved individuals must navigate a difficult path in deciding how to handle decisions about family activities and rituals. As one mourner indicated, "I was not sure whether I should hang my son's stocking or not. I decided to hang it, because after all he is my son. But my husband thought that this was not a good idea. He told me that I was 'in denial.'"
4. **The Ambush.** During the holidays, mourners are often hit by powerful feelings that are evoked by some reminder of the loss. Consequently, they experience what Noel and Blair (2000) have called "the ambush." As one mother explained, "I was taking out the Christmas ornaments and I came across an ornament that Timmy had made in kindergarten. It had his hand print on it. I dissolved into tears." These events, which are unexpected and unpredictable, are also called "blindside reminders," "zingers," and "grief attacks." Although natural and normal, such experiences are often frightening in their intensity. They literally can take the mourner's breath away and bring about heart palpitations and other symptoms.

Mourner's Suggestions for Things to Try

1. **Plan Ahead.** Don't allow the holidays to just happen. Also, try to use a Plan A/Plan B approach to the holidays. Plan A might involve spending Christmas or Hanukkah with relatives; Plan B might mean having a simple dinner and watching a movie at home. Having a Plan B can be comforting even if you don't use it.
2. **Arrange a Family Meeting or a conference call to discuss how you would like to spend the holiday season.** Let everyone in your family have a say, even the children.
3. **Consider Changing Your Routine.** If you always prepared the family meal, you may want to consider having dinner with relatives or friends. Or you may want to leave town altogether, heading for a cabin in the woods or an excursion to the mountains or the shore.
4. **Take Charge of Your Social Life.** Although you may not feel like getting together with anyone, consider accepting a few invitations to be with close family or friends. Choose to be around people who make you feel comfortable and safe. Avoid social events that seem more like obligation.
5. **Scale Back.** Because grief robs us of our emotional and physical energy, consider cutting back on such holiday tasks as sending cards, baking, decorating, or putting up a tree. Some of these activities may be painful to execute in light of the loss. One woman who lost a child stated that, "It broke my heart to write three names on the holiday cards instead of four, so I stopped sending cards." Let others know that you may not be able to do things that you have done in the past.
6. **Be Gentle With Yourself.** Accept that feelings of anguish are difficult to avoid during the holiday season. Do not expect too much of yourself, and recognize that you are doing the best you can.

7. **Have an Exit Strategy.** In many cases, it is difficult for mourners to be around a lot of people. If they do go to a social gathering, they may not want to stay very long. This problem can be dealt with by developing an exit strategy in advance. For example, a widower may tell the hostess that, "I may need to leave early because I get tired easily"
8. **Honor Your Loved One's Memory.** Some people have maintained that coming up with ways to do this can bring a positive focus to our grief. There are many ways to remember the person who died: share your favorite stories about him; light a candle in remembrance; make a donation in her name. You might also consider making a list of positive qualities that your loved one brought into the world. Another idea is to spend time working on a goal or value that was important to the deceased. If your father was very involved in conservation efforts, for example, you might volunteer your time to a group working towards conservation, or consider making a donation to this cause.
9. **Find People Who Will Provide Support.** When people are already experiencing the great stress of grief, the additional strains of the holiday season can create distress that is almost unbearable. Thus it is important to identify those relatives and friends whom you feel are good listeners, and share your feelings with them. It may also help to recruit support for specific tasks that are particularly difficult. For example, a bereaved father found it heart-wrenching to go Christmas shopping alone because it upset him to encounter presents his daughter would have enjoyed. He asked a neighbor to accompany him to the mall so that he could purchase presents for his surviving children. "John helped me to focus so that I could get the job done," he said.
10. **Consider Attending a Support Group.** At this time of year, it can be particularly useful to interact with people who have experienced a loss that is similar to yours. Such individuals are likely to understand exactly what you are going through. In many cases, members will also be able to share strategies for dealing with the challenges of the holidays. As Rosof (1994) has indicated, those who have experienced a similar loss can also help us to understand that our feelings and fears are normal under the circumstances.

Because of the difficulties inherent at this time of year, it is easy for mourners to feel that they are making little headway in dealing with their loss. Noel and Blair (2000) have suggested that mourners may be moving forward even when they are unaware of it. According to these authors, "Wherever you are in the grief process... We know it's hard—and we also know it gets less hard. The next time a special occasion, anniversary or holiday comes around you will feel a little more in control, a little less pained, the situation will be a little less difficult and you will begin to celebrate life again—one day".

13th Annual National Survivors of Suicide Day

Day of Healing for Survivors of Suicide Loss Around the World, Saturday, November 19, 2011 - marks the 13th annual National Survivors of Suicide Day. This is a day of healing for those who are bereaved after a suicide loss, and was created by a U.S. Senate resolution in 1999.

This year there are four different sites to participate in the Survivor's Day program: Bremerton, Lakewood, Seattle and Spokane. For more information on any of these and for contact information go to www.afsp.org and click on National Survivors Day. Especially if you are newly bereaved, this can be an important part of your healing.

National Survivors of Suicide Day takes place every year on the 3rd Saturday in November. It includes a blend of emotional support and information about resources for healing. Survivors and mental health professionals discuss their experiences and address questions like: Why did this happen? How do I cope?

Day of Healing for Bereavement After Suicide, in English, Spanish & French SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2011

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Congratulations to Andee and crew! Andee, one of the Auburn facilitators helped to staff our booth at the AFSP's Out of the Darkness Community walk at Green Lake in Seattle. This year over \$85,000 was raised! Almost 900 participants this year – what a great turnout! Thousands walked in the *Out of the Darkness* Community Walks nationwide to raise money for AFSP's vital research and education programs to prevent suicide and save lives, increase national awareness about depression and suicide and provide support for survivors of suicide loss

Compassionate Friends
Grief Support

A support group for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one.

Cost: None.

Schedule: 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Location: Burien Highline Campus, 5 Cedar Conference Room.

For more information call 206-431-5249 or 206-439-9095.

Widowed Information & Consultation Service, Inc. *Healing From Loss*

An 8-week group for people who have lost a loved one to death. New groups begin quarterly.

Cost: None.

Schedule: Please call for schedule.

Location: Specialty Center, Home Care Services Building Conference Room

Call 206-439-9095 for information or registration.

What: **BRIDGES: A Center for Grieving Children** is a family-based support program where families with children ages 4-18 who have experienced the death of a parent or a sibling come together to heal. We offer support groups just for children as well as groups for adults.

When: 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Where: Christ Church, 310 North K St, Tacoma, WA 98403

Who: Surviving families of suicide who have children between the ages of 4-18

Contact: Darren Wenz (Darren.wenz@multicare.org) or Michelle Schuyleman (michelle.schuyleman@multicare.org) at 253.272.8266

PROFESSIONAL INDOOR LACROSSE, Sat. Jan. 28, 2012 ~



Players for Prevention Night with the Washington Stealth. Tickets \$15.00, for tickets please contact Jo McNeal @ 425-482-0965 or jmcneal@afsp.org.

On January 28, the Stealth plays host to the Edmonton Rush for "Hometown Heroes Night". The evening will also be a continuation of the "Players for Prevention" initiative with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, in which the Stealth has already served as a presenting sponsor for the AFSP's Out of the Darkness Community Walk in Seattle. The AFSP will be hosting a Launch-A-Ball fundraiser at the game as well as a silent auction with Stealth memorabilia and donations from other sports organizations and companies throughout the area. All the proceeds from the event will go towards the ASFP's goals of suicide prevention and awareness.

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The holiday season can be especially challenging and emotional for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Our Coping with Holidays workshops are designed to help people understand and cope with their grief during this time. Please join us for an evening of inspiration and hope. There is no charge to attend but please register by calling (360) 493-4667.

**Olympia**

Thursday, November 10th  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Providence SoundHomeCare & Hospice  
3432 South Bay Rd. NE

**University Place**

Sunday, November 13th from 3pm - 5pm.  
University Place Presbyterian Church  
8101 27th St. W.

**Lacey**

Monday, November 7th  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Lacey Presbyterian Church  
3045 Carpenter Rd.

## *Wounded Holidays*

Young, they left our homes  
in a moment, long or quick,  
they were gone.

Dewdrops turned into teardrops,  
the shining sea too small  
to hold our grief.

"Give us our children back," we pled  
as we noticed their plateless places  
at the table.

Regret made a river through our days,  
tempering laughter,  
pervading sudden silences.

Bodies they had through us, with us  
bodies housing minds and souls  
no longer.

The holiday season's return  
makes throb now the wounds  
we felt at their parting,

wounds which may heal  
in time, we hope,  
into strength

but not yet, in this season  
of snowflakes that sting and cookies  
that somehow taste of vinegar.

"If only," goes our carol.  
If only they could return to us  
but no.

If only  
we could speak with them  
but no.

If only we could love them  
so intensely that they could  
feel our presence right now

but yes, yes to this one,  
a thousand yesses--  
they can.

How can they not feel our love,  
being core in core with us,  
heart in heart?

We give love this season to them and  
to each other as plundered parents  
and wounded healers.

With love flowing, something in our lives  
a magnificent, mysterious Something  
guides us like a star.

*Alan Harris*  
*The Compassionate Friends*



**YOUR DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED, APPRECIATED AND ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

Please mail your donations to:

28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S., Federal Way, WA. 98003

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

Auburn SOS  
28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S.  
Federal Way, WA 98003

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We encourage you to consider receiving your newsletter via e-mail. As costs continue to rise this is one way we can save money. Send an e-mail to: [newsletter@auburnsos.com](mailto:newsletter@auburnsos.com)



**Weather Alert!**

*If the weather is inclement (as in 'snow'!) we will follow the guidelines of the local school district as to whether or not to cancel our meeting.*



*When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight. - Kahlil Gibran*